

Making --- the Clayton Street --- Corridor: ---



A WORKBOOK MARCH - DECEMBER 2022

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We would like to say thank-you to the wider team who contributed to this project, including academics (Paul Richter, Rebecca Prescott, David Butler and Loes Veldpaus), members of Newcastle City Council (Andrew Rothwell, Ed Banks and Vikki Leaney), our Critical Friends (Nadia Iftkhar, Tom Hopkin, Lee Etherington/Mariam Rezaei, and Rebecca Huggan), and the Clayton Street Corridor grassroots artist representatives (Jenny McNamara and Kitty McKay).



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1. Welcome / Thank you

Welcome!

In this workbook, we outline what the 'Making the Clayton Street Corridor' project is, what we have started to do, and what we would like to do next.

This includes some material originally shared via our blog – including contributions from Tom Hopkins, Kitty McKay, Lee Etherington and Vikki Leaney. We also share some of the resources we have been using in case they can be of wider use. Finally, we reflect on our progress to date. This means we ask important questions of ourselves.

Is what we are doing working?

What should we do more, or less, of?

Who is missing?

What could we do better?

We see this work as part of a conversation. If you have an idea, suggestion or question – please do get in touch with us. You can contact us in the following ways:

- At makingtheclaytonstreetcorridor@gmail.com
- You can comment on the blog, and/or look up everyone involved via the 'Meet the Team' page. Here, you will find links to more contact information. We're at <https://makingtheclaytonstreetcorridor.wordpress.com/>
- Via our Twitter @MakingCSC

Most importantly, we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved in the Making the Clayton Street Corridor project. We counted and 36 people came to one of our first events (at Newcastle University Business School / The Lubber Fiend), 57 to a coffee morning, 60 artists and creative practitioners voted online for their representative in June, and 46 artists and creative practitioners responded to the survey on creative workspace. Since the webpage launched in August we've had 1,132 individual visitors viewing the pages and blog posts 3,344 times.

We see this as testament to the incredible strength and vitality of the grassroots arts sector in Newcastle (and beyond).

We hope that this workbook can contribute to the conversation, and look forward to seeing/hearing from you again soon.

Emma, Hannah and Daniel

2. What is the Clayton Street Corridor?

written by Emma Coffield

Our project is called 'Making the Clayton Street Corridor'.

But what is the Clayton Street Corridor in the first place?

This is a difficult question, because we don't know everything yet. There is a lot still to be decided! What we do know is:

- The North of Tyne Combined Authority have allocated Newcastle City Council funding specifically to create a Cultural and Creative Zone (or CCZ).
- The zone will be in the area around Clayton Street. Originally, this meant the zone was going to be called the Clayton Street Corridor – hence our project name. But, as the zone is much larger than this one street, some people are worried that the 'Clayton Street Corridor' title is confusing. At the moment, the zone is known both as the 'Clayton Street Corridor' and 'Newcastle's Cultural and Creative Zone'. We use 'Clayton Street Corridor' throughout this report to refer to the zone and will do until a formal decision is made.
- The Clayton Street Corridor has funding to run from 2022-2027.
- Various groups and individuals are already involved (see the Governance Diagram below for more information).
- You can also find more information at: <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/our-city/culture-newcastle/cultural-and-creative-zone>

