

Future Paisley

Evaluation Report



**Culture matters
and its intrinsic
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place leaders
and communities
in Renfrewshire.**

Executive Summary

Culture matters and its intrinsic value is recognised and understood by place leaders and communities in Renfrewshire. Active participation in the visual and performing arts, music and dance is accepted by service providers as an effective way to help people live a longer, healthier and more fulfilled life; it can help maintain levels of independence and curiosity and it can bring great joy and happiness, and so improve the quality of life for those joining in.

In response to this, and building on the legacy of Paisley's bid to be UK City of Culture 2021, the Future Paisley programme launched in 2018 and confirmed five bold step changes, using culture as a lever for cultural, social, and economic change:

- Radically change Paisley's image and reputation in Scotland, nationally and internationally.
- Raise prosperity and increase wellbeing in Renfrewshire's communities.
- Paisley will be recognised for its cultural innovation.
- Transform Paisley into a vibrant town centre.
- Develop a sustainable and resilient creative economy in Renfrewshire.

The programme has since delivered more than 5,500 events, interventions, performances, and activities and has prioritised and driven the creation of local, affordable and free-to-access cultural experiences (87%), attracting national interest from policy makers and cultural leaders. During this time, employment in Renfrewshire's cultural and creative sectors has increased from 1,910 to 1,970 and employment in tourism has risen from 3,054 to 3,356.

The programme followed Paisley's bid to be UK City of Culture in 2021 and carried on the ambitions of the bid and the overarching Paisley: The Untold Story cultural regeneration strategy from which it emerged. Future Paisley harnessed the town's new-found sense of self-confidence, and broader awareness of Paisley's cultural story to power change at our own pace. In a broader sense, it also helped realise the vision and objectives of Renfrewshire's Culture Strategy 2016 to 2023, contributing to Renfrewshire Council's priorities outlined in its Council Plan and providing a golden thread to A Culture Strategy for Scotland. A Theory of Change set out the intended journey of the programme, linking resource and projects to intended outcomes and the Step Changes, and evolved throughout delivery to be responsive to a changing local and national context, including the impact of the pandemic.

Future Paisley adopted the definition of culture stated in the Renfrewshire's Culture Strategy: **Culture is alive. It lives, breathes, sings, dances, performs, interacts, entertains. Culture engages the emotions, stimulates the senses, provokes the mind and fires the imagination.**

By 'culture' we mean performing arts; visual arts; literature; music and sound; events and festivals; architecture; crafts; design; fashion; film; tv; radio; photography; animation; gaming; everyday participation (hobbies and pastimes); play; food; museums; galleries; libraries; archives; historic environment (buildings, monuments and historic landscape); Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH—living traditions like games, song and stories) and blends and mixes of any of the above. All of which are visible through the Future Paisley programme.

Future Paisley was not delivered by one organisation alone. It was informed and influenced and delivered by an enduring partnership of place leaders, cultural organisations and national agencies which include the council and its partners OneRen and Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership, the University of West of Scotland, West College Scotland, The Glasgow School of Art, The Arts Connection (Renfrewshire's cultural sector network), Star Project, Engage Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce, Paisley First, Police Scotland, Skills Development Scotland, Culture and Business Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, EventScotland, VisitScotland, Creative Scotland and Scottish Futures Trust. Led by the council, the Partnership met four to six times a year to oversee programme activity, add value and perspective, monitor progress and agree recommendations and actions.

Through this partnership, Renfrewshire's cultural regeneration was able to be integrated with policy making and public service strategy at a local and national level, setting a precedent for co-design, with Renfrewshire's communities playing a lead role in determining projects to be delivered and shaping their ultimate delivery. Engagement with communities and community groups meant 82% of the events, exhibitions, and cultural participation sessions were co-designed with local people.

Future Paisley championed and has consistently demonstrated genuine cultural democracy and community capacity building. People in Renfrewshire engaged with Future Paisley in their own neighbourhoods, villages and towns, with almost 300,000 participations recorded. Activity was often bespoke, through intensive creative workshops and cultural interventions, and at other times, large-scale general cultural experiences. The demographic characteristics of those participating are representative of the demographics of the region in terms of age groups, gender, and ethnicity. Activity took place in every ward and neighbourhood across Renfrewshire.

Across Renfrewshire, communities who faced barriers to cultural participation were able to regularly engage with publicly funded culture. All high schools in Renfrewshire engaged with the programme. Through the cultural champions project, Future Paisley reached a third of Renfrewshire's nurseries and almost two-thirds of primary schools. More than 2,398 community dancers, musicians, poets, and makers participated in culture through Renfrewshire's signature events programme.

Alongside programming and events, Future Paisley invested directly in Renfrewshire's cultural sector, through supporting artists to develop their practice, capacity-building and organisational development, recognising its intended step changes could only be achieved in partnership with a resilient, diverse, and thriving sector. This investment included cultural funding programmes, sector development, volunteering programmes and enhancing cultural infrastructure across the region by funding key institutions and building cultural workforce. Almost £2.7 million was awarded through cultural funding grants.

At a strategic level, Future Paisley attempted to tackle some of the challenges that exist for publicly-funded culture and encouraged greater ownership of culture by wider public services, by demonstrating how culture can improve local outcomes and create a vibrant place. This was intended to build a robust case for continued investment in culture and to provide strong foundations on which to move forward with a refreshed cultural strategy. Future Paisley is demonstrating the potential to transition from fixed-term investment to a more sustainable model built on increased sector leadership and community capacity.



Dark Sky Viewing Nights 2024

Programming was diverse and inclusive, encompassing 'culture on the doorstep' and venues-based programming, designed to reduce financial, geographical, and digital barriers. By working with communities, arts and cultural organisations and practitioners, Future Paisley increased understanding of the physical barriers to access and provided funding to cultural organisations and spaces to improve accessibility while also challenging the perception 'culture is not for me' which limits universal access. A key question is whether Future Paisley helped to increase cultural participation or not. Levels of engagement and participation tracked through the programme and the 2022 Scottish Household Survey would suggest so. Renfrewshire currently outperforms the Scottish average with cultural participation among adults tracking at 70%, compared to a Scottish average of 65%, with cultural participation of those living in the 20% most deprived communities in Renfrewshire also sitting at 70%, against a Scottish participation rate of 51%.

Through the programme, there was an attempt to address low levels of diversity in cultural leadership roles and across cultural workforce in Renfrewshire by investing in the sector and the recruitment of cultural professionals across art forms, and establishing cultural partnerships with less representative groups, such as the Ethnic Minorities Cultural Steering Group.

Investment was made in building local structural capacity and infrastructure across Renfrewshire, including capacity in council and OneRen cultural teams, in growing sector capacity through dedicated funding, and by encouraging the development of new spaces for culture to take place, designed to help resource a more collaborative long-term and strategic place-based approach.

Future Paisley faced inevitable challenges in identifying baseline data and collecting core data on projects, and co-ordinating a consistent approach to evaluation, but nonetheless has delivered a comprehensive suite of case studies, policy insights and evidence reviews in addition to an evaluation framework, that can be accessed by public services and the wider cultural sector. Collectively, the insight and data and framework will enable the application of consistent methods of evaluating the impact of cultural activity on communities by services in future, and provides the cultural sector with access to methods of measuring the impact of their own interventions for the purpose of better targeting future resource.

The programme has helped to drive economic benefits for culture in Renfrewshire, primarily through the creation of employment in the cultural and creative sector (3% increase) and tourism sector (10%). Future Paisley has also enabled Renfrewshire Council and OneRen to leverage more than £1.1 million in external funding from a variety of sources including UKRI, Creative Scotland, EventScotland and VisitScotland and to develop strong partnerships which have longevity. Additionally, national funding was secured by several cultural organisations, supported by Future Paisley.

Intensive marketing of Paisley and wider Renfrewshire was driven through Paisley. Promoting the regional visitor offer has paid dividends, not only in terms of positive coverage, but also tourism impact, with visitor numbers increasing over the programme timeframe from 944,000 in 2015 to 1.06 million in 2023, and independent data (STEAM 2023), calculating the economic impact of tourism in Renfrewshire at £246.62 million, 16% higher than the pre-Covid year of 2019, which compares very favourably with overall UK figures which are still showing a deficit.

The strength of Future Paisley, however, lies in the social outcomes achieved through a multitude of opportunities for residents to engage in culture. The impacts of that engagement are communal as well as individual.

Through Renfrewshire's events programme, Future Paisley provided additional opportunities for residents to directly contribute and participate in community celebrations and commemorations. 310 volunteers were supported through the events programme, delivering 2,963 hours of community volunteering.

Co-created programmes influenced changes in core service practice by building a deeper connectivity with, and understanding of, community need, interests, and social and global agendas. Engagement and participation have had a direct positive impact on people, with considerable qualitative feedback describing improved wellbeing and social connections, increased agency, and inclusion because of participating in culture, with participants also expressing a desire to remain active and engaged in community action or civic activity long-term. 70% of organisations in receipt of funds from one grant programme reported positive improvement in participants' mental health and the reduction of social isolation.

For six years, Future Paisley drove investment in the cultural sector and supported the development of new partnerships between arts organisations, as well as partnerships between the cultural sector and non-arts organisations creating a legacy of new practice. According to OSCR data, the number of charities registered in Renfrewshire with a charitable purpose of the advancement of the arts, heritage, culture, or science has increased by 40% between 2016 and 2024.

The cultural sector has reported the benefits of extended networks and cultural funding, which created new opportunities, partnerships, and resource. The Cultural Organisational Development Fund was unique in its flexibility and unmatched by other business support, enabling cultural organisations to shape funding to their individual needs, while the Culture Heritage and Events Fund has created a platform to develop local vernacular and 'what [and who] is already here'. Collectively, funding has supported cultural organisations and artists to thrive and to extend the reach and impact of their work regionally, nationally, and internationally.

To make sense of the variety and depth of projects delivered, the programme is tracked and evaluated under five pillars—programming, marketing, cultural sector development, strategic development, and cultural workforce. This has allowed projects to be grouped together and to share evaluation methodology and to track programme funding, enabling outputs to be understood. In addition, the programme has been examined under the five step changes and 15 strategic outcomes, using project lead data collection and case studies to understand the qualitative impact and to hear the voices of those who participated and interacted with Future Paisley.

Since 2018, Future Paisley has supported trailblazing work and shone a light on the transformation taking place across Renfrewshire by making tangible the aspirations and ambitions for the region, which this has extended well beyond expected events and performances:

- The Centre for Culture, Sport and Events (CCSE), a Paisley-based research centre working internationally, was delivered through a partnership between Renfrewshire Council and the University of West of Scotland.
- Several professional networks were established to champion culture and embed cultural practice in the delivery of public services. This includes The Arts Connection; Culture, Arts, Health & Social Care (CAHSC); Renfrewshire Wellbeing Network; Culture, Health, Arts Training (CHAT); and the Cultural Champions Network.
- National and international artists relocated to Renfrewshire or launched their business in Renfrewshire to build their practice and engage with local communities. New collectives were formed including The Sculpture House Collective, Refractive Scotland and Johnstone Textile Space.
- Castlehead School of Creativity was established. A landmark partnership between Castlehead High School and The Glasgow School of Art that applies creative thinking across the curriculum, turbo-charging attainment in art and design and delivering new nationally recognised courses.
- Culture has secured a significant and genuine influence in placeshaping.
- The Paisley brand launched and generated massive publicity for Paisley through national visitor campaigns, event marketing and new visitor products.
- A reinvented Paisley Halloween Festival and the newly-created Paisley Book Festival attracted tens of thousands of event attendees, significant social and economic benefits, and national recognition.

- Paisley Pattern collaborations with globally-recognised fashion brands Hermes and Pringle were secured to create international publicity for Paisley's pattern and shawl collection, through product development.
- Pathway programmes for young people in Renfrewshire were established, working with local and national partners, to build aspiration and support young people to enter cultural and creative industries—*UWS Pathways Programme*, the *Jupiter + Paisley Orbit Youth Collective* and *Building the Future*.
- New grant programmes were delivered, with almost £2.7 million of funding awarded to cultural organisations, cultural groups and independent artists—Culture, Heritage and Events Fund (CHEF); Cultural Organisational Development Fund (CODF); Renfrewshire Cultural Recovery & Renewal Fund (RCRRF); Visual Artist and Craft Makers Award (VACMA); and Creative Wellbeing Fund and Making Arts & Culture Accessible Fund (CAHSC Grant Funding).
- Targeted cultural interventions were delivered to significantly improve quality of life for older people, young carers and care-experienced children and young people, people experiencing mental health or loneliness, and adults with a disability.
- New brands were built by OneRen for Renfrewshire's landmark cultural venues—Paisley Museum, Paisley Town Hall, Paisley Arts Centre, and Paisley Central Library.
- The Future Paisley Exhibition was launched and ran for five months to promote Paisley's cultural heritage, showcase development plans, and invite people who love Paisley to help co-design the town's future vision.

The programme evaluation has established Future Paisley was instrumental in strengthening Renfrewshire's cultural infrastructure and progressing the intended five step changes. Cultural organisations in receipt of sector support through Future Paisley have confirmed they are stronger and more resilient as a result of this intervention. Building on this momentum will require a continued partnership focus on cultural regeneration and systems change—with culture as a component of future service design, and a refreshed culture strategy for Renfrewshire. Challenges remain around funding for public culture, particularly in the current financial climate and in the face of increasing cost and demand pressures on public services. Another challenge is in evaluating the individual and collective impact of cultural services, particularly on prevention, to help direct future investment.

As place leaders, the council, OneRen and Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership can and should continue to convene partners to design and deliver cultural policy and strategy and find ways to embed art and cultural activity in core services. This has significant potential to drive better outcomes for local people and help reduce the requirement for traditional (high-cost) interventions in future. Recommendations are made in the final section of the evaluation to help shape the next phase of Renfrewshire's cultural regeneration journey, linked to five themes—strategy and partnership, access and inclusion, creative growth, cultural education and pathways to creative employment and health and wellbeing.

The Future Paisley programme formally closed in May 2024, marking the end of this phase of Renfrewshire's cultural regeneration journey, with outcomes that will help to shape future policy and strategy and how culture is used as a lever for social and economic change.

Foreword

On 7 December 2017, as the winner of the UK City of Culture 2021 competition was announced in Hull, few would have believed that Paisley had been granted a major opportunity. Undeterred by missing out on the title, Paisley gathered itself and vowed to continue its planned journey of cultural regeneration. The positive steps taken in Paisley in the weeks that followed were down to the ambition and foresight of Renfrewshire Council, the strength of community and partnership, and the collective will to continue a journey, which began in 2014 with the publication of Paisley: The Untold Story—a 10-year heritage regeneration strategy to transform the fortunes of the town using culture and creativity as levers for change. Today, as we publish the evaluation of Future Paisley, Renfrewshire Council's landmark cultural regeneration programme, we have realised the benefit of being able to invest in culture and creativity on our own terms and at our own pace.

Using its power to convene, the Council had brought together the cultural sector and regional and national representatives who implicitly understood the value of cultural investment and the vital role culture plays in society to build resilient places, to encourage social mobility, to promote better health and wellbeing and to support local economic growth. A partnership that continues today through Future Paisley.

The process of bidding for the culture title was transformational. It brought unprecedented positive publicity for the town and drew communities together, galvanised public support for culture and ignited a totally new conversation about the town's past and future. People came together in shopping malls, on the bus and on doorsteps to share their aspirations for a Year of Culture, and offered insight and solutions linked to the hidden barriers to participation in cultural and civic life. These conversations shaped Future Paisley and ensured long-term cultural value for the town. This, and the Council's ongoing financial commitment of £1m to support the cultural sector over the next three years combined with strong partnerships provided a framework to continue and kept the collective commitment and confidence to deliver alive.

For six years, Future Paisley has continued to engage communities in conversations about their future and to use culture as a catalyst for greater prosperity and wellbeing. Future Paisley has honoured many commitments in the original City of Culture bid and has delivered more than 5,500 events, interventions, performances, and activities with almost 300,000 participations, to help achieve five step changes for the region and to maintain ambition in the longer term.



Through Future Paisley we were able to test and to innovate and to learn what worked and what didn't. We had time to fully integrate with wider place strategy and policy development. We had more time to understand the impact of our work. Future Paisley directed activity straddling programming, marketing, cultural sector development, strategic development and developing cultural workforce, and continued to deliver during a global pandemic.

As we waited for our landmark cultural venues to reappear from behind hoardings and scaffold, through Future Paisley we were assembling—investing in developing local audiences, delivering culture on the doorstep and creating hundreds of ways for people to 'join in'. We developed award-winning events and festivals, invested in town readiness and promoted Paisley to visitors across Scotland. We focused on strengthening the local cultural sector—working with cultural organisations and independent artists, creating networks, supporting national funding bids and providing almost £2.7 million in direct grants and flexible funding. This ensured everyone would be ready when Paisley's venues re-opened.

None of this would have been possible without the cross-party support of elected members, our communities, the ingenuity of the cultural sector, our council family OneRen and Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and our Future Paisley Partnership Board. And now, as Future Paisley closes and we publish our evaluation, we have time to consider our collective impact and where our work has mattered most.

It has been a privilege to have been part of the formidable relay team who have carried Paisley's regeneration baton over many years. I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has supported Future Paisley here in Renfrewshire and for the warmth and generosity we have received from Buddies across the UK and beyond, and I look forward to championing what comes next.

It would be remiss to end without reminding everyone... keep your eye on Paisley.

Louisa Mahon,
Head of Marketing, Communications and Major Events





PACE—Limitless

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**Culture helps
keep people
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and engaged in
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Introduction

Future Paisley is a far-reaching cultural regeneration programme that recognises culture is a force that changes lives. It draws on the rich heritage, cultural strengths and creative potential of Paisley and wider Renfrewshire to shape the area's future and supports whole-system change, delivering both short-term and generational benefits. The programme was launched following Paisley's bid to the UK City of Culture in 2021 and drove the region's continuing cultural regeneration approach to deliver physical, environmental, social, and economic impact.

The link between cultural participation and individual wellbeing is well-evidenced and understood. Culture helps keep people well, happier and connected and engaged in civic life. It is not the purpose of the Future Paisley evaluation to establish this, but instead to establish the extent to which investment through Future Paisley has contributed to those benefits in Renfrewshire.

This report presents a detailed record of how the Future Paisley investment of £10,145,000 aligned with public policy, Renfrewshire Council priorities, and its own core objectives to pursue new lines of enquiry, remove barriers to access and participation, and develop models of best practice to embed culture at the heart of decision-making. By collating both quantitative and qualitative data produced over the last six years, we can examine impact and demonstrate the programme has driven significant social, cultural and economic change, and is helping to make life better for people who live in Renfrewshire.

Renfrewshire's Cultural Regeneration Journey

In Renfrewshire, the body of evidence on the impact of culture is universally understood and has driven the region's ambitious programme of regeneration since 2014.

Over the past decade Renfrewshire Council has invested £79.9 million in cultural activity, policy and infrastructure, reversing previous under-investment in arts and culture in Renfrewshire, and extending to the area's main heritage buildings, supporting cultural workforce, and growing the cultural sector. The success of the cultural regeneration strategy that has evolved since is testament to the council's vision, the existing cultural ecology, and the town of Paisley itself, where for 200 years people have set up cultural societies and taken culture into their own hands.

The Untold Story and subsequent UK City of Culture 2021 competition shaped ten years of unique partnership that has transformed how culture is perceived and accessed across Renfrewshire. The City of Culture bidding process was a catalyst that inspired 40,000 people to actively engage in shaping their cultural future between November 2015 and December 2017. The depth of understanding about community needs and the role of arts and creativity as a force for change in the town was unprecedented. The competition gave Paisley the platform to challenge an out-of-date negative image and ignite nationwide support for the town and recognition of its vibrant cultural heritage. The local cultural sector and community groups stepped forward and took ownership of the campaign, becoming local and national champions for Paisley as a town of immense creativity and resilience.

An investment plan, led by Renfrewshire Council and agreed by the Paisley Partnership Board formed the basis of Paisley's bid. Given the strength of community support, the partners made a pledge to continue to progress the agreed Step Changes, win or lose. The Council, as lead partner, committed to maintaining £7 million earmarked to support delivery of the UK City of Culture year, for investment in cultural programme, partnerships, and cultural workforce, irrespective of the competition outcome. At the end of the bidding process, a new movement '***Our Journey Continues***' driven by local people and the cultural sector, was harnessed and shaped the **Future Paisley programme**.

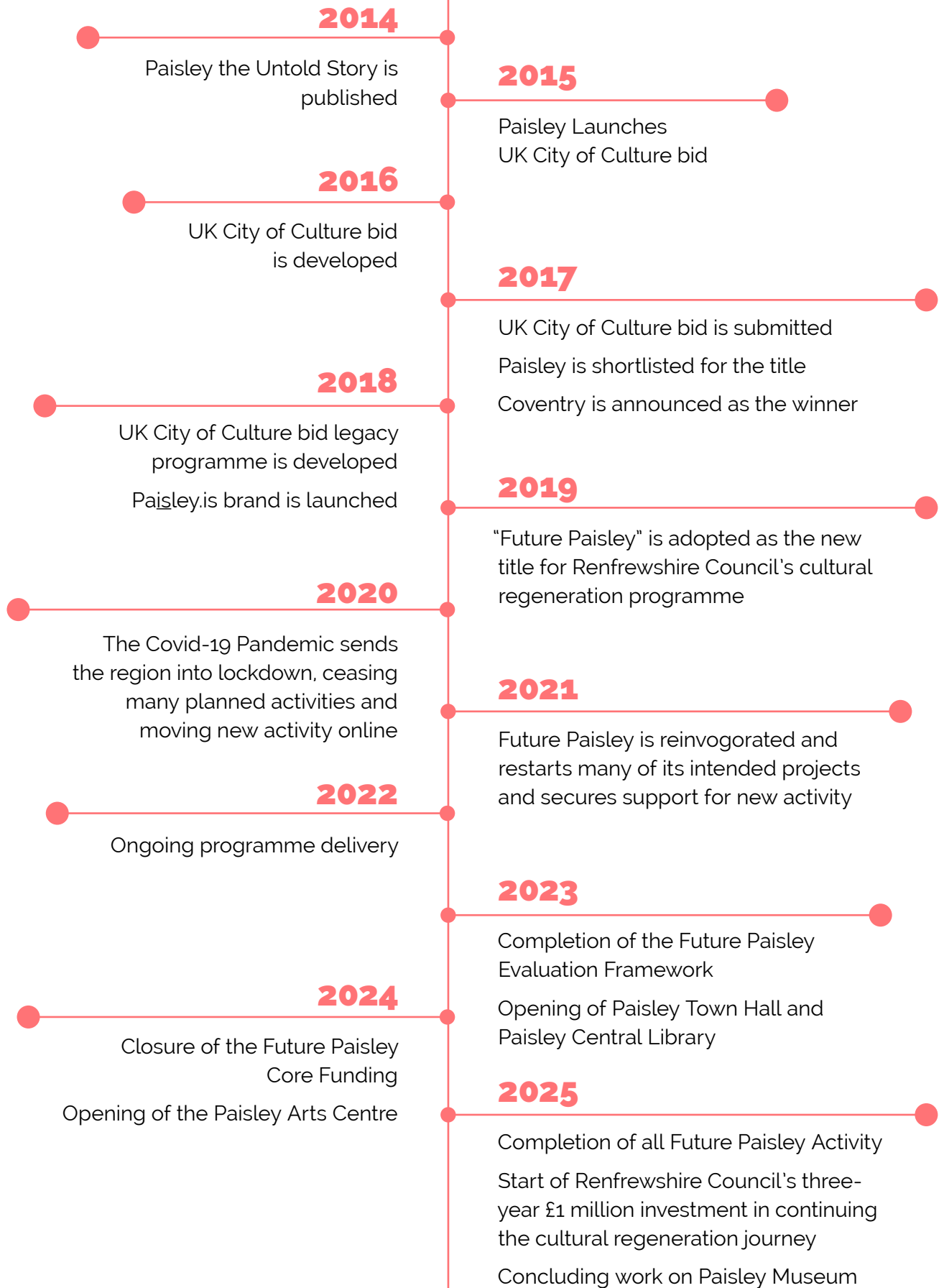
The funding that delivered Future Paisley has come to an end, and the impact of that is examined in this evaluation. But the work will continue. Future Paisley is just one part of Renfrewshire's ongoing cultural regeneration journey. Activity will continue over the next two years with the reopening of Paisley Museum and by programming and building audiences for the region's new cultural venues, through the continuation of strong partnerships with the cultural sector, and by embedding culture within core council services. This will require ongoing investment informed by the evidence generated through Future Paisley.

Phases of Renfrewshire's Cultural Regeneration

- 2014 to 2017—Ambition-Building (Paisley: The Untold Story, the Paisley 2021 UK City of Culture Bid, What's Our Story? brand development, investment in major events and event bidding strategy, launch of the Culture, Heritage and Events Fund (CHEF), and Outline Business Case for Paisley Museum)
- 2018 to 2024—Assembly and Delivery (Future Paisley, Paisley brand launch, Paisley Town Hall project, Paisley Art Centre refurbishment, Paisley Museum Reimagined, construction of the new Paisley Central Library, Paisley Townscape Heritage and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme 2)
- 2024 onwards—Performance and Growth (full reopening of Renfrewshire's cultural assets, embedded cultural partnerships, multi-tier programming and stabilised cultural sector support)

There are several live projects and programmes which will continue to be delivered up to March 2025, including the management of cultural funding grants. The evaluation of those final projects will be added to the online Future Paisley Evaluation Report as a separate and additional report to ensure all impacts are reflected and understood within the wider context of the full Future Paisley programme.

Timeline



Future Paisley's Theory of Change

The plan for Future Paisley was developed simultaneously alongside programme delivery in 2018, derived from the ambitions of Paisley's UK City of Culture bid and built upon the Theory of Change, developed through the bidding process and agreed by the partnership board. The Theory of Change described the intervention activities that would be taken to achieve a series of outcomes linked to the bid's five step changes and was a living document guiding decision-making which was revised regularly. This enabled the Future Paisley programme to remain agile and adapt investment to priorities to align with Renfrewshire Council's Council Plan, Renfrewshire's Community Plan, and the desired transformational change for Paisley.

Future Paisley's Theory of Change breaks the programme into four components:

- **Inputs**, including investments, partnerships, and people
- **Outputs**, described by the five Pillars of Activity
- **Short-Term Outcomes**, broken into the 15 strategic outcomes that underpin the Step Changes
- **Long-Term Outcomes**, as described by the five Step Changes

The **inputs** for Future Paisley included the Council's significant financial commitment to the programme as well as the partnership commitments from key stakeholders, community organisations, local artists, and residents. Without all elements, Renfrewshire Council alone would not have been able to deliver Future Paisley's ambitious programme of activities.

The second category details the **outputs** from Future Paisley's programmes. It uses five Pillars to organise hundreds of activities that make up the Future Paisley programme into similar groupings to allow for outputs to be accurately measured against expenditure. For example, the Programming pillar includes Renfrewshire's festivals and events, the productions and art commissions undertaken during the funding period, and cultural engagement programmes funded through Future Paisley. These activities share similar output metrics such as the number of attendees and participants, data that wouldn't be relevant for pillars such as the Culture Workforce or Marketing. The pillars allow for outputs to be accurately captured and logically presented.

To support the assessment of and learning from Future Paisley, Renfrewshire Council's cultural regeneration team worked with their strategic partners at the University of West Scotland Centre for Culture Sport and Events (CCSE), as well as independent consultancy DHA Communications, to develop the Future Paisley Evaluation Framework. This framework includes a range of research and evaluation activities centred around five Step Changes and 15 Strategic Outcomes. The 15 Strategic Outcomes developed by Renfrewshire Council, are the mechanism in which to evidence **short-term outcomes** for the Future Paisley programme, which combine to enable the realisation of the five Step Changes, the programme's **long-term outcomes**.

The monitoring of Future Paisley projects began in 2018 to ensure appropriate data collection at an early stage and was standardised in 2021 and further refined in 2023, with the Evaluation Framework.

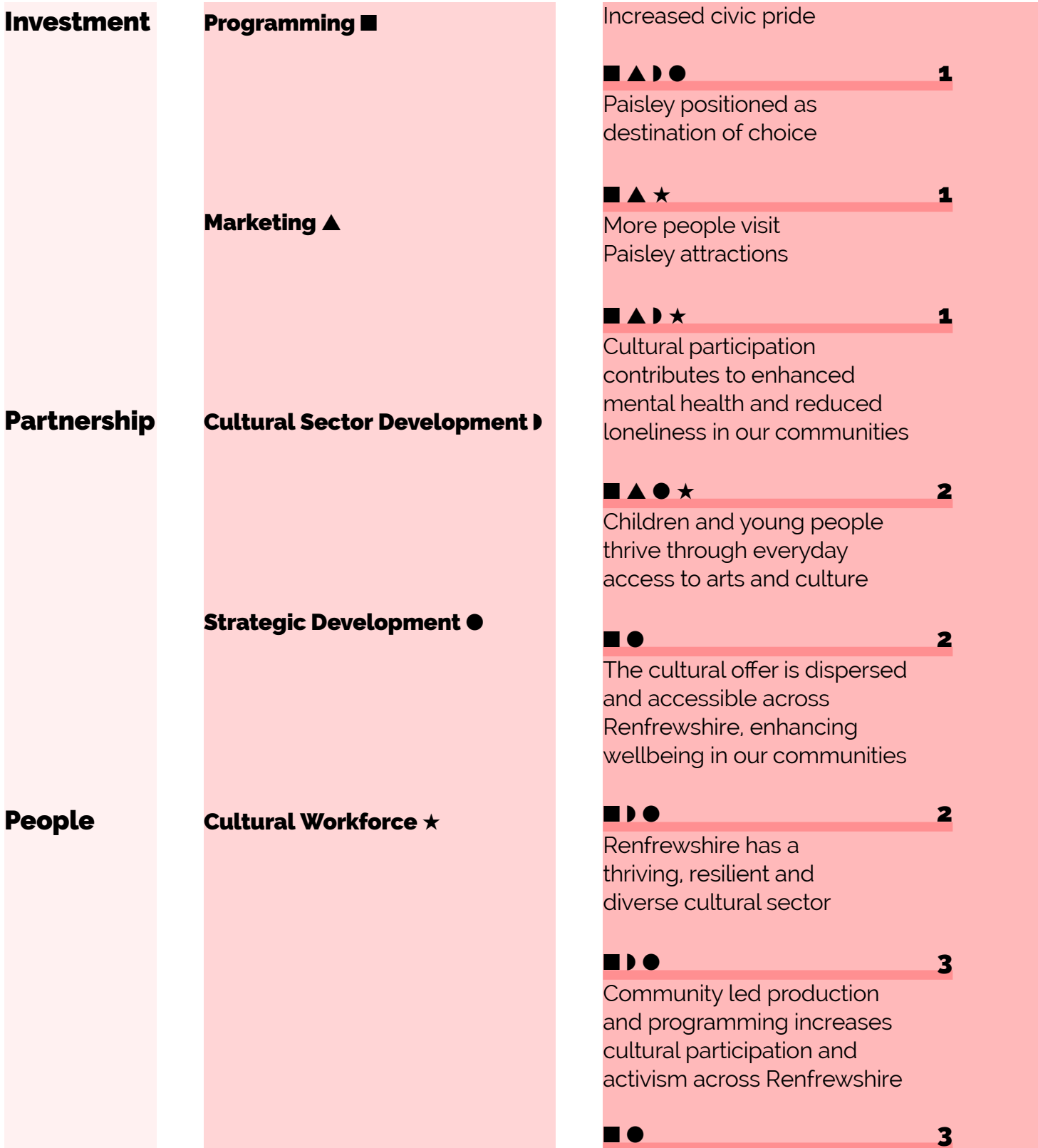
The collection of monitoring data was the responsibility of each project lead within Renfrewshire Council, OneRen and Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership. This was to include collection of regular monitoring data, including the collection of diversity and demographic data from staff, artists/freelancers, and project participants. Social media metrics and media value were logged, as well as other programme related metrics. The monitoring of financial data—project expenditure and income—was also included. Project leads were responsible for administering and collecting exit survey data from events funded by Future Paisley, through box-office data or surveys at free to attend events. The data provided by the project lead was the principal source for evaluating outputs and outcomes. Future Paisley appointed a Monitoring & Evaluation Officer in 2023 to ensure monitoring data was collated and processed in a format that would fully enable evaluation.

Theory of Change Chart

Inputs

Outputs

Short Term Outcomes



Long Term Outcomes

Innovation in programming leads to wider engagement by local and national audiences

■▷● **3**

Paisley town centre is revitalised through the opening of major cultural venues and attractions

■▲ **4**

Paisley's town centre is revitalised through improvements to the public realm

■ **4**

Paisley town centre is animated by cultural production and participation

■▲● **4**

Organisations and sole traders working in Renfrewshire's creative economy develop sustainable and resilient business models

■▲▷● **5**

Pathways into employment and progression routes in Renfrewshire's tourism, cultural and creative sectors are being supported

■▲▷●★ **5**

The tourism and the cultural and creative sector in Renfrewshire are vibrant and employment opportunities are developing

■▲▷●★ **5**

Step Change 1:

Radically change Paisley's image and reputation in Scotland, the UK and internationally

Step Change 2:

Raise prosperity and increase wellbeing in our communities

Step Change 3:

Paisley will be recognised for its cultural innovation

Step Change 4:

Transform Paisley into a vibrant town centre

Step Change 5:

Develop a sustainable and resilient creative economy in Renfrewshire

The Challenge of Evaluation

Future Paisley activity has generated almost 300,000 participations and delivered hundreds of cultural experiences since 2018, with emphasis on reaching children and young people. There has been robust financial tracking and there is precise data on where funded activity has taken place and the communities most regularly reached.

Inevitably there were some challenges to completing the evaluation of the Future Paisley programme, given the scale and diversity of the programme being delivered by different partners and services, and those are outlined in this section. Consistency of approach was hard to maintain and while there is robust evidence that shows the impact of projects such as place marketing, the growth of the events programme, the impact of funding for cultural organisations and the impact of projects delivered by health and social care, data collection was less structured in other areas.

Context is important and the pace of the transition from bidding to delivery of a legacy programme should be reflected on. In the desire to move forward in 2018 and to not lose momentum and community support, some of the connectedness of the original cultural programme was compromised as projects, designed to be delivered through a 'build phase' preceding a UK City of Culture year or condensed as part of a year-long-event, were delivered individually and over a different timeframe. Projects moved ahead at pace, but some lost connection to the original step changes. The original culture programme was developed by a defined bid team and there was a feeling among new project leads of inheriting 'pre-determined' projects and uncertainty about their ability to make changes. Greater awareness of the Theory of Change model would have helped to reinforce the strategic rationale for projects and which outcomes were relevant to planned activities. The original cultural programme and five step changes were created during a competition, designed to ignite the interest of a judging panel. Delivery outwith the spotlight (and financial benefits), of a national competition would have benefitted from re-examination of the intended step changes, programme and supporting activity, and further scrutiny of the legacy impact. Working with the Centre for Culture, Sport, and Events (CCSE) a revised Story of Change was produced, grounded in the reality of assembly and delivery in 'peacetime' but not until 2020.

The greatest challenge was building a culture of consistent evaluation and data sharing between projects and partner organisations. Multiple delivery partners and changes of personnel within separate organisations, made it challenging to monitor, influence reporting and to ensure consistency. This was coupled with the absence of baseline data and KPIs in some areas from the outset, which continued at a project level. It is important to also recognise that measuring social impact is notoriously difficult. When evaluating Future Paisley, there was a need to be flexible, combining project data with case studies, policy insights and evidence reviews and drawing those strands together to gauge impact and draw conclusions over the extent of progression towards the intended step changes. Additionally, early interventions require a long period of time before impact is understood. Many of the initiatives funded by Future Paisley require long-term commitment, way beyond this initial funding period and the full impact of those initiatives is not yet known. The challenge for funders will be how to continue to deliver cultural interventions intended to improve readiness to learn, boost community cohesion, prevent people from accessing acute services or reduce the chances of re-entering the criminal justice system. This requires long-term tracking and must take account of the input of a variety of interdependent services.

Maintaining partnership over a decade requires ongoing commitment from all those involved due to shifts in organisational focus and changes in leadership and delivery personnel, and the stickiness of the Future Paisley Partnership Board is a clear mark of success. There was however a perceived imbalance by some within the cultural sector, who believed the Future Paisley investment overseen by Renfrewshire's public institutions should be distributed to the sector, who saw themselves as best placed to deliver cultural activity and ensure projects originating from local artists were prioritised. This is despite the significant investment in the cultural sector made by the council.

Most importantly, Paisley's cultural regeneration approach has managed to successfully navigate changes in senior personnel and political leadership, national policy change, a global pandemic resulting in the cancellation of activity, events and performances and the pivoting of all partners to new organisational priorities, unprecedented demand pressures on public sector funding and a cost-of-living crisis. It has also maintained its momentum and integrity over ten years and expanded its reach beyond Paisley to wider Renfrewshire. Post-pandemic, Future Paisley successfully adapted and changed, and the step changes were reviewed, with strengthened strategic outcomes to ensure clear links to activity now taking place on the ground. While it is difficult to measure the full impact of every aspect of Future Paisley, a wealth of valuable data and insights were collected by partners and by the CCSE and are documented as part of the evaluation report.

**Most
Renfrewshire
residents
will have
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a Future Paisley
activity or event.**

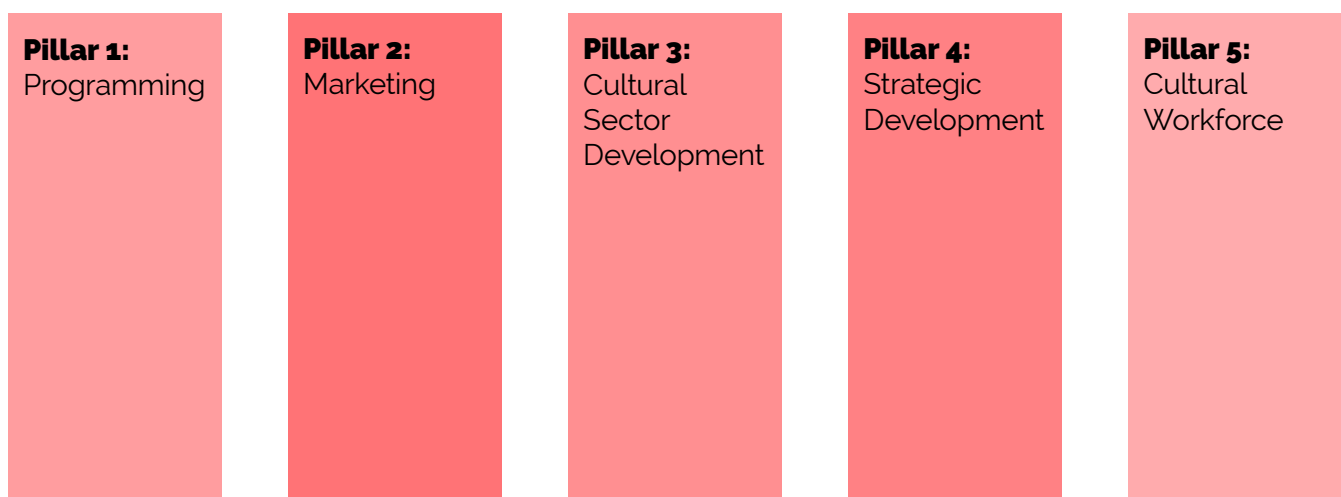
How was the Future Paisley investment used?

The breadth of work encompassed as part of Future Paisley has been considerable. Most Renfrewshire residents will have engaged with or participated in a Future Paisley activity or event, but few would recognise the scope or scale of the entire programme. Some initiatives are not public-facing or involve very targeted interventions with specific communities. Before evaluating the success of the programme, it was crucial to describe simply how Future Paisley investment was used.

The programme included five Pillars of Activity: Programming, Marketing, Cultural Sector Development, Strategic Development, and the Cultural Workforce. These pillars describe specific types of activities that took place, with each project categorised underneath. The pillars of activity sit separately to Future Paisley's five Step Changes, which describe the outcome and impact of the activity.

The five Pillars assist in describing all the activity that was delivered since 2018, where activity took place across Renfrewshire and who participated.

Five Pillars of Activity



Future Paisley budget allocation by activity type



Pillar 1: Programming

Programming is the most public-facing Future Paisley activity and one of the most important elements of the investment, driven by the desire to build and develop local audiences, create a multitude of opportunities for everyone in our communities to 'join in' and to build the region's reputation for hosting and producing excellent and exciting cultural events.

This pillar of activity includes the major **Festivals** and one-off **Events** that took place in Renfrewshire. These high-impact events promoted Renfrewshire as a cultural destination and helped foster community and civic pride for Renfrewshire residents. In some cases, funding was used to grow existing annual festivals, like Halloween and new events like Paisley Book Festival, while other funding was used to host national events like the Royal National Mòd and the Scots Language Awards. All these events served to engage local people, bring new visitors to Renfrewshire, and showcase amazing local talent.

Programming includes a portfolio of original **Productions** and **Commissions** which were supported by Future Paisley. These activities brought critically-acclaimed artists to Renfrewshire to produce new pieces of work. These works included wide-reaching community engagement programmes and co-production as part of their development processes to involve residents and local cultural organisations in shaping and influencing their work and helped identify and share real stories about Renfrewshire with new audiences.

Programming funds also supported **Cultural Engagement Programmes** intended to encourage residents and their families to participate in culture, recognising the considerable benefits to health and wellbeing and attainment. This provided many 'joining-in' points, to inspire habitual participation. Culture was accessible from people's doorsteps. Activity took place in local neighbourhoods across Renfrewshire, regular gaming groups met at libraries, young people had access to creative activities at summer camps, and creative activities populated indoor community spaces in the cold winter months—all supported by Future Paisley. In addition, **Opening Year Programmes** were designed to fuel the opening of the newly-renovated cultural spaces in Paisley town centre, enabling the very best of programming to bring people from across Renfrewshire and beyond to enjoy their new cultural spaces.

The activities included in the programming pillar are varied and unique to Paisley. A snapshot from 2021 includes outdoor performances and a sculpture trail along cycleways between Paisley and Lochwinnoch, a Renfrewshire libraries engagement programme, the second annual Paisley Book Festival, the launch of The Radical Wars audio walking tour highlighting Paisley's pivotal role in the 1820 wars, and the commission and unveiling of Rattle: Little Mother to honour Paisley's children who were tragically lost in the 1929 Glen Cinema Disaster. Each project was grounded in community engagement and co-design, reflecting what people in Renfrewshire considered to be most important to them. From a list of 19 creative disciplines tracked through the Future Paisley monitoring process, only one discipline (archaeology) was not explored by Future Paisley programming activities. The breadth of work within pillar one ensured the investment was dispersed across the cultural sector.