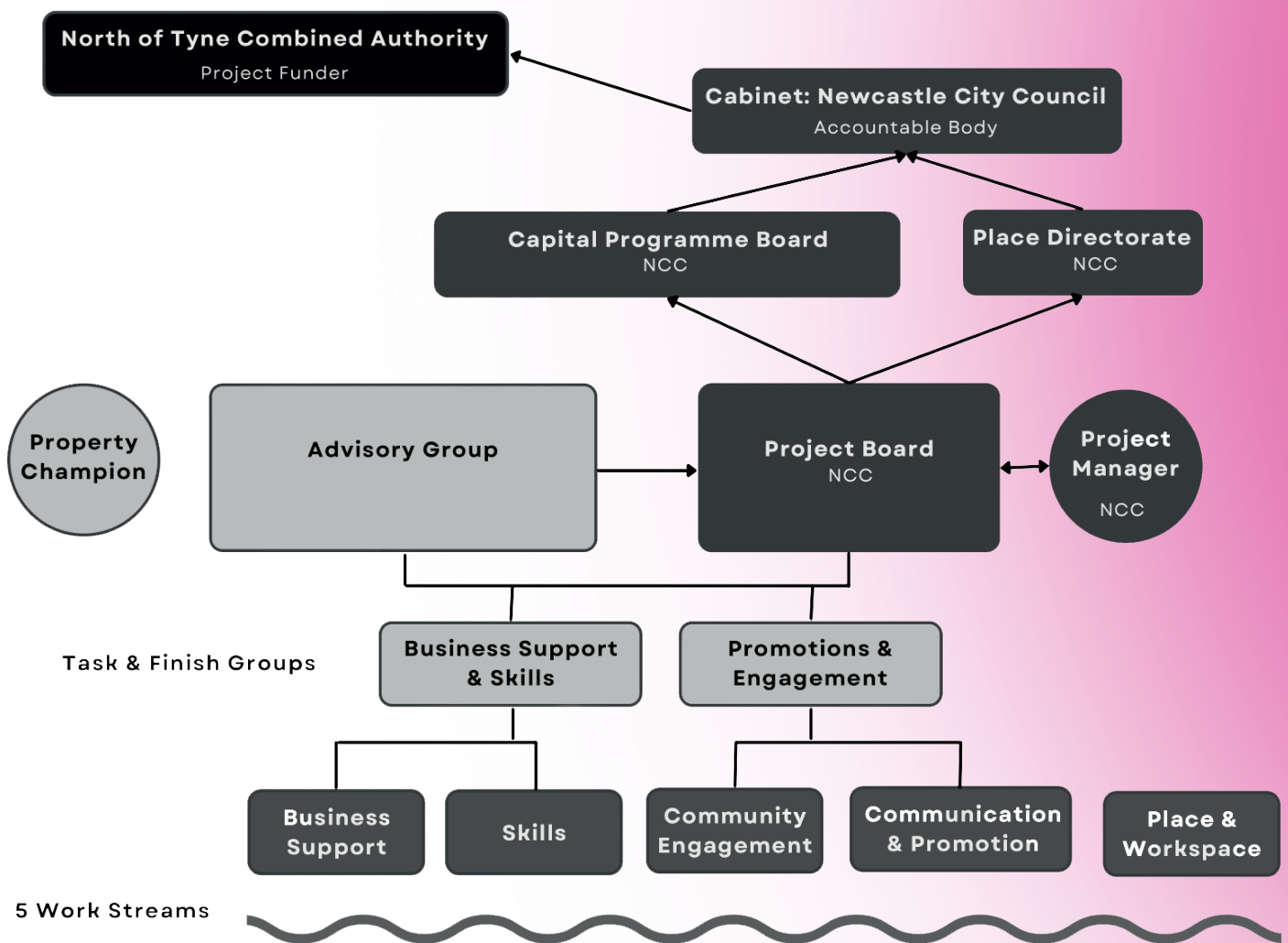
We also know that many grassroots artists and creative practitioners are stretched for time, and perhaps don't even know this is happening. That is very much the point of our project: to raise awareness and help grassroots artists and creative practitioners get involved – and benefit from – these developments.

2a. RESOURCE: Governance diagram

created by Hannah Marsden

[This image/text was originally shared as a blog post on our webpage. Many thanks to Hannah for letting us share it again here.]

We've created a handy diagram to help make visible the governance structure behind the Clayton Street Corridor. The explanations (below) have been developed with input from Ed Banks and Vikki Leaney at Newcastle City Council and describe each element in the diagram and its role in the governance of the CCZ. We hope it can be a tool to demystify some of what goes on 'behind the scenes'.



Project Funder: North of Tyne Combined Authority

North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) is a partnership of three local authorities: Newcastle, North Tyneside, and Northumberland, with a directly-elected Metro Mayor.

NTCA has awarded £1.7 million to Newcastle City Council (NCC) to deliver the CCZ over 5 years. NTCA have no further decision-making power provided that the project is delivered in accordance with the proposal. Quarterly reports are provided to NTCA including progress and milestone updates, spending updates, and achieved outputs.

Accountable Body: Cabinet, Newcastle City Council

Cabinet is the part of the Council that is responsible for the most strategic decisions. It comprises the leader of the council, deputy leader, eight councillors with portfolio responsibilities, and three councillors who are assistant members.

There are two members of Cabinet whose portfolio responsibilities relate to the CCZ. Councillor Hay's remit is resilience, business and jobs growth. Councillor Story's remit is culture. Both are regularly briefed about the CCZ and have influence over direction and decisions.

Capital Programme Board

This includes the Chief Executive, the Finance Director and other Senior Directors at Newcastle City Council who meet on a monthly basis.

The Project Board will report to the Capital Programme Board only on major decisions (e.g. when entering into grant agreements or legal obligations with another body).

Advisory Group

The Advisory Group is made up of representatives from organisations and groups who have a shared interest in making the zone a success. Initial members of the Advisory Group were invited by the Project Board in 2022.

The Advisory Group has no decision-making powers. It provides advice and guidance on content and priorities to the Project Board. The Advisory Group meets approximately every 2-3 months (minutes available at <https://makingtheclaytonstreetcorridor.wordpress.com/grassroots-artists-rep/>).

The Advisory Group currently includes:

- Senior Advisor for Culture at NCC (Jim Mawdsley) - Chair
- Newcastle University (currently Jane Robinson or Rachel Pattison)
- Northumbria University (currently Dan Monnery)
- Newcastle College (currently Jon Ridley or Veronica Spowart)
- NGI (currently Ben Whitfield)
- NE1; Culture Compact/Newcastle Creates (Tim Wickens <https://www.newcastlecreates.co.uk/about/>)
- 2 representatives of existing cultural venues (currently Tyne Theatre and Newcastle Arts Centre)
- 1 representative of cultural freelancers (currently Rhonda Fenwick, back-up is Paul Miskin)
- 1 representative of grassroots artists (currently Jenny McNamara, back-up is Kitty McKay, <https://makingtheclaytonstreetcorridor.wordpress.com/grassroots-artists-rep/>)
- 1 representative of voluntary/community sector (currently Gemma Dyer, Princes Trust, a charity, based in 'zone', supporting young people to get into jobs, education and training)

- 1 representative of residents (not currently in place); and the possibility of 2 co-optees as required (this could be Grainger Market, Historic England, Arts Council England or other sub-sector representative body)

Place Directorate

This includes the heads of services at Newcastle City Council such as Head of Property, Head of Planning, Head of Arts & Culture, Head of Economic Development, Head of Housing, Head of Transport who meet on a weekly basis.

The Project Board will report to the Place Directorate to sign off on mid-level decisions (e.g. to seek approval to launch an open call to a business and skills development fund).

Work Streams

Five work streams have been identified to enable council officers to keep track of what is being developed through the CCZ: Place & Workspace, Business Support, Skills. Communication & Promotion, Community Engagement. The areas can merge into each other (e.g. artists want to know how to manage their own workspace, so this has been linked with business support).

Project Board and Project Manager

A Project Manager (Vikki Leaney) has been appointed to oversee the development and delivery of the CCZ over the 5 years (2022-2027). The Project Manager is part of the Project Board which is the main team of Newcastle City Council officers that are responsible for the project and day-to-day decision making. This includes Economic Development Officers (Ed Banks) and Culture & Tourism Manager (Andrew Rothwell). Only the Project Manager works on the CCZ full-time. Officers from other departments might join the Project Board as and when required/appropriate (e.g. Finance, Planning, Capital Investment, Property).

Property Champion

This is a consultant appointed by the council through a procurement process to build and disseminate knowledge about the properties in and around Clayton Street. Broadoak Asset Management has been appointed as Property Champion on a contractual relationship for six months.