One consistent feature of pillar one activity was co-production. In respect of all events, exhibitions and participation sessions generated specifically under Pillar 1 (Programming activity), 60% included some form of co-production. Of those activities, 71% were co-designed, meaning the plan for the activity—not just the output—was created collaboratively with participants and community members. Co-design was often accomplished through sustained contact between residents and professional artists, providing high-quality cultural experiences for Renfrewshire's communities.

The Other Side of the River—exemplifying Future Paisley's commitment to co-design.

The Other Side of the River brought the theatre production company In Motion to Ferguslie Park, culminating in ten performances across Scotland. In Motion worked with Ferguslie residents to design a variety of cultural projects that informed the production and created wrap-around activity for the show's tour. Co-designed projects included a series of monologues written by residents and a podcast series interviewing Ferguslie Park residents about how they viewed their home. In total, 67 participatory sessions were held with residents.

“It portrayed the Ferguslie I know. Usually, the place is seen in a way that is very different to the reality of the place. As part of a community organisation delivering services, [The Other Side of the River] felt like the show was about our community.”

The Other Side of the River audience feedback

While over half of the programming activities (54%) included events that took place in Paisley town centre, influenced by the town’s hosting of large-scale events such as Paisley Halloween Festival and Paisley Book Festival, the remainder of programming activity was well dispersed across Renfrewshire. A considerable amount of activity had events which took place in Johnstone (12%), Lochwinnoch (12%), and Renfrew (9%), as well as in areas of Paisley outside of the town centre (10%) including in areas of higher deprivation such as Ferguslie Park.

Future Paisley funding was often used for additionality; funds supported new programming within existing cultural events and activity.

“What Edinburgh is to Hogmanay, Paisley is to Halloween.”

Building Paisley’s award-winning Halloween Festival

Renfrewshire Council launched its first Paisley Halloween event in 2014, attracting around 10,000 local attendees. Since then, the event has developed into an annual festival featuring in UK top ten event listings and winning several national event awards. Future Paisley has supported the festival since 2018, enabling an expanded community engagement programme for the festival through an investment of £121,000 over seven years. This further enabled the festival to leverage £150,000 of EventScotland funding as the festival grew, becoming Scotland’s largest Halloween celebration, attracting crowds of over 50,000.



In total, activities delivered under the programming pillar leveraged more than £550,000 of external funding, contributing 14% of total budget and providing a 36% return on investment for Future Paisley. Future Paisley funding supported new programming and enabled Renfrewshire Council and OneRen to secure additional funding from external sources.



Paisley Opera—Paisley Kiss

Programming Budget	
Future Paisley Allocation	£1,527,578
Renfrewshire Council Existing Service Budgets	£1,795,991
External Funding	£550,536
Total budget for all programming activities:	£3,874,105

Programming includes the majority of Future Paisley's public facing work including:

- Festivals
- Events
- Productions
- Commissions
- Opening Year Programming
- Cultural Engagement Programmes

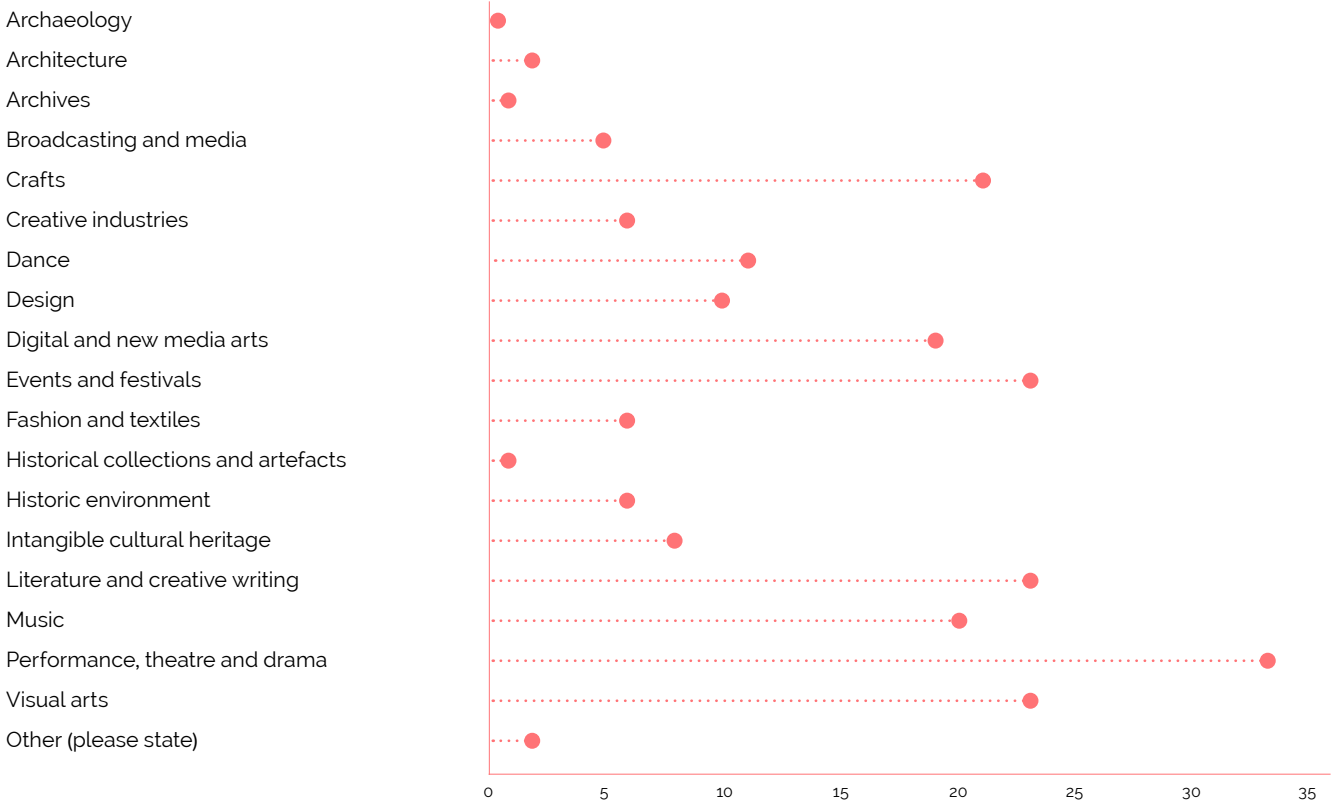
257,537

The total number of participations and attendances generated by programming activity

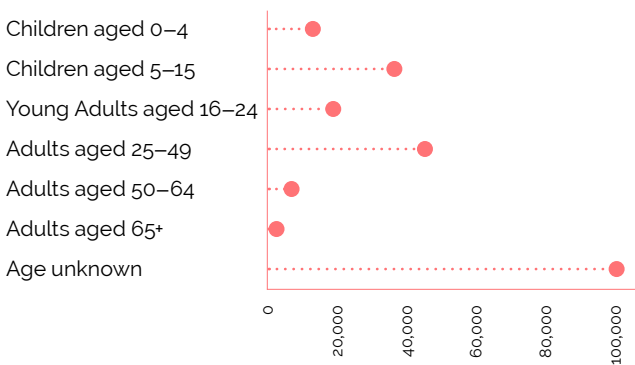
A total of 14% of the programming budget was leveraged from external sources

External funding represents a 36% return on investment from Future Paisley's original contribution

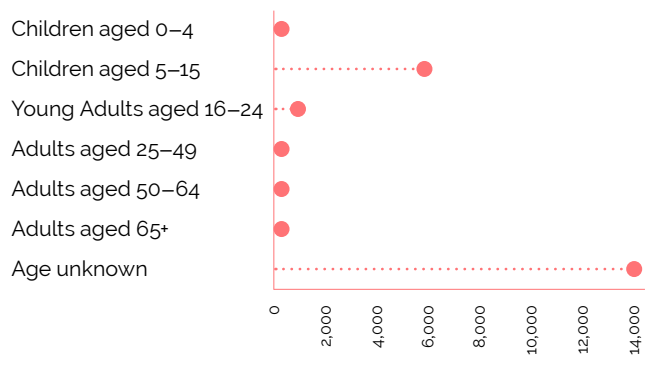
Types of Activities



Attendances by age



Participations by age



Programming activities generated **2,149** cultural events, exhibitions, and opportunities for cultural participation In Renfrewshire

Performances: an act of presenting a play, concert, or other form of entertainment

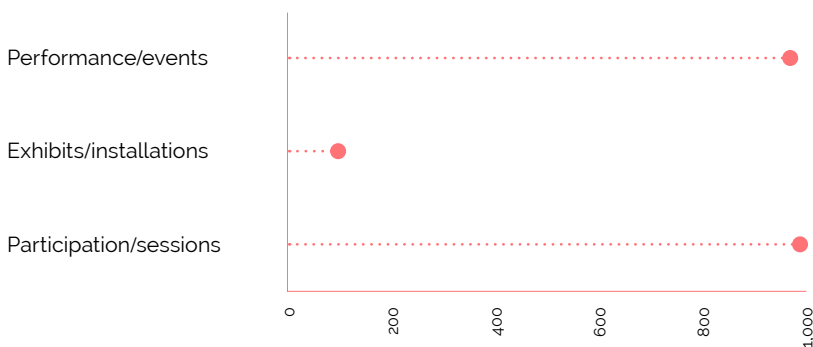
Participation: a cooperative effort to give input, make decisions, resolve issues, and assign actions together

Event: a planned public or social occasion, something which happens at a particular time, to bring people together

Installation: a permanent art work or cultural experience that is installed in a community space

Exhibition: a temporary asynchronous showcase of work, ideas or creativity, in physical or online spaces

Total number of outputs from programming activity



Pillar 2: Marketing

The activities in this pillar can be split into two key functions: the development of a brand, strategies, and promotional assets for **marketing Paisley and Renfrewshire** to the public, and **data commissions** and **visitor and cultural insight** projects that were funded to provide data and insights to influence the decisions made for marketing and visitor engagement.

The primary activity of this pillar is the Paisley place brand, launched in 2018 with funding from Future Paisley. Paisley was created as a response to Paisley: The Untold Story which promised a town brand and publicity strategy and was progressed as an action in Paisley's bid to be UK City of Culture in 2021. Outdated, negative perceptions of Paisley were considered a barrier to visitors and investment; challenging and changing these perceptions was confirmed as a strategic priority through the region's economic strategy.

Prior to the launch, Renfrewshire did not have an established visitor presence. Search results for "Paisley", "Visit Paisley", or "Visit Renfrewshire" all showed general travel sites like TripAdvisor or Expedia. These sites focus on the most popular attractions within a region, excluding major events and festivals, and limiting exposure for Paisley's emerging visitor attractions and the breadth of the visitor offer across the wider region.

The launch of the brand included the establishment of a new website www.paisley.is, social media channels, marketing materials, and a large-scale media push for positive stories about Paisley and the wider Renfrewshire region. This activity, delivered by Renfrewshire Council's marketing and communications service, has seen a huge return on investment. Paisley activity was funded by an assigned council budget and Future Paisley funding. The total budget investment since 2018 is £460,852. This includes £124,300 Future Paisley funding and a funding award of £56,000 from VisitScotland in 2021/2022. With this investment, Paisley has generated over 1.5 billion opportunities to see and hear positive things about the place through media coverage and reached over 17.7 million through social media. The Paisley website quickly established itself as a valuable source of visitor inspiration for Renfrewshire and is home to itineraries, walking routes, blog posts, event listings, maps, historical information, family days out and a list of microadventures in the region. It has been visited by more than two million unique users and has received 2.6 million page views to date.

Paisley was the largest investment in this pillar but not the sole marketing activity. Significant investment went into preparing the marketing strategy for the reopening of Paisley Museum and resource was allocated to OneRen to develop its initial marketing approach and new brand identities for Paisley Town Hall, Paisley Central Library, Paisley Museum, and Paisley Arts Centre.

Underpinning marketing investment was information gained through research and visitor data commissions and cultural insights. These activities accounted for 35% of the Marketing pillar's budget and provided invaluable insight which, ultimately, led to the most productive use of funding.

Determining place strategy—UNESCO Creative City

In 2019, a report was commissioned to investigate the merits and value of an application to join the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. While the report was able to identify several strengths of Renfrewshire's approach to cultural regeneration which aligned it with the Creative Cities Network, it also identified areas which would make Paisley's application unlikely to be accepted. Through this research, the council was able to choose to focus time and funds elsewhere on projects like Paisley and relationships with the OECD, the Academy of Urbanism and Scotland's Towns Partnership which had greater impact.



Data commissions are also providing the council and the Future Paisley Partnership with data that can be used to compare regional visitor performance across Scotland. This data is crucial for monitoring continued post-pandemic recovery, sector performance and the impact of the region's tourism action plan. This data will be particularly important in the years following Future Paisley, to identify the economic impact of the reopening of Paisley Museum and the town's cultural venues.

Overall, the investment made in marketing activities was modest in comparison to the other pillars of activity for Future Paisley. The Paisley brand and publicity strategy have already demonstrated the positive impact this investment has had on increasing Renfrewshire's media profile and reach. The impact of other projects within this category are not yet known and will be understood after Paisley Museum has reopened. With the reopening and marketing of Paisley's cultural venues, the use of data to track visitor numbers and build audiences will continue to be a priority, as will Paisley's role as a campaign brand. The independent review of the impact of Paisley provides clear recommendations for its role in continuing to raise the profile of Paisley and tell the story of the area's ongoing transformation.

Marketing Budget	
Future Paisley Allocation	£756,364
Renfrewshire Council Existing Service Budgets	£80,000
External Funding	£308,000
Total budget for marketing activities:	£1,144,364

External funding represents a **41%** return on investment from Future Paisley's original investment

A total of **27%** of the marketing budget was leveraged from external sources

Renfrewshire's new destination marketing brand has generated over **1.5 billion** opportunities to see and hear positive things about Renfrewshire

Pillar 3: Cultural Sector Development

The third pillar of activity in the Future Paisley portfolio was focused on strengthening Renfrewshire's cultural sector. A key aim of the UK City of Culture bid was to drive growth and sustainability, support shared ownership of cultural strategy and disperse resource beyond public organisations. Renfrewshire's cultural sector was identified as vibrant but fragile, with a need for Future Paisley to support local artists and cultural organisations in both bespoke and flexible ways to enable them to sustain and grow beyond the programme's investment. This pillar was a major priority and represented the second largest financial commitment from Future Paisley.

Most of the funding for this pillar supported **Cultural Funding** grants. From 2016 to 2024, Renfrewshire Council awarded £1,633,241 in grants through the Culture, Heritage, and Events Fund otherwise known as CHEF. This fund was initially created during Paisley's bid to be UK City of Culture 2021 and continued under Future Paisley. The purpose of CHEF was to raise cultural ambition and stimulate new cultural, heritage and events activity, aiming to create long-lasting cultural, economic, and social transformation in Renfrewshire. Projects funded through CHEF ranged from festivals to original artwork and full operatic productions and were delivered across Renfrewshire.

Similarly, the Cultural Organisation Development Fund (CODF), which awarded £663,102 in grants, was designed to accommodate the unique business needs of Renfrewshire's cultural sector. Unlike other business development grants, CODF was a non-prescriptive fund and allowed recipients to design their own approach to business development to suit their organisation. Over the course of the Future Paisley programme, 23 CODF grants have supported 14 organisations, three of which have changed from being an unincorporated club or Community Interest Company into a charitable organisation, and two have started the process of undertaking large-scale building development projects to support their growing portfolio of work¹. These cultural organisations are now more established in the region and can strongly contribute to Renfrewshire's cultural economy. In their own words, funding through Future Paisley has been 'critical to their development'.

¹ See Appendix 2f for a full analysis of CODF.

In 2020, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, Renfrewshire Council pivoted funds into the Renfrewshire Cultural Recovery and Renewal Fund (RCRRF). This fund was divided into three strands: a grant to support individual artists (Arts Development Grant), a grant for organisations (Cultural Organisation Support), and a grant to support the creation of work that could improve the public realm and be enjoyed by residents as lockdown restrictions lifted (Town Centre and Neighbourhood Creative Installation). These grants had different intended outputs from CHEF and CODF, and allowed Future Paisley's investment to remain agile in the face of rapidly-changing circumstances.

Funding through Future Paisley was intended to support the sector with upskilling and to provide the tools to develop long-term sustainable funding streams, and to be more accessible for people and organisations at all levels. For example, CHEF was open to organisations with a legal status as well as to individual artists, makers, and community groups. This ensured the widest possible eligibility and removed barriers for individual artists or unincorporated clubs who would be interested in applying.

Future Paisley also provided match-funding for the national grant programme, Visual Arts and Craft Maker Awards (VACMA), as well as funding for grant programmes increasing access to arts for people who are impacted by inequalities, enabling further support to be provided across Renfrewshire.

Between 2016 and 2024, Renfrewshire awarded 368 grants and supported 225 organisations—including 49 independent artists and 29 unincorporated clubs, through cultural funding programmes, totalling just under £2.7 million². These grants were funded through Future Paisley, through existing council service budgets, and through partnerships with external funding organisations like Creative Scotland. The grant programmes funded and administered by Future Paisley created a comprehensive cultural funding ecosystem which was suited to Renfrewshire's specific needs.

² Cultural Funding Overview presented at the Future Paisley Partnership Board 06 December 2023.

In addition to funding programmes, Future Paisley recognised the cultural sector is reliant on a regular supply of freelance artists. To help connect freelance artists with work opportunities and develop early career artists emerging in Renfrewshire, Future Paisley funded several programmes offering **Artist Support**. Future Paisley investment enabled artform specialists from OneRen to host networking and meet-up groups for music, theatre, film, and visual arts, leading to initiatives such as the POP Newsletter for sharing paid creative opportunities with artists and the monthly Sma'sh Hits! open-mic nights for musicians to test new music.

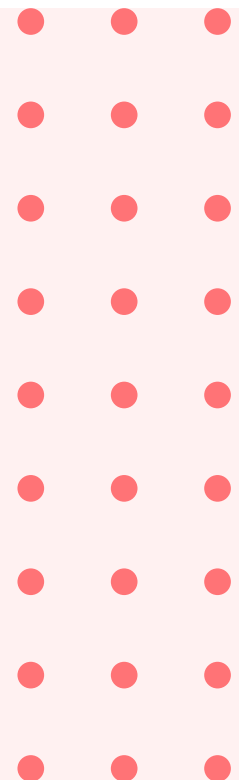
Future Paisley funding has helped develop and strengthen relationships with and between Renfrewshire's cultural and creative communities, to support the freelance community to make connections, and to help local arts organisations further establish themselves in Renfrewshire.

In addition, the conditions created in Renfrewshire are attracting artists and cultural organisations to re-locate their practice to Renfrewshire from other parts of Scotland.

Paisley Opera's CHEF Award—connecting community singers with professional expertise.

Paisley Opera is a local cultural organisation that connects with the community through operatic singing and productions of classic operas. As their "Passion Not Posh" tagline implies, Paisley Opera is focused on making opera accessible and meaningful to people in the community—something they accomplish by performing in a variety of community settings and by staging their productions in the familiar scene of Renfrewshire.

In CHEF Round 12, Paisley Opera received funding to support their performance of Verdi's Macbeth, an operatic retelling of Shakespeare's classic play. The production featured the community chorus singing alongside professional performers from the Scottish Opera and was accompanied by the Scottish Opera orchestra. Paisley Opera also collaborated with local dance group Right2Dance to include movement and dance in the final production. Community members benefitted from professional guidance throughout the performance process, culminating in two sold-out performances in Paisley Town Hall.



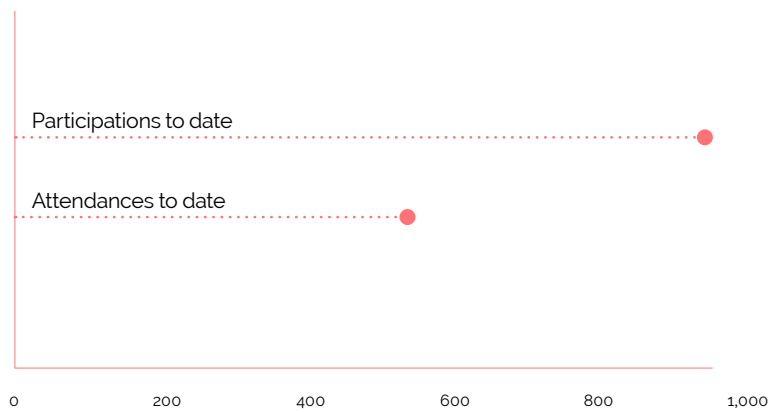
Cultural Sector Development Budget	
Future Paisley Allocation	£2,171,730
Renfrewshire Council Existing Service Budgets	£469,728
External Funding	£40,477
Total for Creative Industries Development activity:	£2,681,935

A total of **2%** of the Cultural Sector Development budget was leveraged from external sources

External funding represents a **2%** return on investment from Future Paisley's original investment

Artist engagement with networking and development

One Ren and Renfrewshire Council have hosted **31** events and **125** participation sessions for local artists to network and develop their practice



£2,680,468.93

The total amount awarded to local artists and community organisations through cultural funding grants

225

The number of unique organisations and artists funded through Cultural Sector Development grants

368

The number of funding grants distributed through Cultural Sector Development grant programmes



Pillar 4: Strategic Development

Much of Future Paisley activity was intended to provide an initial boost in support to help build Renfrewshire's reputation as a cultural destination and a place where original work is produced. The Programming pillar of work provided new opportunities and additionality to existing activities; Marketing covered the one-off development costs for place branding and marketing Paisley's new cultural venues; and Sector Support activities served to strengthen cultural organisations, freelance artists and community organisations, and create an independently functioning cultural sector. The projects not captured by the previous pillars are projects with longer-term goals and targeted interventions focused on tackling health and wellbeing and social issues and building sustainable partnerships in Renfrewshire. These initiatives were created to influence system change, to help drive prevention and to change how core services are delivered. Within this pillar, co-created programmes and partnerships have influenced change in practice through building a deeper connectivity with, and understanding of, community need. These activities are included within the Strategic Development pillar.