Task & Finish Groups

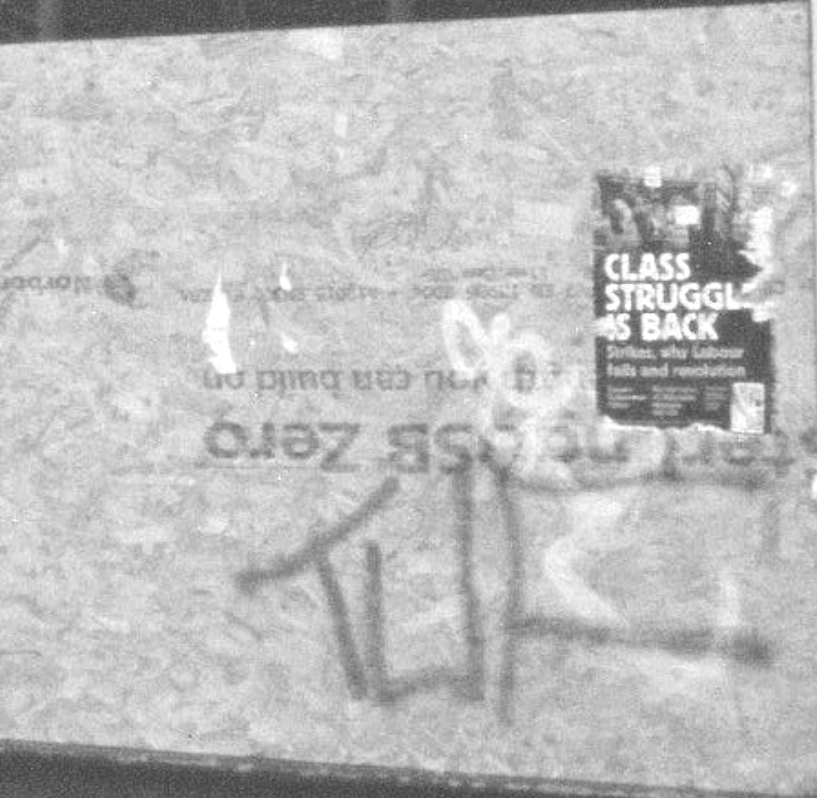
These are ad hoc groups which focus on big topics that can't be covered in as much detail by the Advisory Group alone. Membership is based on who is interested in the topic or task. People from the Advisory Group might decide to be part of a Task & Finish Group and additional people might be co-opted (from within the council or external). Whilst these are informal groups, minutes of meetings are taken and progress is reported back to Advisory Group.

Unlike the Advisory Group, which exists for the duration of the CCZ project, the Task & Finish Groups come together when a task has been identified and may disband once the task has been resolved. Two Task & Finish Groups have been set up so far.

- Promotions and Engagement Task & Finish Group will focus on developing a communications strategy for the CCZ. The group has internally co-opted Newcastle City Council Communications Lead to support.
- Business Support & Skills Task & Finish Group met in August 2022 and may meet again in January 2023 to reflect on the success of the open call for funded pilot projects (<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/our-city/culture-newcastle/cultural-and-creative-zone#Skills>). This group also includes officers from Northumberland and North Tyneside councils.

Possible future Task & Finish Groups might include Place & Creative Workspace and Community Engagement.





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TAKING SELFIES WITH FOREST
AS THEY DANCE AMONGST THE
OF OUR FUTURES

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2b. Creative and Cultural Zones (Elsewhere)

written by Lee Etherington

[This text was originally shared as two blog posts on our webpage. Many thanks to Lee for letting us share it again here]

Blog One

Hello. My name is Lee Etherington and I've been involved in producing music events and related projects on Tyneside and further afield for 20 years. I first got involved in this work through a desire to bring the kind of artists to the region that weren't visiting and to promote the region's artists, and those aspirations have kept me busy since the late 1990s. In 2011 I launched what is now called Tusk Music Projects and the TUSK Festival, which has to date worked with artists from over 30 countries and managed to develop an international reputation for our work that we hope shines favourably on the region.

As soon as I heard about the plans for a creative zone in Newcastle, I wanted to know more. To be honest, in the past I may have flirted with the idea that artists and organisations being given spaces to inhabit and enrich and then moved along in the face of more lucrative developments was perhaps the natural order of things. And artists are adaptable people who can often use such upheaval to their creative advantage. But in a world increasingly reshaped at the whims of overseas money and the creeping suspicion that money laundering has too many seats at the urban development table, question marks keep popping up. Added to this, our current shade of government seems totally removed from comprehending how 'the arts' work and their value to our education system and our economy.

I can't help thinking that the Clayton St Corridor is a chance to do something better. To provide concrete support to the region's arts world at a uniquely critical time. To try to build something that is more than keeping things tidy for someone's later property portfolio enhancements. To create something with long-term vision that, first and foremost, serves and engages – and, ideally, is taken hold of by – the local community. And that provides a reflection of that community. So these thoughts will guide my research for this project and in my next post I'll talk about examples I've found of such zones in other cities and how they do and don't address these issues.

Blog Two

Following my first post and thoughts on creative zones not just being fluffers for developers to then swoop in once 'the arts' have restored an area's desirability (and kept the buildings upright), I wanted to consider some examples of how this has been addressed elsewhere.

There are numerous such schemes in London currently, all look ambitious though all seem to accept the transitional nature of such projects. For example, International House in the Brixton Creative Enterprise Zone is a "five year meanwhile use located in a former council office building in Brixton town centre." It does seem to have considered what it can do socially and for the local community and businesses, to some extent. For example, "It operates on a 'BuyGiveWork' structure, whereby for every desk sold on commercial terms, one is given away rent free to support charities and social purpose organisations. The 70,000 sq ft building is split into five 'Buy Floors'

and five 'Give Floors'. The Buy Floors house everything from individual freelancers to a company with 100 employees. The Give Floors accommodate users at risk of displacement due to changing market conditions".

But transience for the project seems to be accepted. And the last sentence suggests that, if International House get a better offer, those on the Give Floor will be turned out. Why are the needs of 'the arts' seen as secondary – in fact subservient – to the needs of city development and big commerce? And aren't 'the arts' big commerce? They are a huge part of our economy.

The supposed streaming "debate" that mainstream media has been having with itself only speaks to Spotify and the self-proclaimed 'major' labels, oblivious to the fact that 99% (conservative estimate) of people in music are small scale freelancers struggling to make a living. This attitude is reflected perfectly in cultural zone plans if they are seen as 'allowed' to exist until other 'proper' business needs the space.

So my interest was caught by reports of the City of St Paul in Minneapolis and their Creative Enterprise Zone. "The CEZ nonprofit organization was formed in 2009 in response to the displacement of creative studios during construction of light rail on University Avenue and the great recession, and grew out of an initiative by the St. Anthony Park Community Council to ensure that the area's creative nature remains intact."

Further, "The physical landscape of the City of Saint Paul is rapidly changing. Large scale construction projects such as sports stadiums, multi-unit housing complexes, and business towers are popping up all over. These changes are often being driven by external wealthy investors and have the potential to fracture the sense of neighborhood and community fabric through displacement of existing residents and small businesses. The Creative Enterprise Zone (CEZ) is a newly established non-profit representing a coalition of residents and business owners working in some capacity in a creative enterprise or small-scale manufacturing."

If we take this at face value, this is a creative zone driven by the needs of the community when faced with widespread faceless development. St. Paul sounds a lot like Newcastle to me. Their CEZ looked at the idea of Creative Placemaking and prioritising the zone as a place where "community members, artists, arts and culture organizations, community developers, and other stakeholders use arts and cultural strategies to implement community-led change." Simple ideas like a mural festival that basically invited the people of the area in to determine the outer physical appearance of the zone. And in doing so, it becomes the community's. This has to be the way we do it in Newcastle if the Clayton St Corridor is to have any meaningful impact.

Lee Etherington is the Creative Director at TUSK Music, and a Critical Friend of the Making the Clayton Street Corridor project.

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- Gronfor, C., Moreno, A. and Rahman, S (2019) 'Analysis of Placemaking in the Creative Enterprise Zone'. Available at Analysis of Placemaking in the Creative Enterprise Zone (umn.edu)
- Lindahl, K (2019) 'What's With St. Paul's Creative Enterprise Zone and Why Does It Matter?' [online] Available at: What's With St. Paul's Creative Enterprise Zone and Why Does It Matter? - Minnesota Commercial Real Estate

3. What is the 'Making the Clayton Street Corridor' project?

written by Emma Coffield

'Making the Clayton Street Corridor' is a project run by an interdisciplinary team. It is funded by Newcastle City Council. Between March – December 2022 we ran events, created resources and supported relationship building that enabled meaningful collaboration between grassroots artists and creative practitioners and policy-makers.

We did this because we want to see the opportunities developed as part of the Clayton Street Corridor champion grassroots artists. This means that we want development to be 'grassroots-led' – so that important decisions and actions don't just include grassroots artists and creative practitioners, but are influenced, shaped and led by grassroots artists and creative practitioners. We want to make sure that the Clayton Street Corridor meets the needs of grassroots artists and creative practitioners, so that they can benefit from the plans alongside other artistic and creative groups in the city.

In order to achieve this, we work 'in-between' artists and creative practitioners and policy-makers at Newcastle City Council. We don't have any power to make decisions, and we don't sit on the Advisory Board or any of the Task and Finish groups that form the governance of the Clayton Street Corridor. Instead, we work to establish and strengthen channels of communication between Newcastle City Council and grassroots artists and creative practitioners. We gather information, co-ordinate activity and resources, and make as much as possible available via our blog – so that artists and creative practitioners know what is happening, have a chance to ask questions and opportunities to get involved.