Many of the projects involved **embedding arts and cultural practice in local services** such as health and social care, criminal justice programmes, youth services, economic regeneration, and education. Rather than a 'nice to have', these projects embed arts and culture in core service delivery, helping the council and partners to achieve their strategic outcomes and deliver wellbeing benefits and inclusion. Projects were intensive, working with small groups of individuals experiencing similar challenges.

Several projects added value to wider council priorities such as The Promise or Culture, Arts, Health, and Social Care (CAHSC). These projects included programming, but also featured targeted investments seeking to generate long-term impact within their respective areas of work. For CAHSC, this included the creation of a training programme which served as a knowledge exchange between the third-sector and arts practitioners. For The Promise, this included creating young activist groups supporting the voices of care-experienced young people in the policy sphere.

Other activities consisted of new long-lasting **Partnerships** that were formed with external organisations. These partnerships created strong connections between Renfrewshire communities and arts professionals, or local and national organisations involved in supporting and working with Renfrewshire's cultural sector. This included several projects focused on connecting young people with arts and cultural opportunities. Aspects of these activities may have included programming or supporting creative organisations, but they were primarily focused on piloting new initiatives and establishing ongoing relationships.

Castlehead School of Creativity³, a partnership between Castlehead High School and The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) explored how studio-based pedagogy can be incorporated into secondary-school education. The partnership created new cultural programming for young people attending Castlehead, such as the annual Creativity Week, and several new accredited courses and qualifications for pupils have been launched as part of the programme. This included the Creative Thinking course, designed by Daydream Believers and supported by organisations such as LEGO and The Ellen McArthur Foundation. The partnership also created a system for increased communication between institutions. For example, during the pandemic, the partnership enabled GSA and Castlehead to adapt quickly, creating opportunities to develop new curriculum resources and influencing a national conversation about higher education admissions processes for student impacted by the lockdown.

A key feature across all activity within the Strategic Development pillar was the desire to increase access to culture. All projects within the pillar targeted specific protected characteristics or disadvantaged groups within the community—groups most likely to face barriers when accessing arts and cultural activities. Future Paisley was able to provide targeted funding to establish accessible and inclusive routes for such groups. The success to which this was achieved for all groups is addressed later in the evaluation.

³ A full evaluation of Castlehead School of Creativity can be found in Appendix 2b.

Strategic Development Budget	
Future Paisley Allocation	£966,900
Renfrewshire Council Existing Service Budgets	£0
External Funding	£163,655
Total for Strategic Development activity:	£1,130,555

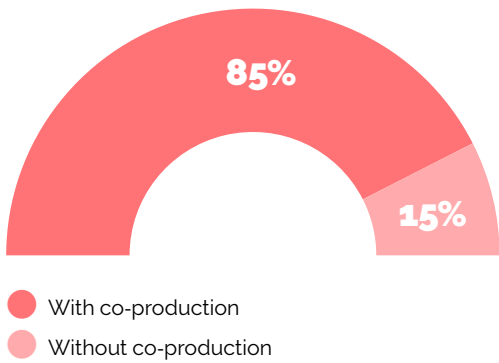
A total of **14%** of the Strategic Development budget was leveraged from external sources

External funding represents a **17%** return on investment from Future Paisley's original investment

Many of these outputs included sustained contact with Renfrewshire residents and professional artists over an extended period of time. These repeat encounters led to a total of **37,191** participations and attendances

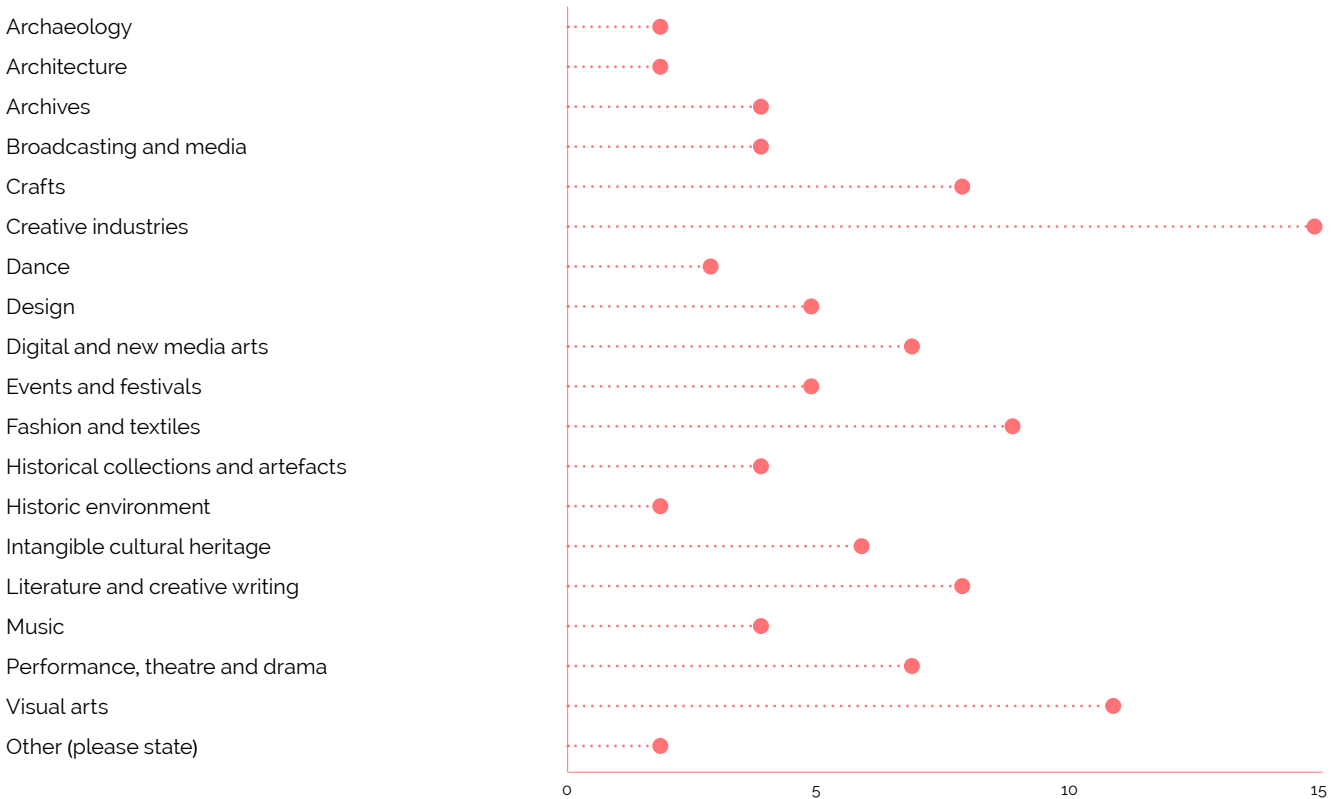
Strategic Development activities generated a total of **2,720** performances events, exhibition, and cultural participation opportunities in Renfrewshire

Activities with Co-Production



85% of strategic development activities were either co-produced with an arts organisation or strategic service, or directly with community members and participants

Strategic development activity types



Pillar 5: Cultural Workforce

Underpinning the work across the previous Pillars of Activity is the fifth Pillar, Renfrewshire's Cultural Workforce.

Significant investment of £3,447,592 was made to grow and develop cultural workforce in the council and OneRen, recognising the need for experienced cultural practitioners to deliver cultural strategy, partnerships, tourism development, sector growth, and the wider cultural regeneration agenda. This included the development of additional arts roles within the team based in OneRen and resource to deliver cultural activity across health and social care, cultural events programming, and creative learning. It also supported temporary resource required to drive and oversee the Future Paisley programme between 2018 and 2024.

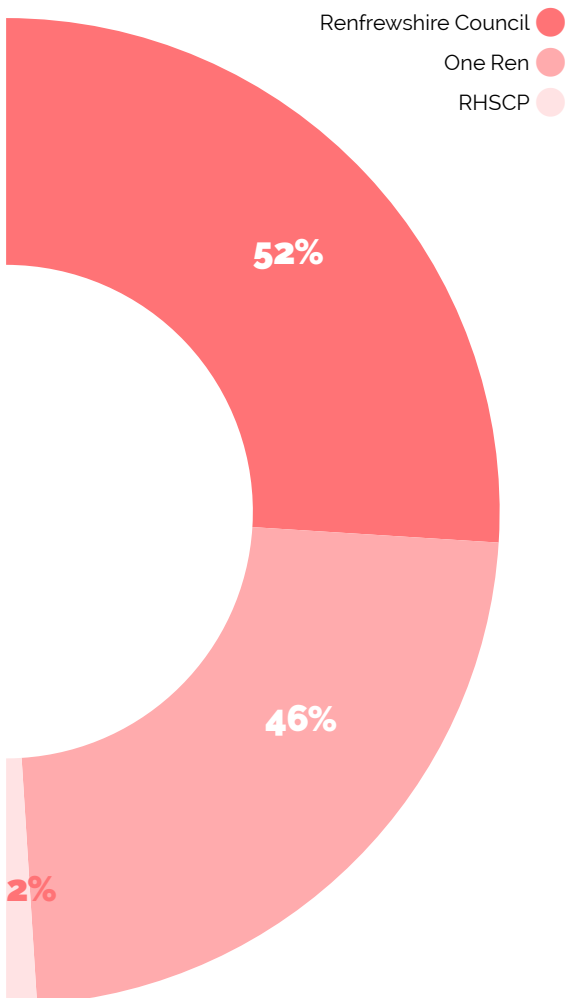
These roles attracted highly experienced cultural practitioners with significant national profile and networks to Renfrewshire, increasing the region's profile and reach.

A total of 21 posts were funded through Future Paisley, with 11 of those posts funded permanently.

Operational costs incurred in the delivery of the Future Paisley programme are included in this pillar. This included programme administration costs and fees and artist payouts for programmes cancelled due to the pandemic.

Cultural Workforce Budget	
Future Paisley Allocation	£3,519,601
Renfrewshire Council Existing Service Budgets	£0
External Funding	£77,256
Total for Strategic Development activity:	£3,596,857

Managing organisation for culture posts



Two posts within Renfrewshire Council will be funded permanently, with nine posts remaining at OneRen, and one post continuing to be based in Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership. Five temporary posts will conclude in 2025.

External funding represents a 2% return on investment from Future Paisley’s original investment

A total of 2% of the Cultural Workforce budget was leveraged from external sources

**Culture is alive.
It lives,
breathes,
sings,
dances,
performs,
interacts,
entertains.**

What was the Impact of Future Paisley?

The profile of Future Paisley has grown nationally since 2018 with several programme projects attracting national media attention and interest from other towns and cities. There is ongoing interest in how the programme is being monitored and evaluated, its contribution to the step changes initially envisaged as part of the UK City of Culture competition, and the next steps for the programme as the current funding period closes.

The previous chapter outlined the types of activities funded through Future Paisley as well as the direct outputs from the programme such as attendance and participation data. However, these outputs alone do not illustrate the impact of the programme and its success so far in delivering social and economic change for the region. The evaluation also considers data in relation to the strategic objectives of the programme to demonstrate the impact programmes had on residents, on the region, and on Renfrewshire's relationships beyond its own geographical boundaries. It is important to note it is not yet possible to determine impact across all projects and activities. As previously highlighted, several projects are due to complete in 2025, the most significant being Paisley Museum, which is anticipated to generate a large increase in visitor numbers to Renfrewshire, bringing its own economic and social impacts.

Like all major investments by the council, Future Paisley was guided by a set of goals which align with the council's overarching strategic plans⁴. These strategic objectives were called the **Five Step Changes**, each underpinned by three **Strategic Outcomes** which identify the specific circumstances to be achieved to progress the intended step change. They break the Step Changes into explicit goals with more targeted areas of impact and defined metrics for success. This enables progress to be measured and evaluated. This framework has guided planning and investment decisions for the Future Paisley Partnership Board and Steering Group.

The Future Paisley Evaluation Framework⁵:

⁴ Future Paisley ran during the period of two different Council Plans, the Renfrewshire Council Plan 2017–2022 and the Renfrewshire Council Plan 2022–2027.

⁵ Available in Appendix 3b.

Step Changes	
<p>1. Radically change Paisley’s image and reputation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased civic pride ● Paisley recognised as a destination of choice ● More people visit Paisley attractions and events
<p>2. Raise prosperity and increase wellbeing in our communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cultural participation contributes to enhanced mental health and reduced loneliness in our communities ● Children and young people thrive through everyday access to arts and culture ● Cultural engagement and programme are dispersed across Renfrewshire
<p>3. Paisley will be recognised for its cultural innovation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Renfrewshire has a thriving, resilient and diverse cultural sector ● Innovation in programming leads to wider engagement by local and national audiences ● Community-led production and programming increases cultural participation and activism across Renfrewshire
<p>4. Transform Paisley into a vibrant town centre</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paisley town centre is revitalised through the opening of major cultural venues and attractions ● Paisley’s town centre is revitalised through improvements to the public realm ● Paisley town centre is animated by cultural production and participation
<p>5. Develop a sustainable and resilient creative economy in Renfrewshire</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organisations and sole traders working in the creative economy develop sustainable and resilient business models ● Pathways into employment and progression routes in local tourism, cultural and creative sectors are established ● More people are employed in tourism and the cultural and creative sector as Renfrewshire recovers from the pandemic

Most activities in the Future Paisley programme contribute to multiple step changes. For example, the Glen Cinema Commission contributed to three strategic outcomes across three different step changes. One of these outcomes related to civic pride and marking a significant moment in Renfrewshire's history. The others related to co-design and the process of community-led engagement alongside animating Paisley town centre.

This part of the evaluation will review each step change and address how the strategic outcomes have been met. Throughout this chapter, a series of Programme Highlights will be provided to bring to life how individual projects contributed to the intended Step Changes, to illustrate how a singular project can accomplish multiple strategic objectives, and to showcase some of the unique and innovative approaches the programme has taken to do so.

Step Change 1: Radically change Paisley's image and reputation in Scotland, the UK and internationally

Future Paisley's first Step Change focused on addressing outdated perceptions of Paisley, identified as having a negative impact on the wider region. For years, Paisley was used as shorthand for UK high-street decline and poverty. This impacted the town's ability to attract investment, but more profoundly placed a burden on local people, who felt stigmatised by living in a place perceived as one no one should visit. Place partners wanted to continue to vigorously challenge this out-dated area image post bid, building on the city of culture campaign, celebrated as already having considerable impact on how Paisley was portrayed in the national media.

The benefits of this Step Change were considered twofold; by creating a consistent and positive perception of Paisley, the town would attract investment, serve as a visitor gateway to the rest of Renfrewshire and contribute meaningfully to boost the region's tourism economy while boosting civic pride and confidence across all the town's communities.

Strategic Outcome: Increased civic pride

Supporting the Council Plan:

Place—Demonstrating that Renfrewshire is a great place to grow up, it's a place of opportunity for those that live and work here, and it's a brilliant place for a day out.

Indicators:

- Positive news coverage of Renfrewshire
- Evidence of Renfrewshire's place brand being co-produced with residents
- Surveys and feedback from residents show an improved perception of Paisley and Renfrewshire

Civic pride is a feeling of belonging to a community or place where people live. This outcome recognised that people are at the heart of a vibrant place and that building civic pride is an essential part of quality of life and helps to drive participation. Civic pride can mean different things to different people, but it will include activism, volunteering, participating in activities and events that improve the town, shopping locally and advocating for Paisley.

Through Future Paisley, the aim was to create reasons for local people to feel proud of their place and to provide a national platform for residents, the cultural sector, and locally-based businesses to amplify their success stories.

Through the place brand Paisley, there has been a transformational increase in positive media coverage for the town and the wider region. Over 1.5 billion opportunities to see or hear (OTSH) something positive about Renfrewshire were generated from 2018 to 2024. This is against a baseline of 15 million OTSH in 2015, increasing to 72 million in 2016 due to the launch of the UKCoC bid campaign. There has been consistent local and national coverage of the changes being delivered to improve the fabric of the town, of the town's event programme, and a host of other activities being delivered by partners and Future Paisley. This has extended to digital coverage, broadcasting, and print media.

Local people and businesses were directly involved in shaping Paisley's place brand and digital presence. Over 1,000 residents submitted ideas, inspiration, and artwork to influence the design of the brand, and community groups have been crucial collaborators. The way the region is presented to the world has been driven by local voices, creating an authentic message about what is great about the place.

Through the dedicated publicity strategy, development of a brand identity and marketing campaign, major investment programmes and through the growth of Renfrewshire's event programme, perceptions of Paisley have changed for the better. In the 2023 Paisley Halloween Festival evaluation, 97% of respondents agreed they feel more positive toward Paisley than they used to. More than 90% agreed they have heard or seen something positive about Paisley and that there is more going on in Paisley these days. There has been a measurable change in how residents view Paisley since the start of the investment.

Strategic Outcome: Paisley positioned as a destination of choice

Supporting the Council Plan:

Place—Demonstrating that Renfrewshire is a great place to grow up, it's a place of opportunity for those that live and work here, and it's a brilliant place for a day out.

Indicators:

- Increased awareness of visitor options in Paisley and Renfrewshire
- Digital metrics demonstrate increased engagement with Renfrewshire's visitor marketing
- National news coverage of Renfrewshire as a visitor destination

This outcome relates to place attractiveness and how effective we have been at changing perceptions of Paisley. By destination of choice, we mean that Paisley is chosen by visitors, relocators and investors as a place to spend their time and money, above other destinations, and that media coverage of the region is broadly positive. Responding to this outcome has involved developing a new brand, promoting area assets and investments, designing and promoting place sampling opportunities such as events, and using networks of influencers and word-of-mouth advocates to reinforce place marketing. This relies on consistent marketing campaigns, PR and events targeted at prospective visitors, investors, and the media.

Future Paisley funded campaigns to attract visitors and maintain visitor interest during the closure of the town's main attractions. Campaigns were delivered regionally and nationally, showcasing the brand and hero photography on high-impact sites across central Scotland. Marketing materials were developed to enable Paisley's visitor offer to be promoted across Scotland for the first time.

Awareness of the resulting Paisley destination brand is high, rising from an average of 39% in 2018 to 65% in 2022. The Paisley social media channels and Paisley website have had considerable traffic, with more than two million unique users visiting the website and more than 17 million impressions on social media during the first six years of the brand. Seasonal visitor campaigns have found an audience through these channels and through marketing campaigns, including the new summer campaign which launched in 2022—raising the profile and awareness of Paisley and Renfrewshire and positioning Paisley and Renfrewshire as a destination of choice for day visitors. The summer campaign generated 5.1 million opportunities to see or hear something positive about Renfrewshire.

National media regularly covered news stories and features about projects in Renfrewshire. Outlets like the BBC, STV, Radio 4, The Guardian, The Sunday Times, Scotsman, and The Art Newspaper have all written about Future Paisley funded projects and Paisley has been featured in several articles ranking cultural destinations in the UK, and on University Challenge: "this large town, with a population of around 75,000, the Academy praised for its approach to town centre regeneration and addressing social deprivation". These messages have had a significant reach, sharing the work of Future Paisley beyond Renfrewshire.

Digital metrics and the ongoing recognition of Renfrewshire and Paisley as cultural destinations have demonstrated the impact Future Paisley has had on wider perceptions of the region.

Programme Highlight: Paisley

Prior to Future Paisley, Renfrewshire had no established place marketing brand. The Paisley brand was launched in March 2018, and sought to change perceptions of Paisley through storytelling and positioning the town as the visitor gateway to wider Renfrewshire.

Renfrewshire Council's Marketing and Communications team worked with a variety of industry partners to develop Paisley. The branding and new website help visitors understand everything Renfrewshire has to offer—and how they can access it.

A full evaluation of Paisley can be found in Appendix 2a.

Strategic Outcome: More people visit Paisley attractions and events

Supporting the Council Plan:

Place—Demonstrating that Renfrewshire is a great place to grow up, it's a place of opportunity for those that live and work here, and it's a brilliant place for a day out.

Indicators:

- Attendance at Paisley's signature events increase
- External events and festivals choose to host in Paisley
- National visitor data demonstrates Paisley is growing annual visitor figures

Future Paisley improved Renfrewshire's visitor offer through investment in events, cultural venues, and visitor marketing. More visitors attend events and local attractions, in turn generating positive economic impact. Visitors included local people choosing to remain in Renfrewshire to attend an event or visit an attraction, day visitors from elsewhere in Scotland, and international tourists who spend time in Renfrewshire or use Renfrewshire as a 'basecamp' for other destinations.

An important driver of increased visitor numbers was boosted investment in Paisley's signature events by Future Paisley. Hosting large-scale annual events and festivals has attracted a large number of visitors to sample the region and bring together members of the community, driving footfall in Paisley's town centre and raising awareness of the other visitor options in the region. Attendance at Paisley Halloween Festival, one of the largest Halloween festivals in the UK and Paisley's premiere signature event, rose from 17,000 in 2016 to 50,000 in 2023, generating a combined economic impact of £6.416 million, with Future Paisley funding supporting Renfrewshire-wide community engagement and co-design.