We want to make the Clayton Street Corridor together!

3a. Who is involved?

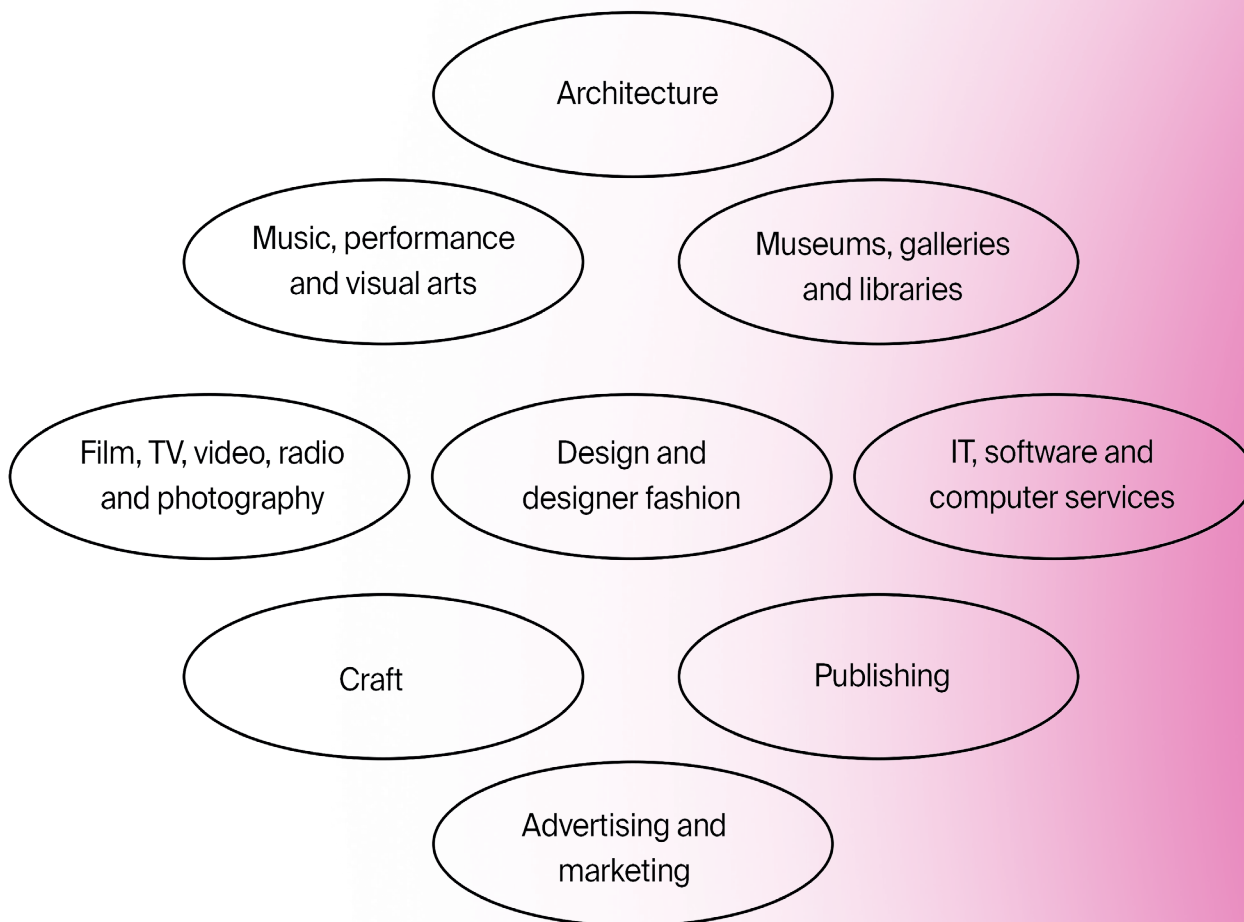
written by Emma Coffield

Who is involved in the Clayton Street Corridor?

This is a tricky question. We don't know the names of everyone who is, or will be, involved in the Clayton Street Corridor yet, as things are changing all the time. We have put as many names as we can into the Governance Diagram (above), but we are aware that this won't include everyone, that some names will change over time, and lot of activity won't be listed there.