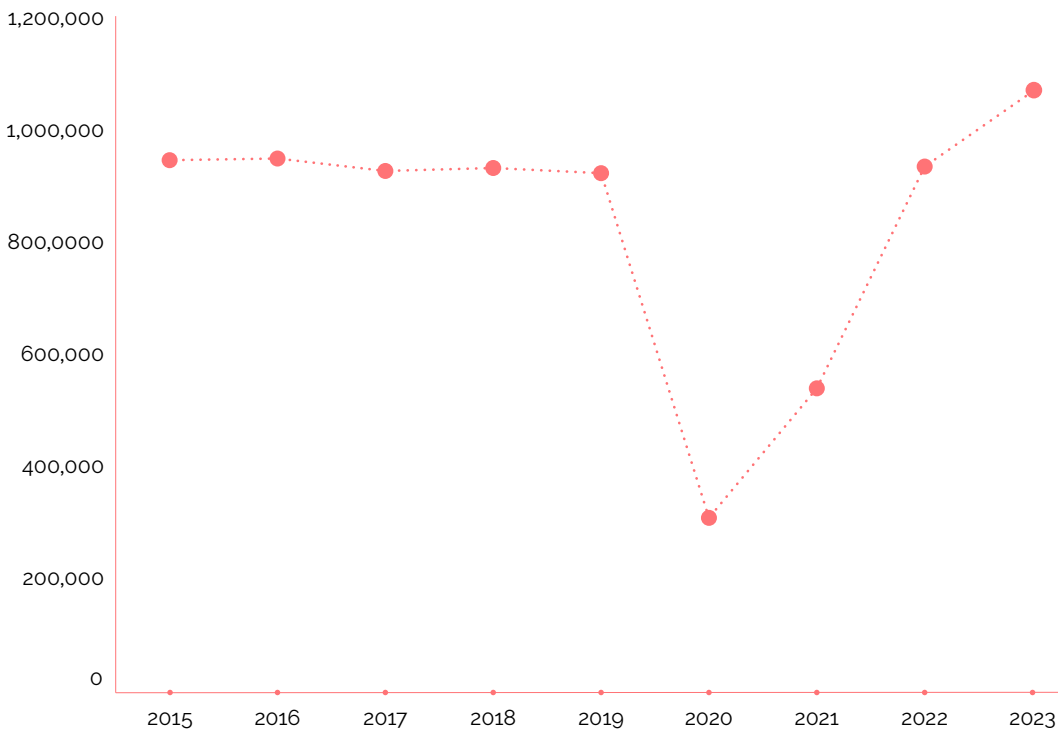
The Paisley Book Festival, another signature event for the region, was launched as part of the Future Paisley programme. The festival has consistently sold more than 1,500 tickets for the main programme and has substantially grown its schools' programmes from 280 pupils in the first year to 1,650 in 2023. In addition to these annual events, standalone events such as the Royal National Mòd, which brought in approximately 8,000 audience members and attendees, generating £700,000 in visitor spending and £2.5 million in economic impact, have further helped to bring footfall to Paisley's town centre. Collaborating with local organisations for performances and bringing local vendors to the events showcased the best of what the region has to offer, while partnerships with national promoters and producers provided access to new visitor audiences.

Outside of festivals and events, Renfrewshire has grown the number of visitors to its outdoor attractions. Through the pandemic, outdoor spaces became crucial spaces for maintaining wellbeing and socialising, the impact of which can be seen in Renfrewshire's visitor and tourism data. For example, according to data reported to the Moffat Centre, Gleniffer Braes Country Park had a 30% rise in visitor numbers between 2019 and 2020 and maintained a similarly high number of visitors for 2021. While this change in behaviour cannot be solely attributed to Future Paisley, promoting Renfrewshire's natural assets, was consistently driven by Paisley, which pivoted during Covid to target a local audience and encourage engagement with outdoors attractions. The campaigns delivered at this time drove an increase in visits to Renfrewshire's webpages for those specifically seeking family days out and microadventures.

Despite the dip in overall visitor numbers during the pandemic, including figures for footfall in town centres, stays in accommodation, and attendance at cultural venues, Renfrewshire has successfully overtaken the number of annual visitors it had pre-pandemic and is on a growth trajectory, outperforming the recovery of other regions in the UK⁶.

⁶ According to STEAM data from Global Tourism Solutions, 2023.

Renfrewshire visitors



Data commissions with the Moffat Centre and STEAM have been commissioned to track and understand Renfrewshire's visitor economy and tourism sector, funded by Future Paisley. This data is required to support and understand the impact of Renfrewshire's Tourism Action Plan and the performance of the sector. The total cumulative benefits of investment, including festivals and events and its impact on annual visitor numbers, won't be realised until key visitor attractions have reopened. The funded data commissions will be key to monitoring the success of the new cultural venues, and the relationships established with Moffat Centre and STEAM will continue beyond the Future Paisley funding period. Further analysis of visitor numbers will be completed in 2025 after Paisley's cultural venues and museum have had time to complete their reopening plans.

Step Change 2: Raise prosperity and increase wellbeing in our communities

Research has indicated arts and culture have the potential to build skills that can materially improve peoples' lives⁷ and participation in culture has a positive impact on participants mental wellbeing⁸. Future Paisley's second Step Change was therefore focused on arts and culture as levers to improve health and wellbeing for people living in Renfrewshire, especially for children and young people, those struggling with social isolation, and those living with the impacts of inequality.

Future Paisley activity specifically targeted nine communities and groups with protected characteristics. These groups were:

- Children and young people
- Care-experienced children and young people and/or young carers
- Older people
- Disabled people or people experiencing long-term ill health (including physical or mental health)
- People experiencing social isolation or loneliness
- People from minority ethnic communities
- Lesbians, gay men, transgender and bisexual people
- People living in poverty
- People living in the 20% most deprived areas according to SIMD statistics

The investment sought to increase the amount of cultural activities available to the groups above and improve their access to arts and culture programming. This has required a combination of new programming and methods to understand and remove barriers to participation. To engage with adults who access health and social care services, a working group combining senior practitioners in health, social care, the third sector and culture and the arts, was established from the outset of the development of the UK City of Culture bidding process. Their purpose was to help shape the cultural programme for the local community. The working group evolved post-bid, and the Culture, Arts, Health and Social Care (CAHSC) Steering Group was created and brought stakeholders across art, culture, and health and social care together to collaborate on innovative approaches to improving wellbeing through cultural participation for adults and older people.

⁷ The Role of Arts and Culture in Lifting Communities Out of Poverty: A Review of Evidence (uws.ac.uk)

⁸ The Social Value of Community Events: A Literature Review (uws.ac.uk)

Strategic Outcome: Cultural participation contributes to enhanced mental health and reduced loneliness in our communities

Supporting the Council Plan:

Fair—Protecting, supporting and nurturing children, families and people who are vulnerable, with particular focus on early intervention and mental health and wellbeing, to ensure positive outcomes.

Indicators:

- Number of participations in cultural activity designed to improve wellbeing
- Demographics of participants
- Feedback from participants that references improved health and wellbeing

When we refer to cultural participation we mean participation across all art forms—facilitated by professional artists and cultural organisations. Our intention was to delivery activity that had a demonstratable positive impact on the mental health and wellbeing of those taking part. Activity was targeted at people who were experiencing isolation and barriers to participation and aimed to demonstrate new experiences and taking part had a positive impact on improving mental health and reducing loneliness, expressing feelings, self-worth, functional ability, and quality of life.

Measuring this across the population, however, is challenging. Metrics like the number of mental health diagnoses or prescriptions of medications which could be available through the NHS are not reliable indicators of improved mental health through cultural participation or any one action. In particular, the impact of Covid-19 (and lockdown) on the provision of health services and on the mental wellbeing of the population, has impacted metrics used to evidence what benefits can be solely attributed to participation in arts and cultural activity. Therefore, the best way to evaluate how well Future Paisley achieved this Strategic Outcome is through participant feedback and qualitative evidence from projects delivered on the ground and designed to to decrease loneliness and improve wellbeing. Evidence has been collected through Project Lead reporting and case studies to illustrate personal experiences, with around 42,929 participations in Future Paisley funded projects specifically designed to boost mental health and reduce loneliness.

One initiative, designed to connect people to cultural activity and reduce loneliness was Future Paisley's investment to build and test social prescribing—a referral system for NHS patients identified as suffering from loneliness or low mood. By creating a dedicated co-ordination post, Community Link workers and GPs were able to link patients with a wide variety of cultural activities delivered by groups and organisations across Renfrewshire, including OneRen's arts and culture programmes. The co-ordination post, based within OneRen, helped to integrate various initiatives, building knowledge of activity taking place in Renfrewshire, and to identify where there were gaps in provision or where accessibility was a problem. The key requirement was to develop an understanding of the interests of each patient and ensuring a match with a suitable local group or activity. One participant described starting the programme in the "*worst imaginable health state*" and left the programme feeling well and more connected with their community. They stated, "*I'm glad I came to [meet the Social Prescribing Coordinator], otherwise I would have never had the confidence to attend the other sessions, I am happy where I am at.*" The programme engaged 109 unique participants who were referred by the NHS and community link workers, all of whom were connected to cultural activity by the co-ordinator and has now expanded to include an online self-referral service. To date more than 60% of referrals to Social Prescribing have been for clients who reside in SIMD areas 1 or 2. The social prescribing coordinator completes post-referral calls with participants to ensure they are still connected and have continued to participate in cultural activity.

Working collaboratively alongside Social Prescribing was the CAHSC Partnership. The partnership placed an experienced cultural programmer within Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership to increase awareness of art and culture as a tool for wellbeing with health and care practitioners and to create the infrastructure to make it easier to offer cultural activity as part of a treatment programme. CAHSC specifically served adults (aged 18+) engaging in health and social care services. Through a combination of training opportunities and network building, the partnership supported a wide variety of organisations and initiatives. More than 180 professionals across the creative, cultural, health, and wellbeing sectors have engaged in training opportunities, building skills they can use in their roles to better meet service-user needs. Additionally, CAHSC grants funded 54 cultural projects creating more opportunities for Renfrewshire residents to access cultural activity. The CAHSC coordinator and the Social Prescribing Coordinator shared networks to progress projects that increased the accessibility of cultural activity and created more opportunities for people who would not usually participate. Case studies from CAHSC-funded projects demonstrate significant positive impacts on participants' moods. One project which utilised participant surveys to gauge impact found 70% of participants explicitly referenced improvements to mood or feelings of connection as part of their feedback. CAHSC programmes were able to reach almost 2,000 residents and offer activities shaped to meet their needs.

Programme Highlight: Culture, Arts, Health, and Social Care Partnership

The Culture, Arts, Health, and Social Care (CAHSC) Partnership is Renfrewshire's innovative approach to bringing arts and culture to residents (18+) engaging with social care services. By funding an arts and culture coordinator post embedded within the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), CAHSC is able to create opportunities for some of Renfrewshire's most disadvantaged residents to access arts and culture and improve their health and wellbeing.

CAHSC worked with 39 partner organisations, delivering over 5,000 opportunities for cultural engagement.

A full evaluation of the CAHSC programme can be found in Appendix 2c.

Strategic Outcome: Children and young people thrive through everyday access to arts and culture

Supporting the Council Plan:

Fair—Protecting, supporting and nurturing children, families and people who are vulnerable, with particular focus on early intervention and mental health and wellbeing, to ensure positive outcomes.

Indicators:

- Number of cultural sessions held for young people
- Demographics of young participants
- Engagement of young people in designing cultural programming

Future Paisley's investment in cultural activity targeted at children and young people was driven by the need for a coherent offer for that group, with equity of access. Through investment in infrastructure and programming in numerous accessible settings, Future Paisley sought to create conditions that enable children and young people to access their cultural entitlement on a day-to-day basis, recognising the direct impact on wellness, readiness to learn, and capacity to succeed in different areas of their lives.

Children and young people were the target audience for many projects funded by Future Paisley. They were the primary participants for many of the public programming activities, as well as the sole beneficiaries of others. For example, the annual library programming budget was primarily aimed at activities for younger residents including funded materials for a Lego group targeted at young adults and theatrical performances for early learners. The Paisley Book Festival similarly had a specific schools programme which brought authors to schools to work with young people, as well as Artist in Residence projects which heavily featured activities for young people and their families.

Co-design and engagement with young people were built into projects from the outset, more so than with any other group or demographic. Within the Programming pillar, 25% of activities included programming specifically designed for young people compared to an average of 9% for the other groups. Participation figures also appear to heavily favour young people when analysed by age, although this may be a result of stronger emphasis on data collection with activities designed for children and young people.

Overall, Future Paisley supported 871 events, 81 exhibitions, and 2,559 participation sessions through programmes or events that included activity for young people.

Future Paisley has built crucial infrastructure in Renfrewshire's schools to make the cultural offer for children and young people coherent and well promoted. The Cultural Champions, a network of teachers invested in increasing students' access to arts and culture, are offered Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions and receive regular updates about opportunities for students. Additionally, Paisley Museum has worked with schools to develop a new educational programme to accompany the new museum's exhibits, reflecting the interests of Renfrewshire's young people and bringing Renfrewshire's history into the curriculum through creative activities.

The largest-scale intervention for children and young people funded by Future Paisley is Castlehead School of Creativity, an innovative partnership between Renfrewshire Council, The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) and Castlehead High School, which embeds creativity in the secondary curriculum. The school uses pedagogical approaches from GSA to integrate creative thinking skills across subjects. Since the partnership was formed in 2018, the school has seen a dramatic shift in attainment in arts and creative subjects. The Art and Design department, which was previously ranked 10th out of 11 schools in Renfrewshire for Art and Design attainment at Higher level, rose to joint 1st in 2023. The school achieved a 100% pass rate for higher art and design in the same year. More pupils than ever before are gaining qualifications in creative subjects, with more than 750 enrolments in the school's new creative courses, and former pupils continuing their creative education through further and higher education.

In 2023, 13% of pupils leaving Castlehead High School were continuing studies in creative disciplines. This is in line with the overall national average in the UK⁹, despite the socio-economic profile of the Castlehead High catchment area, which would predict a lower percentage in comparison to areas of higher socio-economic profile. Through the school's annual creativity week—held every May, and a rotational creativity class for S1 students, the school ensures every student has engaged in creative thinking activities. *“Every pupil is given the chance to benefit from the partnership,”* Gordon Menzies, the Head Teacher for Castlehead, has stated, *“the priority of this approach has never solely been about getting pupils to pursue entry to art school, it's about giving them the creative skills they need to succeed whatever path they choose to follow.”* The results from Castlehead have demonstrated increased engagement with arts and culture can have a positive impact on attainment.

Future Paisley investment specifically funded cultural activity for care-experienced children and young people and young carers, to support Renfrewshire Council's pledge to keep Scotland's The Promise, a national commitment to transform Scotland's approach to caring for and supporting care-experienced children and young people. Future Paisley has contributed to #KeepThePromise through several unique projects and activities—The Promise Champions, The Promise Arts and Culture Programme and Art Boss, which collectively generated 2,566 instances of participation with care-experienced children and young people and young carers.

Programme Highlight: Castlehead School of Creativity

Castlehead School of Creativity is a unique partnership between Castlehead High School in Paisley and Glasgow School of Art (GSA). The collaboration has resulted in an expansive creative curriculum at Castlehead and improvement in student attainment in Art & Design subjects. Since its inception, more than 100 students have left Castlehead High School with a National 5 level qualification in Creative Thinking.

A full summary of the Castlehead School of Creativity partnership can be found in Appendix 2b.

⁹ 2-kcl-making-the-creative-majority-appg-digital-report.pdf



Strategic Outcome: The cultural offer is dispersed and accessible across Renfrewshire, enhancing wellbeing in our communities

Supporting the Council Plan:

Place—Demonstrating that Renfrewshire is a great place to grow up, it's a place of opportunity for those that live and work here, and it's a brilliant place for a day out.

Indicators:

- Geographic spread of cultural activity
- Demographics of participants
- Evidence of activity design that is accessible for protected characteristic groups and other target demographics

The final strategic outcome for Step Change 2 was to increase accessibility of cultural activities for all communities and to deliver an 'on your doorstep' cultural programme. This involved delivery of quality cultural experiences in different spaces, venues and formats in local neighbourhoods, designed to reduce barriers to access, create co-design opportunities and deliver cultural activity in every ward. This approach provided greater visibility of gaps in provision and the ability to strengthen commitments to equitable access for cultural entitlement for children and young people and strengthen the infrastructure that can enable larger-scale social prescribing in future.

57% of Future Paisley funded programmes included events, exhibitions, or participation sessions outside of Paisley town centre—where concentration of cultural activity would usually take place, benefitting 39,936 participants.

The aim was to grow arts activity in communities that were identified as lacking access. A series of Artist in Residence projects were launched in Gallowhill, Glenburn, Seedhill and Williamsburgh early in the Future Paisley programme. These projects sought to establish cultural communities in neighbourhoods identified as places for cultural growth. Of the programmes launched pre-pandemic, few sustained through lockdown. Only one of the early Artist in Residence projects was completed—a new Bothy at the Circle Recovery Hub in Seedhill, which delivered a community space to support people in recovery from using alcohol or drugs. The Bothy is the creation of service users who designed and led the programme, appointing a professional artist to assist in the decoration of the space. The Bothy is one of the strongest examples of co-production from Future Paisley and demonstrates the potential of Artist and Resident projects. There is an opportunity to rethink Artist and Resident activity through the Whole Family Wellbeing project, housing regeneration and Connected Communities.

The impact of lockdown helped to disperse programming across Renfrewshire. Commissioned theatrical productions, which might have premiered in Paisley Town Hall, such as John Byrne's *Underwood Lane* and Kick the Door's *Thread*, were staged in Johnstone and Renfrew respectively. Outdoor programming was prominent through the programme, and a necessity through the pandemic, and resulted in art installations in unusual, outdoors spaces and events. Significant programming also transitioned online, increasing accessibility, and included an investment in digital programming through Ren TV delivered by OneRen. The platform showcased local talent and shared stories about Renfrewshire and attracted over 30,000 viewers. While some projects were not originally planned to be delivered in this format at the outset of Future Paisley, they ultimately contributed to the Step Change.

The main driver of dispersed cultural activity was the Culture, Heritage and Events Fund (CHEF), which empowered groups and organisations to deliver cultural activity in locations that were more easily accessible to communities across Renfrewshire. A total of 42% of CHEF grants supported activity which took place outside of Paisley. In addition to CHEF, two grant programmes funded through the Culture, Arts, Health, and Social Care (CAHSC) Partnership were used to specifically remove barriers to access to culture and to improve the wellbeing of Renfrewshire residents (adults aged 18+) living with the impact of inequality. These funds helped to create new activity, improve planned activity and open activity to all, such as Paisley Community Circus developing accessible circus activities with Waterbaby's Dirty Feet dancing group and arts activities for adult learners engaged in Renfrewshire's ESOL classes.

During the final years of Future Paisley's investment, there were several initiatives which were funded in response to national policy. In summer 2023, Scottish Government confirmed an end to additional funding for summer activities, provided as part of Covid recovery. Future Paisley was able to pivot and contribute funding to the summer programme. Similarly, Future Paisley funded cultural activity as part of Winter Connections, providing welcoming spaces for residents to connect, access advice, activity and warmth, in response to the cost-of-living crisis.

By targeting barriers to access and increasing universal and targeted cultural activity across Renfrewshire and by being responsive to changing policy and local need, Future Paisley was able to flex investment to deliver cultural activity in different ways and reach several of its intended target groups across a wider geography. Programming for and with children and young people, older adults, people with a disability or people living in deprived areas was well evidenced. The same cannot be said in relation to evidence of delivering cultural programming that specifically reflects and is designed for ethnic minority communities, or programming that is specifically for the LGBTQ+ community. This must be addressed quickly, through future programming strategy.

Step Change 3: Paisley will be recognised for its cultural innovation

Future Paisley's third Step Change looked at Renfrewshire Council's innovative approach to cultural regeneration.

The use of arts and culture for creating economic change has been popular practice over the past two decades¹⁰. Renfrewshire Council has approached cultural regeneration through the lens of placemaking, a 'people-centred' practice where arts and culture interventions are used to affect change in an area according to the needs and desires of residents¹¹. This practice has been adopted by national agencies across the UK including Arts Council England's Levelling Up for Culture Places programme¹² and Creative Scotland's Place Partnership programme¹³. Through cultural placemaking, arts and culture can be utilised to affect social and economic changes without damaging the existing culture and community in a region.

Future Paisley incorporated the lessons from urban regeneration elsewhere in the UK and Europe. The programme demonstrates some of the best practices in cultural placemaking, seeing the sector as central to longevity. The step change recognised a thriving cultural sector which attracts diverse artists and makers will in turn create sustainable participation opportunities and employment opportunities.

Step Change 3 tracked Future Paisley projects which followed the principles of cultural placemaking, as well as how the programme positioned Renfrewshire as an exemplar for other towns and regions seeking to take a similar approach to cultural regeneration.

¹⁰ In 2002, economist Richard Florida wrote about his concept of creative cities and the impact of the "creative class" on urban areas. He claimed that cities wishing to increase economic prosperity needed to focus on developing infrastructure and amenities to attract highly educated individuals working in Cultural Sectors. This "creative class" would then in turn attract more profitable industries to the region. His theory was applied widely across the United States and Europe. However, Florida's work has been highly critiqued since its initial positive reception in the early 2000's. What was posed as a way of increasing prosperity for everyone in a region was quickly shown to deepen class inequality, and Florida was soon criticised for popularising gentrification in American cities. The practice which arose to counter Florida's creative cities approach was cultural placemaking.

¹¹ Developing a People-Centred, Place-Led Approach: The Value of the Arts and Humanities (gla.ac.uk)

¹² Priority Places and Levelling Up for Culture Places | Arts Council England

¹³ Place Programme | Creative Scotland

Strategic Outcome: Renfrewshire has a thriving, resilient and diverse cultural sector

Supporting the Council Plan:

Economy—Improving lives and securing wellbeing through a stronger, inclusive and sustainable economy, being creative, imaginative and linking opportunities to enhance the benefits for Renfrewshire.

Indicators:

- Number of new artists and organisations established in Renfrewshire
- Engagement in creative networks
- Number of activities delivered by arts organisations supported by Council operated services and at signature events

Through Future Paisley, Renfrewshire has significantly expanded its creative networks and established a more resilient community of arts organisations. Local artists and organisations support Renfrewshire's wider cultural ambitions, creating opportunities for residents to engage in cultural activity, and devolving cultural delivery from the council into the wider community.

Support from Future Paisley helped several new grassroots organisations take root in the region. Jointly funded by Future Paisley and Creative Scotland's Place Partnership programme, Johnstone Textile Space and film and digital media organisation Refractive Scotland formed and took residency in units in Renfrewshire. These created new operational spaces where Renfrewshire-based artists could thrive. Additionally, there has been relocation of artists from outside of Renfrewshire to the region. Projects like the Sculpture House and the grant awarded to the Paisley Community Circus have brought professional artists from Glasgow to establish their permanent practice in Paisley.

Several artist networks were formed during Future Paisley's funding period which contributed to increased collaboration between artists and arts organisations. OneRen's Arts Team ran regular networking meetings for various artforms including music, theatre, and film. These networking groups had substantial engagement from local artists, with regular meet-ups hosting an average of 9.4 artists across 159 events and networking sessions. Early indicators from the final year of Future Paisley delivery suggest these facilitated spaces for the sector have helped Renfrewshire's cultural organisations to succeed in applications to funders outside of the region. Organisations have gone on to apply for joint funding on future projects¹⁴ and share physical building spaces¹⁵. Networks have brought together previously-disconnected organisations to share knowledge and resources. Overall, the networks and funding grant programmes helped Renfrewshire build a connected and collaborative cultural sector. However, long-term support is required to ensure these networks continue to develop and thrive, and there must be a commitment to reconnecting with groups such as the Ethnic Minorities Cultural Steering Group, to ensure Renfrewshire's cultural offer meets the needs of diverse local communities and all local voices are represented in shaping cultural policy and programming.

From the Future Paisley programme, 36% of all funding went directly to the cultural sector through grant programmes and more opportunities were created to commission creative work locally. These commissions create opportunities and partnerships for local artists and cultural organisations. Local cultural organisations are also recognised as service delivery partners, supporting health and wellbeing through projects such as CAHSC. By providing opportunities for organisations to grow and develop resilient business practices, Future Paisley has attempted to rebalance Renfrewshire's cultural sector, making public institutions less dominant and narrowing the gap with cultural organisations and artists to encourage cultural democracy across the region.

¹⁴ Dirty Feet Dancing and Paisley Circus collaborated on two grant projects from the Culture, Arts, Health and Social Care (CAHSC) grant programmes. Since completion of the grant, the organisations have gone on to obtain further funding to continue delivering accessible circus activities.

¹⁵ Two Paisley-based arts organisations, PACE Theatre and Outspoken Arts, cohabitate in a unit within the Paisley Shopping Centre. The Art Department—THE ART DEPARTMENT (outspokenarts.org)

All these projects have contributed to an infrastructure of organisations that act as a support network for individual artists in Renfrewshire. The impacts of Future Paisley for individual artists and pathways into the cultural sector are further analysed in Step Change 5.

Programme Highlight: The Sculpture House

The Sculpture House is a partnership between Renfrewshire Council and three artists—Sculpture House Collective (SHC). The partnership permits the council to lease a property at Blackstoun Road in Ferguslie Park, to the artists in exchange for delivery of cultural services that are equivalent to the market rental value of the house. The artists use the house as their professional studio space while developing the house into a communal cultural asset and delivering a full programme of cultural activities. During the Pilot Year, SHC delivered a total of 136 workshops and cultural sessions generating 2,012 instances of participation in arts and culture activities. They worked with a wide range of participants, including children, young people, carers, people with a disability, and people suffering from long-term ill health, as well as their immediate community members around the house.

A full evaluation of the Sculpture House Pilot Year can be found in Appendix 2d.



Strategic Outcome: Community-led production and programming increases cultural participation and activism across Renfrewshire

Supporting the Council Plan:

Place—Developing our relationship with, listening to and involving our communities in the shaping of their future, particularly around the Council’s investment and budgeting decisions, and ensuring that a wide range of voices and views are heard.

Indicators:

- Percentage of programming that incorporates co-production
- Evidence of programme changes based on participant influence
- Positive feedback from participants in co-produced programmes

Community-led production and programming refers to a wide variety of practices in cultural production that includes co-production, co-design, and co-creation. These practices incorporate community members and participants into the creative process¹⁶. This involves artists and outreach programmes, and uses art to involve people in debate, conversations, and social interaction. Outputs can be artworks, performances, an event, an intervention, or an installation within the physical environment.

The collaborative process is as important as the final output. It helps communities unpack and overcome issues important to them. Arts professionals empower, encourage, and guide communities to develop solutions for themselves. This approach recognises people are more likely to participate in cultural activity they have designed themselves. Community-led production and programming helps communities identify what they feel passionate about and to create effective and positive social change.

¹⁶ Co-Production in Arts & Culture: A Review of Evidence, CCSE 2024.

Of the events, interventions, performances, and activities in the Future Paisley portfolio, 82% were co-produced.

Cultural activities designed for people with protected characteristics and other target demographics were particularly likely to be co-produced, ensuring that the activities for these groups reflected their unique needs. One such activity was the Promise Champions. Promise Champions were originally intended to be a youth activism group supported to influence national policy makers, similar to groups created by Who Cares? Scotland. However, when the young people came together for the group, they expressed the need for something different and were supported to design a project that suited their aspirations and needs. The group chose to explore how arts and culture could give a voice to their experiences, but also pushed for the group to have a more tangible local impact on other young care-experienced people in their community rather than taking a policy-driven approach. This led to projects like their Christmas present drive, a charitable project run by the Promise Champions to collect donations and gifts for other care-experienced children and young people.

“As Care-Experienced young people, we know that some of us won’t receive many presents at Christmas. We want to change this to help make these young people’s Christmas feel a little more special.”

Renfrewshire’s Promise Champions

69% of co-produced activity was achieved working with community organisations. Organisations served as community experts and trusted sources, advising on the needs for the area, as well as delivering the activities in partnership with the council or OneRen’s cultural producers. Among these programmes is the Paisley Museum Creative Learning programme. Considered ‘sector-leading’ by peer organisations, the programme involved schools across Renfrewshire in the design of the new educational opportunities to be offered at the transformed museum. The programme ensured the content of the learning materials would be interesting and relevant to Renfrewshire’s young people and reflect the diversity of the region’s history and current residents.

Of the co-produced activities, 44% were created directly with participants. One example of this direct engagement is through the Future-Paisley-funded theatrical production *Common is as Common Does*. The show, which explored how exposure to violence shapes ideas of masculinity, was created collaboratively with residents from Johnstone and Paisley. Acclaimed Glasgow-based dance company 21 Common led the sessions, helping Renfrewshire residents to make a high-quality artistic movement piece based on their lived experiences. Participants from Johnstone and Paisley engaged in development sessions, with six participations from these initial sessions continuing engagement throughout the production process. These six residents, who ranged from age 18 to 60, collaboratively choreographed the show and performed on stage alongside the professional dancers. Participants commented on the overwhelmingly-positive experience they had in creating the production, particularly the elements dealing with serious topic they'd seen in their own lives. The production went on to show at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2024.

“I have direct experience of domestic violence, and this show makes me feel seen... It has been fantastic for me, to feel part of the company and so valued. I have loved every minute.”

Common is as Common Does Participant

Strategic Outcome: Innovation in programming leads to wider engagement by local and national audiences

Supporting the Council Plan:

Place—Demonstrating that Renfrewshire is a great place to grow up, it's a place of opportunity for those that live and work here, and it's a brilliant place for a day out.

Indicators:

- National reporting on new productions or models of practice
- Sector leaders and specialists come to Renfrewshire and generate external interest in Future Paisley's delivery
- Renfrewshire receives invitations to speak at national conferences and networking events

This Strategic Outcome called for an increase in new and original work being produced in Renfrewshire, sparked by Future Paisley investment. This delivered several premieres and unique live events including *Other Side of the River*, *Common is as Common Does*, *Underwood Lane*, and *Thread*. These major productions supported by Renfrewshire Council and OneRen had 4,233 attendees and toured beyond Renfrewshire, sharing original work from the region nationally.

However, Renfrewshire's 'innovation' goes beyond programming. Future Paisley's radical approach to cultural regeneration, including its commitment to partnership and investment in the cultural sector and community-led production, has received recognition from peers within government, cultural agencies and in the wider regeneration community. This included being the first-ever Scottish Winner of Best Town (Paisley) in UK, Ireland and Europe at the Academy of Urbanism in 2018. The unique models developed through partnership have continued to be focus of this attention.

Cultural leaders in Renfrewshire are frequently invited to speak regionally and nationally at sector events and policy round tables¹⁷ and contribute to national media, specialised publications featuring Future Paisley projects¹⁸. Cultural leaders, academics and experts in regeneration contributed to the Renfrewshire discussion through the Future Paisley's *Grande Conversazioni* in 2022. During its pilot year, The Sculpture House hosted curators from Jupiter Artland and Tate Britain, academics from Oxford University, and conservation specialists from Page Park Architects and The Prince's Foundation. Additionally, since 2018, Renfrewshire has hosted academics and policy experts in the field of culture, sport, and events via the University of the West of Scotland CCSE Symposiums—an annual event attracting national audiences and national speakers, placing Future Paisley and Renfrewshire's approach to cultural regeneration at the heart of policy discussions.

Emblematic of this success is Paisley's selection to host *About Us*. *About Us* was the opening event for *UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK*, a celebration of creativity which took place across the UK in 2022. Paisley was selected in recognition of its outstanding use of creativity for town revitalisation. Additionally, Paisley's Halloween Festival has been recognised at the Scottish Thistle Awards as the 'Best Cultural Event or Festival', and at the Scottish Event Awards as 'Best Large Festival', not only for the growth of the event, but for the festival's engagement with young people and the community.

The combination of quality productions and innovative partnerships have brought attention to Renfrewshire's cultural regeneration.

¹⁷ Head of Marketing and Communication—EventScotland conference, Cultural Leader round table events, Spirit of 2012 roundtable, DCMS planning, Major Events Manager—national events advisory group, Lead Officer (Future Paisley)—Creative Scotland and government roundtables, Castlehead School of Creativity—Education Scotland

¹⁸ Paisley's House Of Sculpture | Artmag | All The Arts In Scotland



Sma' Shot Day

Step Change 4: Transform Paisley into a vibrant town centre

Future Paisley's fourth Step Change centred around Paisley's physical transformation, funded by Renfrewshire Council. This included the Paisley Town Hall project¹⁹, the refurbishment of Paisley Arts Centre, Paisley Museum Reimagined²⁰, the construction of the new Paisley Central Library²¹, as well as the Paisley Townscape Heritage and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme²². Collectively, the council invested £79.9 million into preserving Paisley's physical heritage and landmark buildings, whilst bringing them into 21st century use, which has been a catalyst for further significant investment from the private sector and other funders. Future Paisley investment was aligned to this capital transformation programme, to build audiences in anticipation of new cultural venues, to animate the town centre in innovative ways during the temporary closures of venues, and to support the cultural venues with their reopening by boosting programming and marketing budgets for year one. Delivery of this step change and the timing of the reopening of Paisley's refurbished venues, was significantly impacted by the pandemic. Paisley Town Hall and the new Paisley Central Library, originally planned to open in 2021, were launched in 2023 followed by the Paisley Arts Centre's reopening in 2024. The transformation of Paisley Museum is due to conclude in late 2025. Future Paisley's contribution to this large-scale investment programme was re-aligned to enable brand, marketing, audience development and programming support to be maximised.

¹⁹ Paisley Town Hall—Renfrewshire Website

²⁰ Paisley Museum Reimagined—Renfrewshire Website

²¹ Paisley Learning and Cultural Hub—Renfrewshire Website

²² Paisley Townscape Heritage and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme—Renfrewshire Website

Strategic Outcome: Paisley town centre is revitalised through the opening of major cultural venues and attractions

Supporting the Council Plan:

Place—Demonstrating that Renfrewshire is a great place to grow up, it's a place of opportunity for those that live and work here, and it's a brilliant place for a day out.

Indicators:

- The opening of Paisley's cultural venues (Paisley Arts Centre, the Town Hall, the Museum, and the Library)
- Footfall in these venues
- Engagement with events in the venues and advertisement of the venues

It is too early to assess the impact of Paisley's new cultural venues on town centre vibrancy or the contribution of Future Paisley investment in the Museum marketing strategy, marketing and brand development for Paisley Central Library, Paisley Arts Centre, and Paisley Town Hall, and opening programme for each venue. OneRen will monitor and report on footfall and visitor numbers, supported by data collection through the Moffat Centre.

Renfrewshire's current visitor and tourism data reflects the impact of the loss of town centre attractions on visitor numbers for cultural venues²³. However, despite a delay to opening of the Paisley Museum and Paisley's cultural attractions, Renfrewshire's wider visitor economy and tourism sector indicate positive recovery and performance.

Programme Highlight: Opening Year Programme

Future Paisley aligned to the ambitious and exciting programme of capital investment in Paisley's cultural venues. Refurbishment of Paisley Arts Centre, Paisley Town Hall, and Paisley Museum, as well as the construction of the new Paisley Central Library, will continue to drive the vision for Future Paisley. Opening programming for the venues was supported by Future Paisley, which will continue through 2025, as was support for new brand identities and the marketing strategies for each venue, driven by OneRen.

A full summary of the opening year activities can be found in Appendix 2e.

²³ STEAM Report for Renfrewshire, 2010-2021.

Strategic Outcome: Paisley's town centre is revitalised through improvements to the public realm

Supporting the Council Plan:

Place—Demonstrating that Renfrewshire is a great place to grow up, it's a place of opportunity for those that live and work here, and it's a brilliant place for a day out.

Indicators:

- Number of works done to improve the public realm
- Increased footfall in the town centre's public spaces
- Positive perceptions of the town centre in feedback and surveys

This strategic outcome focused on maximising planned improvements to Paisley town centre's public realm and the spaces and places where local people and visitors choose to dwell.

It was originally envisaged that this Step Change would capture the impact of public realm projects at County Square and Paisley Abbey however due to changing priorities and the emergence of wider town centre regeneration plans proposed by the private sector, both projects were paused.

Running parallel to Future Paisley was the Paisley Townscape Heritage and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme²⁴. This separate programme funded the repair, restoration and preservation physical architecture in Paisley town centre and contributed to the enhanced experience of the town centre, ultimately supporting Future Paisley outcomes. Posts funded through Future Paisley worked closely with the Townscape Heritage and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme, and Future Paisley co-funded projects in the scheme through cultural funding grants such as the refurbishment of Sma' Shot Cottages and collaboration on the Future Paisley Exhibition *Grand Conversazioni* series. Joint working between Future Paisley and the Townscape Heritage and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme is one example of how Future Paisley achieved a strategic outcome by adding value to existing physical regeneration activity.

²⁴ Paisley Townscape Heritage and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme—Renfrewshire Website

Future Paisley funded several self-guided heritage tours through Paisley town centre. These tours help to tell a different story of Paisley, improve visitor experience and encourage increased visitor footfall. Tours include the Paisley Radicals Tour which explores Paisley's role in the Scottish Radical War of 1820. The tour was created by Civil Disobedience in partnership with community groups across over 40 engagement sessions. A more recently completed tour is the Paisley Buddy Walk of Fame, a Hollywood-style trail that celebrates famous cultural Buddies such as Paolo Nutini, Phyllis Logan and David Tennant. Designed by Paisley First, and part-funded through Future Paisley, these plaques in the pavement were created as a further attraction to the town centre with the purpose of informing visitors about key figures from Paisley past and present²⁵. These types of activities have contributed to the improvement of Paisley town centre's public spaces as well as encouraging cultural participation.

While this strategic outcome was initially intended to focus on Paisley town centre, there was specific effort to disperse physical improvement activity across Renfrewshire and expand access for local people. Through Place Partnership with Creative Scotland, several projects led by community groups have improved both urban and rural spaces. Projects included temporary artwork installations along Renfrewshire's cycle routes which engaged over 3,000 people and a permanent sound garden installation in Erskine town centre.

²⁵ Paisley First received funding through an early round of CHEF funding for a series of murals across Paisley town centre. They then later received funding for the Paisley Walk of Fame, a trail of plaques through the town centre recognising key figures in Paisley's history.

Strategic Outcome: Paisley town centre is animated by cultural production and participation

Supporting the Council Plan:

Place—Demonstrating that Renfrewshire is a great place to grow up, it's a place of opportunity for those that live and work here, and it's a brilliant place for a day out.

Indicators:

- Number of events, festivals, and performances in the town
- Number of visitors to the town centre
- Positive feedback from participants about events and activities held in the town centre

In addition to investment in outdoor events to animate the town centre, there were several projects which temporarily inhabited vacant former retail units or created new permanent attractions.

The Future Paisley Exhibition, a multimedia installation showcasing Renfrewshire's cultural heritage and enabling local people to help reimagine the town's ongoing cultural regeneration, was hosted in a unit in the Piazza shopping centre and attracted 7,000 visitors and participants, including local school groups. The Piazza also hosted Binge, an interactive theatre production, part of the internationally recognised Take Me Somewhere Festival, attracting 156 visitors and participants. The Creative Scotland Place Partnership funded several new developments in Paisley. This included Refractive Scotland, mentioned previously, a new filmmakers group delivering workshops and network events for Renfrewshire's film, digital, and new media specialists, and the partnership funded artworks in town centre shop windows during COP 26, with an estimated footfall of 1,590. Renfrewshire's cultural sector is also investing in physical spaces in Paisley's town centre. The Art Department created a new cultural space in a former shopping store, joined by PACE Youth Theatre who have created temporary rehearsal studios, performance space and theatre space. Both organisations have benefited from Future Paisley support and grant funding.

Building on this, The Art Department, is set to take over a prominent formerly-vacant unit at 9 to 11 Causeyside Street as their new permanent location, with PACE in the process of refurbishing a former theatre and nightclub and creating their new Exchange Theatre, Scotland's first theatre dedicated for children and young people.

A significant project, initially identified through the UK City of Culture community engagement process, was the design and installation of Rattle: Little Mother in Dunn Square. The statue honours the 71 children lost in the Glen Cinema disaster on New Year's Eve in 1929, their families and the survivors. The statue was crafted by two acclaimed artists following considerable engagement with Paisley Community Trust, Star Project, and pupils from Paisley Grammar School, and was co-designed with survivors and community members whose families were impacted by the tragedy. The statue is a permanent fixture in Dunn Square and provides a place of remembrance and reflection in the town centre where people gather annually to remember the children lost. The project was part of a wider programme of activity to mark the 90th anniversary of the disaster, which included screenings of the information film about the disaster and a memorial service featuring a lantern walk with nearly 200 participants through Paisley town centre to the Paisley Abbey. Living descendants and survivors of the disaster attended the commemorative events and the unveiling of the statue, which attracted national broadcast media coverage.

During the final year of Future Paisley, a major partnership was confirmed with Jupiter Artland to animate Paisley's High Street with both art and learning through the Jupiter + Paisley project. A site-specific installation called *Stroke* by internationally recognised Paisley-born artist Anya Gallaccio, occupied a shop unit on the high street between September to December 2024, which was complimented by a Creative Learning Studio located directly opposite the artwork in the Paisley Shopping Centre. The Creative Learning Studio will operate for a year, providing art education and maker space for young people across Renfrewshire and will host a programme of public outreach events, schools' workshops, and a mentorship scheme called the *Orbit Youth Collective Programme*. *Stroke* already reached 3,876 visitors through to the end of October 2024 and will remain open until 21 December 2024. The programme has received significant coverage across editorial and broadcast media.

With the reopening of the town's cultural venues following their refurbishment—Paisley Town Hall, Paisley Art Centre, Paisley Central Library and Paisley Museum, cultural participation and programming in Paisley town centre is only expected to grow.

Step Change 5: Develop a sustainable and resilient creative economy in Renfrewshire

Future Paisley's final Step Change focused on celebrating and growing Renfrewshire's cultural and creative sectors and creating meaningful pathways for young people wishing to enter the sectors. To enable long-term impact through cultural regeneration, Future Paisley recognises the stability and sustainability of the cultural sector is critical for success. This will ensure breadth of opportunity to participate and diverse programming that works for all people in our communities and will help to sustain vibrant neighbourhoods and town centres and attract visitors. Future Paisley has endeavoured to help strengthen existing cultural organisations as well as provide opportunities for emerging cultural practitioners to base their work in Renfrewshire.

Strategic Outcome: Organisations and sole traders working in Renfrewshire’s creative economy develop sustainable and resilient business models

Supporting the Council Plan:

Economy—Creating sustainable employment opportunities for people who live in Renfrewshire, attracting good employers to the area and encouraging growth of businesses already operating here, ensuring that all people can benefit from the inclusive growth in Renfrewshire.

Indicators:

- Legal status of arts and culture organisations
- Registered organisations and sole traders
- Participation in sector networks

This strategic outcome focuses on the sustainability of Renfrewshire’s newly-expanded cultural infrastructure and how well the sector has been set up for ongoing success after the Future Paisley investment period. Progress has been steady and overall, since 2016, employment in Renfrewshire’s cultural and creative sectors has increased from 1,910 to 1,970, and the number of registered charities in the region with advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science as their purpose has increased by 40%.

The evaluation of the Cultural Organisation Development Fund (CODF) highlighted how CODF’s approach to organisational development was fundamental to secure long-term sustainability for the sector. Unlike many other forms of support or development funding, CODF was bespoke to organisational need. The fund allowed organisations to determine where and how the funds could best be used to further their organisations strategic objectives. Due to the varying circumstances and needs among Renfrewshire’s cultural sector, this flexibility enabled organisations to find the most impactful use of funds for their specific circumstances. The value of this approach was recognised by Renfrewshire Council’s Economic Development service—“no other funder offers such support”, as well as funded organisations—“I don’t know of another funding scheme that particularly focuses on developing board, staff capacity and gives space for organisations to carry out structured work in developing their vision.”

CODF-funded organisations developed several aspects of their business models that indicate they are now more resilient and sustainable for the future, including bolstering programming and developing more resilient business practices. Of the 14 organisations supported by CODF, three have newly-obtained charitable status during the funding period.

Sole traders in Renfrewshire's cultural sector have also benefitted from Future Paisley funding, through the establishment of strong networks and increased studio and visual arts space. Creative spaces established in partnership with Renfrewshire Council, such as the previously-mentioned Sculpture House and Refractive Scotland, as well as independently-owned spaces, have taken root across Renfrewshire. These making spaces and associated specialist equipment have been made available to new artists and professionals across artforms, and additionally, the networks established by OneRen and Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership have promoted employment opportunities for artists to obtain paid work. For example, the POP newsletter managed by OneRen attracted more than 275 subscribers (artists and makers) across Renfrewshire to promote opportunities for employment and partnership and it is recommended that POP is re-established.

Crucial to the success of this Strategic Outcome is Renfrewshire Council's commitment to continuing sector support after the completion of Future Paisley. The Council has ringfenced £1million over the next three years to support the cultural sector, including funding from Future Paisley. Consultation with the sector to determine the shape of this support is under way. The commitment ensures the impact of Future Paisley is firmly embedded.

Programme Highlight: CODF

The Cultural Organisations Development Fund (CODF) was created to strengthen and build the capacity of local cultural and creative organisations in Renfrewshire. Through the four rounds of this funding grant, Renfrewshire Council has invested £663,102 into Renfrewshire's cultural sector.

A full review of CODF and CHEF funding can be found in Appendix 2f.

Strategic Outcome: Pathways into employment and progression routes in Renfrewshire’s tourism, cultural and creative sectors are being supported

Supporting the Council Plan:

Economy—Matching the skills developed in Renfrewshire with the opportunities available in Renfrewshire and equipping all children and young people to achieve success in life.

Indicators:

- Number of participations in career development programmes for young people
- Positive arts and culture destinations for Renfrewshire's young people leaving school
- Presence of regular job opportunities for young people in cultural organisations

Creating pathways for young people to enter the tourism, cultural, and creative sectors in Renfrewshire will ensure those sectors can attract strong local talent for their future. This Strategic Outcome focused on delivering initiatives to raise awareness of the opportunities presented by the cultural and tourism sectors among local young people at different stages of their education.

Recognising that children begin to form opinions about careers from age nine²⁶, Future Paisley placed an emphasis on activity that would introduce young people to creative and cultural career options from an early age. Cultural Champions, the network connecting teachers to arts and culture opportunities for students, includes primary teachers as well as nursery teachers, and helps them to access CPD opportunities to bring creative skills into the curriculum. Additionally, activity funded by Future Paisley has greatly increased the number of opportunities available to young people outside of school hours and during holiday periods. This early engagement with arts and culture is intended as a green shoot, embedding creativity and promoting possible future careers.

²⁶ What works? Career-related learning in primary schools (careersandenterprise.co.uk)

This engagement continues into the secondary curriculum. The Pathways Programme, a partnership between Renfrewshire Council and the University of West of Scotland, enabled 225 S3 pupils from Renfrewshire's high schools to participate in a two-day careers experience, hosted by University of West of Scotland and West College Scotland, which included visits to local cultural organisations and cultural venues, where pupils explored creative and cultural career opportunities. 62% of pupils who participated, provided feedback that the programme had successfully introduced new and different options for work or study—“there are lots of different opportunities through creative subjects, [more than] I thought”. Future Paisley has demonstrated new ways, working with partners, to connect young people with available opportunities and career paths in the local cultural and creative sectors and to build awareness of cultural activity on offer.

Finally, several strands of Future Paisley work supported opportunities for young people to gain early career experience in the cultural sector outside of the educational context. A volunteering programme for Renfrewshire Council's signature cultural events generated more than 310 instances of participation for volunteers. Several bespoke posts for young people in cultural organisations were also funded. Additionally, through the Centre for Culture, Sport, and Events in partnership with the University of West of Scotland, Future Paisley supported four young researchers specialising in cultural policy and economy to pursue and complete PhDs.

Renfrewshire Council has taken a holistic approach to supporting young people participate in culture, through accessible population-level cultural programming, through targeted interventions and by adding value to the school curriculum. This has included encouraging new ways of thinking about creative careers and increasing adult participation in culture, to spark 'dinner-table conversations' about the value and opportunity offered by careers in the sector. Future Paisley investment has delivered a range of activity and access points to provide real-life experiences through co-design and co-production, volunteering opportunities, and specific projects linked to learning and career development.

Programme Highlight: Pathways Programme

The Pathway Programme was an educational programme designed to develop secondary school pupils' understanding of the cultural, creative and visitor economies in Renfrewshire and how to access those opportunities. The programme included pupils from every high school in Renfrewshire and was run in partnership with UWS, WCS, OneRen, and several local arts organisations, providing pupils with practical information, access to decision makers and behind-the-scenes sector insight.

A full evaluation of the Pathway Programme's pilot year can be found in Appendix 2g.

Strategic Outcome: The tourism and the cultural and creative sector in Renfrewshire are vibrant and employment opportunities are developing

Supporting the Council Plan:

Economy—Creating sustainable employment opportunities for people who live in Renfrewshire, attracting good employers to the area and encouraging growth of businesses already operating here, ensuring that all people can benefit from the inclusive growth in Renfrewshire.

Indicators:

- Employment opportunities for freelance artists
- Arts and culture jobs in Renfrewshire Council and OneRen
- Job opportunities offered in Renfrewshire funded by organisations based outside of the region

This final Strategic Outcome for Step Change 5 measured the impact Future Paisley activity has had on employment in Renfrewshire's cultural, creative and tourism sectors, recognising the creation of new employment opportunities was crucial for Renfrewshire to retain the talent being generated through the expanded creative pathways programmes. Over the timeframe of the Future Paisley programme, despite the significant negative impact of the pandemic on tourism and the cultural sector nationally, employment in Renfrewshire's cultural and creative sector has increased from 1,910 to 1,970, and tourism employment has risen from 3,054 to 3,356.

Fair work principles underpinned Future Paisley, and commitment was made to contract with freelance artists and creative practitioners and provide the Scottish Artists Union Rate. Local cultural networks and organisations such as Creative Renfrewshire helped promote opportunities for employment and partnership to freelance artists. Employment data was under-reported and not routinely captured by project leads, but where documented confirms more than 3,800 days of employment—the equivalent of 14.6FTE positions—directly generated by Future Paisley projects over the last six years. In addition to the opportunities provided for freelance artists, Future Paisley funded an increase in cultural workforce across the Council and OneRen, attracting experienced cultural practitioners from across Scotland. These new posts, which included a sector-leading workforce within OneRen and tourism specialism and major events and national programming experience within Renfrewshire Council, led and delivered Future Paisley projects and provided support for Renfrewshire's cultural organisations and freelance artists. Crucially, the individuals who led and contributed to Paisley's UK City of Culture Bid and Future Paisley have brought national profile and networks and new projects from across Scotland and beyond to Renfrewshire. The long-term impact of this investment in professional workforce is not yet fully understood, but it is predicted the national profile of Renfrewshire's approach and strong connections with Scotland's wider cultural sector will make it easier for Renfrewshire to attract creative talent in the future.

Awareness of Renfrewshire's cultural regeneration approach, the level of cultural investment, and the innovation delivered through Future Paisley, has most certainly influenced the area's ability to attract artists and cultural organisations to relocate. Evidence of this is detailed in Step Change 3.

**Renfrewshire's
future culture
strategy can
maintain a
positive impact
for communities
in Renfrewshire.**

Reflection

The final chapter in the evaluation reflects on the findings and lessons learned through Future Paisley and identifies recommendations for the council and its partners. The reflection considers how Renfrewshire's future culture strategy can maintain a positive impact for communities in Renfrewshire and contribute to Scotland's three national ambitions to strengthen culture, transform through culture, and empower through culture.

Future Paisley was a successful step in Renfrewshire's cultural regeneration journey and has made strides towards achieving five step changes for Renfrewshire, originally envisaged as an outcome of a UK City Culture title win. The programme has also contributed positively to Renfrewshire's cultural strategy 2016 to 2023, which stated eight ambitions for Renfrewshire; exceptional creative practice; community participation and opportunity in high-quality cultural experiences; exploring Renfrewshire's unique cultural identity; partnership commitment to strengthening Renfrewshire's cultural landscape; projects and initiatives that support business creativity; developing networks to support creative practice across disciplines; developing creative capacity through experimentation and reflection; and developing a strong sense of place through unique cultural development.

Future Paisley delivered a dynamic programme of activity and interventions, increasing participation across all age groups and demographics throughout Renfrewshire, building social capital, increasing wellness, strengthening the cultural sector and establishing 'a Renfrewshire approach' as an exemplar in Scotland. Several areas of work stand out as good practice and delivered exceptional results for the communities involved. Individual projects, such as Paisley Halloween Festival, Paisley Book Festival, the Sculpture House, Paisley Museum's creative learning programme and the Castlehead School of Creativity, have received national recognition for their innovative approaches to using culture and creative thinking to increase inclusion, wellbeing, and attainment. While there have been many successes within the programme, some projects faced challenges and some were not delivered, however, this accounted for less than 1% of the expenditure.

Maintaining the positive trajectory of Future Paisley will require the Partnership to continue to build place reputation, to continue to embed culture and creativity in the design of public services and from a health and care perspective, to commit to routinely refer individuals to cultural activity. It is important to continue to create opportunities for people in Renfrewshire to experience culture in a variety of ways and to maximise the positive impact of Renfrewshire Council's investment in its landmark cultural venues. This will require a partnership programming strategy that combines 'culture on the doorstep' and venues programming, delivered through OneRen and the cultural sector. Fundamental to future success, Renfrewshire requires a strong and resilient cultural sector, and it must be made easier for artists, cultural groups, and cultural organisations to work in collaboration with public services. Without the combination of these commitments, the benefits realised and evidenced by Future Paisley (reinforced by national research), will be temporary.

Highlight #1:

Creating positive place identity through Paisley

Paisley's UK City of Culture bid recognised that a poor area image and persistent negative media commentary has a demoralising impact on local people and civic pride, particularly when this is focused on a specific community or neighbourhood. By combining the development of a new town brand with the promotion of significant investment and positive change in Paisley, this project sought to reverse an out-of-date narrative, which was dampening local self-belief and providing a barrier to visitors and private investment. The Paisley town brand has been one of the most quantifiable successes of Future Paisley and the positive impact of brand activity has been assessed through the CCSE and by independent consultants. The original aim—to change how Paisley is perceived and portrayed in the media—has unequivocally been achieved. On every project metric, Paisley has been a success and this success has come with minimal investment and a commitment from Renfrewshire Council to deploy existing resource to drive the agenda. In addition to this, Paisley activity championed Renfrewshire's tourism sector, establishing the region's first tourism excellence award through Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce, supporting customer service excellence training, driving product development, and creating space for local attractions in national campaigns.

The following recommendation is made:

Paisley has helped to re-establish Paisley as a place of culture and creativity, a place to visit, and has generated significant national profile and support. There must now be a clear plan for how the vastly increased positive media coverage about Paisley is maintained now funding has ended, recognising the impact place branding has had on boosting civic pride and attracting people and investment. A recent independent evaluation of the positive impact of Paisley has highlighted that some within Renfrewshire, wish to see the Paisley model extended through the development of a visitor brand for Renfrewshire. This will require the support of the tourism sector, to co-ordinate and drive visitor experience and to collectively promote the visitor offer. Given the end of Future Paisley, driving a regional approach to visitor marketing, as opposed to town promotion, could be achieved through Renfrewshire's Tourism Leadership Group. Building on Future Paisley investment to commission and access national visitor data and the quality of information currently collected about attendees to major events, a robust process is required to capture and share local visitor data and insights, especially those linked to Paisley's new cultural venues and to Paisley Museum.

Highlight #2: Culture is valued in Renfrewshire

The benefits of cultural regeneration are understood and valued by Renfrewshire Council. By positioning Future Paisley within the Council Plan and through the seniority and breadth of council officers who contributed their time and expertise to the Future Paisley steering group, there has been innovation and collaboration between policy makers, service managers and cultural organisations and artists. Public service leaders appreciate that arts and culture can play a valuable part in helping to tackle some of the most challenging social and health conditions.

We will continue to celebrate the arts, culture and our heritage in Renfrewshire, increasingly recognising culture as a central pillar of wellness, flowing through local approaches to health, social care, education and skills development as well as our regeneration and economic development plans and strategies for Renfrewshire.

Renfrewshire Council Plan 2022 to 2027: Place—working together to enhance wellbeing across communities.

Across the council there has been a willingness to test the integration of culture in service delivery and there has been collaboration across health and social care, childrens social work, education, youth services, housing services and neighbourhood regeneration. This includes projects such as The Making of Ferguslie Park leading to the delivery of The Sculpture House, Art Boss, CAHSC, and Percent for Art. The challenge, given the difficult financial outlook for public services, is to ensure arts and culture do not become peripheral, reverting to a view that they are nice-to-have but not an essential part of the response to improve services or to tackle mainstream conditions. Many cultural interventions that can improve wellness are commissioned through cycles of non-recurrent pilot or grant funding—such as Future Paisley, and there is rarely enough time to provide robust evidence on long-term impact to make the case for mainstreaming activity. Future Paisley has demonstrated Renfrewshire's culture sector can play an important role in the delivery Renfrewshire's public services, facilitated in part by the commitment of the council to maintain investment in the sector. Whether it's improving health and well-being through arts activities which engage people physically and emotionally, or using cultural organisations to build stronger communities, it is clear there are significant opportunities for long-term collaboration between public services and the cultural sector. To realise this opportunity, it is important to understand the

cultural sector—a mix of small and diverse organisations, often with charitable status, who find it hard to access public procurement. The sector has identified procurement as a barrier and there is a need to change how council services access the cultural sector and make it easier for both to work together.

Three main recommendations are made:

- 1. Commissioning**—support the local cultural sector to engage more effectively with public-sector procurement systems and articulate the value of its offer against traditional models of service provision. There is an opportunity to make it simpler for cultural organisations and individual artists to connect with commissioning opportunities, and for the council to consider how procurement pathways can better support the cultural sector.
- 2. Community benefits**—include cultural activity and creative practice as prescribed community benefits through Planning and pilot Percent for Art, a recognised national programme based on the principle that artists and craftspeople, working with local communities, bring added expertise and dynamism to a design team. Percent for Art has the potential to be a catalyst for cultural response to be included in the built environment and public realm, informed by the vision, needs and desires of the communities in which it is located.
- 3. Asset management**—Renfrewshire needs to flex its assets to effect change and improve outcomes, and this includes the arts, culture and heritage assets that sit at the heart of many communities in Renfrewshire. These assets should be considered in line with the council's asset strategy to determine their contribution to local service delivery and 'culture on the doorstep'.
- 4. Developing Renfrewshire's cultural workforce** is symbiotic with the action areas outlined above. This includes developing creative skills across the workforce, positioning culture as a core service and building awareness of its impact. It also means continuing to invest in cultural leadership and practitioners leading Renfrewshire's programming and operating cultural venues. It is this group of staff who will engage day-to-day with people in spaces where culture is experienced in less concentrated ways, but where significant wellbeing benefits can be delivered.

Highlight #3:

Embedding art and culture in service delivery—models of good practice

Future Paisley has funded several projects which provide evidence that culture contributes to delivering better outcomes for people when integrated in public services and there is a strong partnership with the cultural sector. As outlined previously, programme activity focused on two main groups—children and young people, and adults engaged in health and social care. Future Paisley's approach recognised many cultural organisations and groups sit in the heart of communities in Renfrewshire, with places and networks that people visit and use daily. They can be flexible and move at pace—participative and responsive to individual interests and are more likely to inspire continuing participation when compared to traditional services. Importantly, and significantly for some services, they can reach people without stigmatising them. Future Paisley aimed to provide a body of evidence to show that working in partnership with artists and the cultural sector can help services deliver better outcomes (and value for money), improve social outcomes for people using services, and deliver services that can prevent acute needs from arising in future. The approach considered two important points—that we are what we repeatedly do, and therefore cultural participation needs to be habitual and, that it may not be engagement in culture in itself that generates wellness, but the socialisation and relationships that often come with engaging in culture.

1. Embedding Arts and Culture in Health and Wellbeing—culture as an important health intervention for adults

The Culture Arts Health and Social Care (CAHSC) model demonstrates the potential for art and culture to be used in health and social work services as part of early intervention and support for older people. Future Paisley sought to build a robust foundation for the future commissioning of care services, which integrate culture and creativity and meet local and national policy goals such as preventing acute needs arising, developing person centred approaches, and improving individual and community wellbeing. Early links were made with colleagues in health and social care, with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership joining the Future Paisley (Paisley 2021 Partnership Board) in 2015. This led to the creation of a new

partnership—Culture, Arts, Health, and Social Care (CAHSC), bringing together cultural professionals and experts in health and social care to identify where art and culture could meaningfully provide health and wellbeing benefits to adults. The aim was to create a permanent intersection between health and social care and art and creativity. Through the development of a dedicated post—a CAHSC Coordinator, placed within Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership, a range of cultural activities supporting social prescribing were progressed and barriers to access removed. Activity has nurtured inter-generational relationships and has provided training for staff employed in health and social care services, improving their understanding of the impact of culture on health improvement and how to take the practice forward. The model enabled extensive and meaningful stakeholder engagement and new relationships between the cultural sector and professionals in health and social care. Activity funded through CAHSC's grant programmes delivered more than 800 events with numerous participation sessions for adults over 18 years old and improved access to cultural activities (and venues) across Renfrewshire, with a total investment of just over £80,000. This has resulted in being able to meet the specific needs of people who were otherwise unable to 'join in'. Feedback from participants evidences enhanced mood and feelings of belonging and wellness. Work driven by the CAHSC co-ordinator has helped to strengthen the relationship between health and social care and the cultural sector—investing in social prescribing pilots, in training for health and social care professionals, in collaborations with artists and cultural practitioners and through the provision of grants for organisations and groups to make cultural activity referral ready. There are opportunities for this model and practice to be extended, creating more, long-term options to support social prescribing, with OneRen playing a pivotal role. Future Paisley has contributed to a body of evidence that shows culture can make a sustained and meaningful contribution to early intervention, reducing the requirement for later stage costly health interventions.

2. Innovative Programming for Children and Young People

Recognising Renfrewshire's commitment to children and families, Future Paisley prioritised investment in projects aimed at increasing equitable cultural participation for children and young people. The volume of activity was matched by a commitment to quality programming, with projects reaching children and young people in new and innovative ways that the participants themselves were encouraged to design and shape. Like CAHSC, success can be attributed to the principle of delivering culture in the places already habitually occupied by children and young people. Several models have been introduced through schools, through children and young people's social work services and in the community. Each project had an overarching aim to create numerous joining in points through co-design, and to provide a model and evidence for further development and roll out across Renfrewshire. The flagship project Castlehead School of Creativity, sought to embed arts and creativity across school curriculum, develop creativity as an essential life skill and increase the number of young people embarking on further and higher education in art and cultural subjects. The project has enabled Castlehead pupils to engage in creative thinking and apply this to individual areas of interest, promoting problem solving and entrepreneurial thinking, and has significantly increased participation and attainment in art and design subjects, building on the success of key programmes over the full academic year, including Creativity Week held each May. While the primary objective of the School of Creativity partnership has been to boost attainment across the curriculum, it also supports progression pathways for young people into cultural and creative industries and the promotion of learning and employment opportunities that were previously under-represented. The partnership model has the potential to be introduced in other high schools in Renfrewshire through the roll-out of Creativity Week or by developing bespoke partnerships with other educational institutions that represent areas of core strength. Furthermore, there is the opportunity for schools in Renfrewshire to also adopt Daydream Believers (National 5) Creative Thinking course or the (National 5) Creative Industries course supported by West College Scotland through their *Minds of Young Artists* (MOYA) programme. Renfrewshire's Cultural Champions Network is another project encouraging children and their families to participate in culture. The appointment of a Cultural Champion Co-ordinator, based with OneRen, now supports a network of primary school and nursery staff to promote opportunities for children to access their cultural entitlement outwith term time and to tackle barriers to access. Through the council's

major event programme and The Promise, including the Art Boss programme, Future Paisley has supported intensive engagement with young carers and care-experienced children and young people who face barriers to access their cultural entitlement, to co-design cultural activity they can more easily take part in. Future Paisley was able to fund activity that brought culture to children and young people—at school, at home, in their immediate community, and at access points for services.

To protect the legacy of projects, investment has also supported continued professional development for staff working with children and young people, to raise awareness of how culture can be used to build confidence, agency, and skills. Evidence from Future Paisley projects indicates a beneficial impact on those who engage, and this should be tracked to understand long-term benefit through further and higher education, employment, and adulthood. Significant progress has been made, but regular, easy access to cultural activity, despite its proven health and wellbeing benefits for children and young people, is not yet achievable for everyone who wants to participate. Renfrewshire Council's commitment to investment in cultural venues is commendable, and this should be supported by accessible, free-to-access programming in places across Renfrewshire where children and young people ordinarily spend time. This will require a future programming strategy that is co-designed and inclusive of community-based artist and resident opportunities and free-to-access local events and performances.

Existing research supplemented by evidence gathered locally through Future Paisley demonstrates culture can help improve outcomes for residents. The opportunity is now to identify how this can be achieved and sustained, and if there are further areas where integration will deliver benefits and impact.

The following recommendations are made:

Four models developed through Future Paisley have consistently produced qualitative data that demonstrate positive outcomes: Culture, Arts, Health & Social Care (CAHSC), Social Prescribing, Castlehead School of Creativity and The Promise/ArtBoss. It is recommended these projects are continued to enable further evaluation of the long-term benefits. A library of case studies and evidence reviews has been established to support and inform future investment decisions, and this can be accessed online at <https://ccse.uws.resources>.

For Renfrewshire Council, within the council plan, there are priority areas where art and culture can continue to have an impact through integrated service design:

Place

- Continue to use arts and culture to drive positive area image, build tourism growth, and job creation through Renfrewshire's Tourism Action Plan.
- Encourage developers to invest in arts and culture strategy under community benefit obligations and Percent for Art.
- Integrate art and creative practice through the council's community engagement programme linked to housing regeneration and use culture in the co-design and ongoing maintenance of neighbourhood environments—homes, community spaces and green space.
- Use culture to boost inclusion, participation, and community cohesion, embedding art and culture within the emerging *Connected Communities* model and through the council's engagement policy, maximise the relationship between cultural engagement and civic engagement, identifying and supporting the diverse needs of communities.

Economy

- To help people access employment and training, use arts and culture to develop confidence and soft skills towards employment readiness, working with specific beneficiary groups.
- Continue to increase programmes for young people and school leavers that promote pathways in the cultural and creative sectors with University of West of Scotland and OneRen.

Fair

- Use art and culture to supplement school learning such as participatory experiences for cognitive development and academic achievement and to develop soft skills such as collaboration and problem solving and identify opportunities to roll-out the Castlehead School of Creativity model to other high schools.
- Identify opportunities to support young people and adults to re-engage with learning and to include cultural activity as part of the first Whole Family Wellbeing hub.
- Through CAHSC, develop a social prescribing framework in Renfrewshire, which uses referrals to art and cultural activity to reduce loneliness and build confidence for older people, support intergenerational work, act as a preventative measure in adult mental health services, extend to clinical settings as therapy and create more opportunities through self-directed support. Similarly, use arts and culture linked to physical health to support rehabilitation and building motor skills following physical trauma or ill-health and preventing falls among older people.
- Use art and culture to boost wellbeing and personal development for people engaged with criminal justice services to encourage positive life choices and build positive social connections.

Green

- Through RenZero, use art and culture as a tool to explain ideas and prompt debate about climate change and engage the cultural sector to actively contribute to Renfrewshire's response to the climate crisis.

Highlight #4:

Programming strategy

Future Paisley invested in diverse cultural programming and created capacity across the cultural sector to ensure cultural activity was delivered in multiple locations—established venues and in surprising, unusual locations, mixing free-to-access and paid-for experiences. Future Paisley followed two distinct routes to increase wellness through its programming. The first involved piloting intensive small-scale cultural interventions with groups of individuals experiencing similar challenges, such as Art Boss (care-experienced children and young people) and the Wallneuk Crafters (social justice programme). This type of activity is widely recognised as having a positive impact on health and wellbeing and can drive long-term benefits for the individual and reduce the requirement for public-service intervention in future. While this has been further evidenced through Future Paisley, given the relatively small numbers of individuals involved, it can be a costly intervention to sustain long-term.

In addition to targeted activity, Future Paisley recognised the importance of regularly engaging large numbers of people in less intensive cultural activity—attending free outdoor events, museum and cinema visits or gig attendance, and the potential of this type of cultural experience to generate significant population level change and to help people to live longer, happier, and healthier lives. Evidence gathered from attendees at Renfrewshire's large-scale cultural experiences confirms social benefits as well as economic impact for Renfrewshire. Future Paisley has demonstrated the value of both targeted and less intensive cultural activity. There was an impressive commitment to remove barriers to cultural attendance and to create a diverse offer of 'joining-in opportunities', based where people naturally spend their time. This has made it easier for people to initially engage with culture and has provided stepping stones to increase participation.

Investment in CHEF enabled an expansive programme to be delivered across Renfrewshire from Tawyna Selene Renelle's transatlantic creative writing workshops culminating in the publication of Paisley Writing Threads, to Johnstone Brass Festival, to PACE Youth Theatre's Enchanted Forest at The Art Department, to School of African Culture's Afro-tire project, celebrating African culture through textiles as part of Black History Month. Cultural activity which responded to community interest (and need) was extensive. Art was used in different ways to support communities tackle issues important to them, from the commissioning of new work Rattle: Little Mother to The Other Side of the River, co-written with community about the stigma of living in a place defined by its deprivation through the media. Culture was delivered in unusual spaces, through town centre and neighbourhood art installations, in pop-up shops, through Paisley Opera at the Piazza, Jupiter + on Paisley High

Street, The Cycle Art Festival on Renfrewshire's cycleways, and through Dark Skies at Clyde Muirshiel regional park. Spectacular performances and premieres took place in Renfrewshire's main cultural venues and outdoors spaces with Paolo Nutini and Optimo X Bicep at Paisley Town Hall, John Bryne's Underwood Lane at Johnstone Townhall, 50,000 people at Paisley Halloween Festival, and multiple venues hosting the 2023 Royal National Mòd. In addition, targeted cultural programming was delivered through the many intervention programmes documented through the evaluation. The challenge is to find new ways to continue to deliver programming in a sustainable, inclusive, and co-ordinated way. While Future Paisley was able to deliver a geographically-dispersed programme and reached several demographic groups, there was a notable gap in programming specifically for people from ethnic minority communities and LGBTQ+ people. Support was removed too early from the Ethnic Communities Cultural Steering Group, which had begun to see success creating a network of community organisations working with minority ethnic groups. Future Paisley funded cultural programming through CAHSC, The Promise and Paisley Book Festival included LGBTQ+ content and activities, but this was limited. Programming specifically targeted to the LGBTQ+ community was not identified or evidenced through reporting, and this must be addressed in future.

Three main recommendations are made:

- 1.** Deliver a co-ordinated programming strategy progressed through the Renfrewshire Cultural Programming Group, pooling programming resource and audience, bringing together outdoor events, venue programming, community-based programming, and targeted interventions. The group will expand to include leadership from cultural organisations and across art forms.
- 2.** Undertake mapping of cultural and heritage assets across Renfrewshire and determine their contribution to delivering programming cultural activity and targeted health, wellbeing, and sustainability interventions.
- 3.** Establish a Cultural Development Group, made up of leaders representing all artforms across Renfrewshire to oversee the development and implementation of a new Cultural Strategy for Renfrewshire and to promote the importance of community and cultural engagement in relation to wellbeing, quality of life, health and the vibrancy and sustainability of Renfrewshire.

Highlight #5: Supporting the Cultural Sector

To achieve Renfrewshire's cultural ambition requires a strong, thriving cultural sector. The vibrancy and diversity and contribution of Renfrewshire's cultural sector is a core part of the region's cultural infrastructure. The development of new funding programmes has undoubtedly helped to build organisational capacity and sustainable practice and ensure a more diverse representation of communities in cultural activity. The positive impact of this is evidenced through sector growth and through direct feedback from those who have been supported through grants and partnership. Additionally Future Paisley projects created employment opportunities for hundreds of freelance artists who have been able to develop their practice and collaborate with local and national partners. Investment in strengthening the sector has leveraged external funding by cultural organisations, furthering their work and business models. Through evaluation of the funding programmes, recipients have increased capacity, delivered new and innovative work and collaborated with local, national, and international partners. CHEF grants have provided crucial stepping stone and gateway opportunities, including securing advocacy of local MSPs, bringing projects and programmes to parliamentary attention. Many cultural organisations who have received CODF funding have commented on the transformative impact of that investment, enabling development of governance and legal structures and building professionalism. The flexible and bespoke nature of CODF was heralded as unique and resulted in a new network of arts organisations. A critical mass of activity has been activated by investing in new organisations and those who are well-established and their feedback makes clear that regular, multi-year funding would enable recipients to plan on a firmer, long-term basis and to access other national funding sources. With a three-year commitment already confirmed by the council, there is the potential

to develop that ambition. Less visible, perhaps, are the networks established in the early years of Future Paisley, across art forms to encourage individual artists and practitioners to network and collaborate to access new opportunities for employment and creative practice. It is essential those important networks are refreshed and reestablished and that Renfrewshire's cultural sector can benefit from opportunities created through the council's investment in its cultural venues. Renfrewshire's cultural strategy must prioritise and advocate for the diverse network of cultural organisations and practitioners now based and practicing locally. Where Creative Renfrewshire plays an important role to support artists, across all artforms, to meet and collaborate and to promote commissions and employment opportunities, there is a similar opportunity for advocacy within public services to build strong relationships with the cultural sector by raising awareness of the value of arts and culture in local services; building capacity to bid for public sector work; engaging with the sector at a strategic level; changing procurement to better engage arts and cultural organisations; and changing monitoring and evaluation approaches to focus more on outcomes.

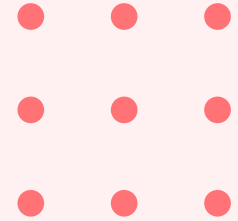
The next phase of cultural regeneration

For a decade, Renfrewshire Council has worked with OneRen and cultural partners to deliver brilliant work against a range of outcomes that directly contribute to Renfrewshire as a great place to live, work and learn—economic growth, boosting wellbeing, improving pride in place, and supporting the talent and skills of the next generation. Partner-led cultural regeneration is a proven way of ensuring Renfrewshire will thrive economically and be a fairer place.

To continue the ambition of Future Paisley and to ensure Renfrewshire remains a culturally vibrant place, ongoing collaboration is needed, as no single organisation has the funding or capacity to do this alone. That requires pooled and aligned funding, open and transparent conversations with communities about what they need, and a shared vision. Future Paisley has been effective because it has drawn on the unique culture and heritage of Paisley and wider Renfrewshire, directly informed by its communities. As Future Paisley funding ends, the role of the council and OneRen remain vital. As leaders of place, the council can continue to embed culture in its economic development, regeneration, and planning strategies, and engage with partners to ensure culture is recognised in wider approaches to community wellbeing, and with OneRen, play an important role in democratising culture and making sure Renfrewshire communities are involved in co-designing the cultural services that affect them. The council's funding of culture has a significant impact, and it supports a wide cultural ecology in Renfrewshire, including everyday cultural activity, a vibrant civil society and growth in the cultural and creative sectors. Working in partnership with the sector will be critical to future success and sustainability.

Renfrewshire’s Cultural Infrastructure

People: local cultural leadership within the council and OneRen, wider cultural leadership within cultural organisations, creative businesses, the community and voluntary sectors, local cultural partnership, and networks e.g., Creative Renfrewshire and The Arts Connection, and the community as participants in and leaders of culture.



Regional organisations: third sector organisations e.g., Engage Renfrewshire, community organisations e.g., Active Communities, Star Project, cultural organisations such as PACE, The Art Department, Right to Dance, Creative Renfrewshire, Erskine Arts, Paisley Opera, The Sculpture House, Bricklane, and Loud 'n' Proud.



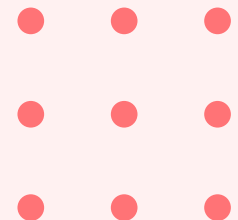
Physical assets: cultural assets such as libraries, Paisley Museum, The Secret Collection, arts centres, music venues, parks and heritage sites and the wider public environment, including the historic environment, connectivity to green space and nature, town and village squares, high streets, and public realm.



Funders: Renfrewshire Council, arms-length bodies such as Creative Scotland, VisitScotland, EventScotland, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Trusts and Foundations, Scottish Government, British Council, UKRI's research councils.



Place-makers outwith the cultural sector: Renfrewshire nurseries and primary and secondary schools, West College Scotland and University of the West of Scotland, research institutions e.g., Centre for Culture, Sport and Events, Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Scottish Enterprise, Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce, and Business Improvement Districts.



Maintaining a local strategic partnership, currently through the Future Paisley Partnership Board, provides a strong basis on which to build a shared understanding of culture and place between the council, the cultural sector, community and voluntary sectors, business partners and the wider public sector, and this should continue.

Renfrewshire's civic buildings play an important role in engaging, connecting, and empowering people, with cultural infrastructure outside Renfrewshire's main towns providing access to cultural participation for young people and others who experience barriers to travelling to access cultural venues and activities in urban areas. Understanding where culture can be best be delivered should be mapped and understood.

There is significant literature on the relationship between health and wellbeing and culture and cultural programmes have been shown to have specific benefits in clinical treatment of conditions such as dementia and depression. Through Future Paisley we have evidenced that cultural participation can support a preventative approach to mental ill-health and loneliness and that more broadly, good cultural infrastructure and universal provision of cultural services at a population level is beneficial to community wellbeing and building connected, resilient communities. Through Paisley Museum and regular cultural programming, Renfrewshire has a real opportunity to build culture into positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

There is a wealth of research illustrating the negative impact a lack of access to cultural participation can have on educational and employment life chances, that cultural is linked to social mobility, and that access to opportunity and aspiration to enter cultural or creative occupations is not equally distributed. Through Future Paisley, we have demonstrated we can support the growth of the creative industries and open access to jobs and skills to a diverse range of people currently under-represented in the sector. This should start with ongoing investment in cultural programmes to address low levels of participation with those least likely to engage, while the long-term sustainability of the culture sector, which underpins the development of the wider creative sector, needs public funding and recognising this symbiosis is vital. Against a backdrop of significant financial challenges for public services, investment in culture could be considered a nice-to-have. But it is for the same reason, that culture remains crucial. Cultural services, organisations, and practitioners support people through times of crisis, particularly the most vulnerable, and provide social connection, jobs, new adaptive skills, and underpin empathy and critical thinking.

Through the evaluation of Future Paisley and at the close of the current funding programme, we have identified five main areas of ambition for culture in Renfrewshire that will require detailed actions to be developed, and theme leads to be identified:

- 1. Strategy and partnership**—continue a partnership approach to cultural regeneration and the development of a new culture strategy and programming strategy for Renfrewshire, that continues the journey to the five Step Changes.
- 2. Access and inclusion**—provide locally accessible and inclusive cultural infrastructure and programming for all, addressing persistent inequalities exacerbated by the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, and protecting cultural provision for the general population.
- 3. Creative growth**—remove barriers to growth for cultural and creative industries, significantly increase commissioning opportunities for the cultural sector, and pursue development of creative sector as a driver of inclusive economic growth.
- 4. Increase cultural education and pathways to creative employment**—provide access for all children and young people to high-quality cultural education and routes to the cultural and creative industries from schools through to further and higher education and employment, partnering with the cultural sector and linking Renfrewshire's cultural attractions.
- 5. Health and wellbeing**—through CAHSC and OneRen, take a strategic approach to health and wellbeing that recognises the preventative and health benefits of culture in supporting people live longer and healthier lives.

To achieve this, there are five conditions that are required:

- 1.** Build capacity and resilience by continuing to fund and create participation opportunities for culture across Renfrewshire, targeting inequalities.
- 2.** Redistribute power and resource to enable a greater diversity of communities, cultural providers and practitioners to influence and shape local decision-making.
- 3.** Take a coherent approach to fund culture that supports the delivery of place-led strategies and continues to tackle the fragility of the cultural sector, by moving to a strategic, long-term and collaborative approach to funding culture at a place-based level.
- 4.** Contribute to a co-ordinated approach to develop an effective evidence base for the impact of culture on people and place, to effectively measure value and shape future investment.
- 5.** Build the cultural network in rural Renfrewshire, building links between cultural venues and events in rural areas to create a greater critical mass of activity that benefits all partners.

Where Renfrewshire Council can continue to have the most impact:

- 1.** Through place leadership, setting the context for a culturally thriving area by publicly championing culture and bringing together partners to develop a shared approach to supporting local culture and promoting tourism.
- 2.** Through strategy setting, coordinating the development of a new place-led strategy for culture, which sets out how local assets and resources will be mobilised to meet local needs.
- 3.** Through advocacy, working internally and with partners to ensure culture is reflected in the work of health, education, and economic development teams.
- 4.** Through community voice and engagement, work with different communities to ensure a diverse range of voices are heard when decisions are being made.
- 5.** Through Planning, integrate culture in the Local Development Plan so the historic environment is protected and enhanced, and consider cultural spend as part of contributions from developers.
- 6.** Through procurement, consider the opportunity for Percent for Art to link developers with artists and craft makers as part of the design process and explore a creative response to community benefits.
- 7.** Through estates and licensing, set the context in which cultural venues and creative businesses can flexibly operate.
- 8.** Through our commitment to equalities, understand the equality implications of our approach to cultural service delivery and our wider strategy for cultural regeneration.
- 9.** Through evidence-gathering, consistently monitor the economic, social, and cultural contribution of local services and establish baselines and measure the impact of cultural interventions on outcomes for people.
- 10.** Through national networking, work collaboratively and collegially with local authorities across Scotland to share learnings and models of practice, identify joint projects and opportunities to collectively advocate for and access cultural funding.

Culture...
it's who we are;
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Final remarks

I want to begin by thanking the Bid Team, the Future Paisley Partnership, the hundreds of local cultural organisations and individuals who contributed to the embedding of culture in the lives of people in Paisley and Renfrewshire and ultimately to the culture led regeneration we see around us. Most of all, I want to thank the people of Renfrewshire—your enthusiasm for cultural opportunities in their widest sense has been the key to the success of Future Paisley.

Culture is a bit of a nebulous concept; it's architecture, and art and music and theatre, and it's who we are; our shared traditions, our communities, our values. At its core, Future Paisley was a plan to use all of these versions of culture to develop our cultural offering, expand the cultural workforce, and offer as many opportunities to access cultural offering as possible, and to harness culture to regenerate Paisley.

Like many of our constituents I grew up in relative poverty, I know how life-changing it is to be able to visit museums, borrow books from libraries, try drama, take art classes. The breadth of the opportunities delivered and commissioned through Future Paisley have provided jumping in points for people of all walks of life, as well as targeting programming for people who would benefit most. I've had the pleasure of visiting organisations and attending events over the past seven years; it has been an absolute joy to see people embrace culture, developing skills and confidence, and supporting wellbeing. It has been a privilege to watch as people's life view and experiences have changed.

The ultimate aspiration of the programme is to make Paisley and Renfrewshire a place where people thrive, where they want to live, work and play, where their wellbeing is improved. A key part of that is the redevelopment of our cultural buildings, and renewed programming within them. The Town Hall, Library and Arts Centre have welcomed audiences both returning and new. We will soon welcome people back to the reimagined Paisley Museum, where we have worked with hundreds of people from communities both local and international to tell the true story of Renfrewshire's museum collection and create a museum that is for the people, co-designed by the people. These projects, along with significant housing regeneration projects in and around the town centre and ongoing programming, are bringing new residents and visitors to Paisley, and we are seeing more businesses open year-on-year.

Throughout this report there are examples of projects, partnerships and programming that have been enormously successful, accompanied by data that shows the scale of opportunity and change in Paisley and Renfrewshire over the past seven years. It has been an enormous effort, and though Future Paisley now comes to a close, the ambition continues.

Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes
Chair of Future Paisley Partnership Board

Appendices

Appendix 1:

Project Information

- 1a: Future Paisley Budget
- 1b: Future Paisley Activities (Full List)
- 1c: Future Paisley Cultural Funding Grants (Full List)

Appendix 2:

Programme Highlights

- 2a: Paisley
- 2b: Castlehead School of Creativity
- 2c: CAHSC
- 2d: Sculpture House
- 2e: Opening Year Programmes
- 2f: CODF & CHEF
- 2g: Pathways Programme

Appendix 3:

CCSE and the Evaluation Framework

- 3a: CCSE Final Report
- 3b: Future Paisley Evaluation Framework
- 3c: Paisley Halloween Case Study
- 3d: Art Boss Case Study
- 3e: Glen Cinema Case Study
- 3f: Open Mind Summit Case Study

Appendices can be found at:

<https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/future-paisley-evaluation>