Some key groups and terms

The Cultural and Creative Industries: The Clayton Street Corridor is designed to benefit the 'Cultural and Creative Industries' in Newcastle (Newcastle City Council, 2022) very broadly. These industries were defined in the UK by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 2001) as 'industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent which have a potential for job and wealth creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property'. They are now commonly held to include the following:



This means that the Clayton Street Corridor will need to involve a whole host of different groups and audiences.

Grassroots artists and creative practitioners: In our project, we focus specifically on grassroots artists and creative practitioners. You can see more about who our use of this term includes in Section 3c (below).

Policy-makers: We use this term somewhat loosely to describe anyone whose job it is to help design cultural policy (in our case, 'policy' documents are those that guide decision making within local government), and who are tasked with 'delivering' the Clayton Street Corridor. This would include staff from the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) and Newcastle City Council, such as economic advisors, cultural managers, project managers, etc.

Our team

For clarity, we've listed everyone involved in our project below.

Core team

- **Dr Emma Coffield** - Principal Investigator. Emma is a Lecturer in Museum, Gallery and Heritage Studies in the School of Arts and Cultures at Newcastle University.
- **Hannah Marsden** - Research Assistant. Hannah is a Postgraduate Researcher in Media Culture and Heritage at Newcastle University.
- **Daniel Newberry** - Research Assistant. Daniel is a Postgraduate Researcher at Newcastle University Business School.

Artist reps

- **Jenny McNamara** - Representative for Grassroots Artists. Jenny is an artist/designer and arts organiser. She runs The Spaghetti Factory with Eve Cromwell.
- **Kitty McKay** - Backup Representative for Grassroots Artists & Critical Friend. Kitty is an artist and facilitator. She runs the group walking project Incursions with Archie Smith, a socially-engaged practice invested in the facilitation of alternative economies and community, in and outside of arts spaces.

Newcastle City Council

- **Andrew Rothwell** - Team Member. Andrew is the Culture and Tourism Manager at Newcastle City Council.
- **Ed Banks** - Team Member. Ed is an Economic Advisor in the Economic Development Team at Newcastle City Council.
- **Vikki Leaney** - Project Manager for the Cultural and Creative Zone at Newcastle City Council.

Academics

- **Dr Paul Richter** - Team Member. Paul is a Senior Lecturer in Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Newcastle University Business School.
- **Dr Loes Veldpaus** - Team Member. Loes is a Lecturer in Architecture and Urban Planning in the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at Newcastle University.
- **Dr Rebecca Prescott** - Team Member. Rebecca is a Senior Lecturer in Entrepreneurship at Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University.
- **David Butler** - Team Member. David is a Senior Lecturer and the Co-ordinator of LifeWorkArt in the School of Fine Art at Newcastle University.

Critical Friends

- **Rebecca Huggan** - Rebecca is the Director of The NewBridge Project.
- **Dr Tom Hopkin** - Tom is the Director of The Lubber Fiend.
- **Nadia Iftkhar** - Nadia is a professional dance artist and founding Artistic Director and CEO of Company of Others.
- **Lee Etherington/Mariam Rezaei** - Lee is the Creative Director at TUSK Music. In December 2022, Mariam, a multi-award winning composer, turntablist, writer and performer, took over the reins.



3b. Where does the money come from?

written by Hannah Marsden

Over two blog posts in August 2022, our Research Assistant, Hannah Marsden, addressed some of the big initial questions. Where is the money coming from? And where is it going?

Funding for the Clayton Street Corridor

At the first workshop for Making the Clayton Street Corridor (29th March 2022), we were joined by Ed Banks from the Economic Development Team at Newcastle City Council. Ed shared some slides which introduced the Clayton Street Corridor, the vision behind it and ideas for what it could become.

Ed told us that the funding to develop the Clayton Street Corridor is coming from North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA). To secure the money, Newcastle City Council submitted a proposal and business plan to NTCA and theirs was one of three successful proposals.

A total of £1.7 million has been secured to develop the Clayton Street Corridor over an initial five-year period. Newcastle City Council is accountable for administering this money, guided by an Advisory Group.

£1.7 million might sound like a lot but it is a relatively small amount when you think it's going to be spread across five years. We also know that Clayton Street Corridor is expected to be self-sustaining once the North of Tyne Combined Authority funding ends in March 2028. Ed shared that over the next five years, Newcastle City Council will be looking for additional funding and investment to sustain the Clayton Street Corridor in the longer term.

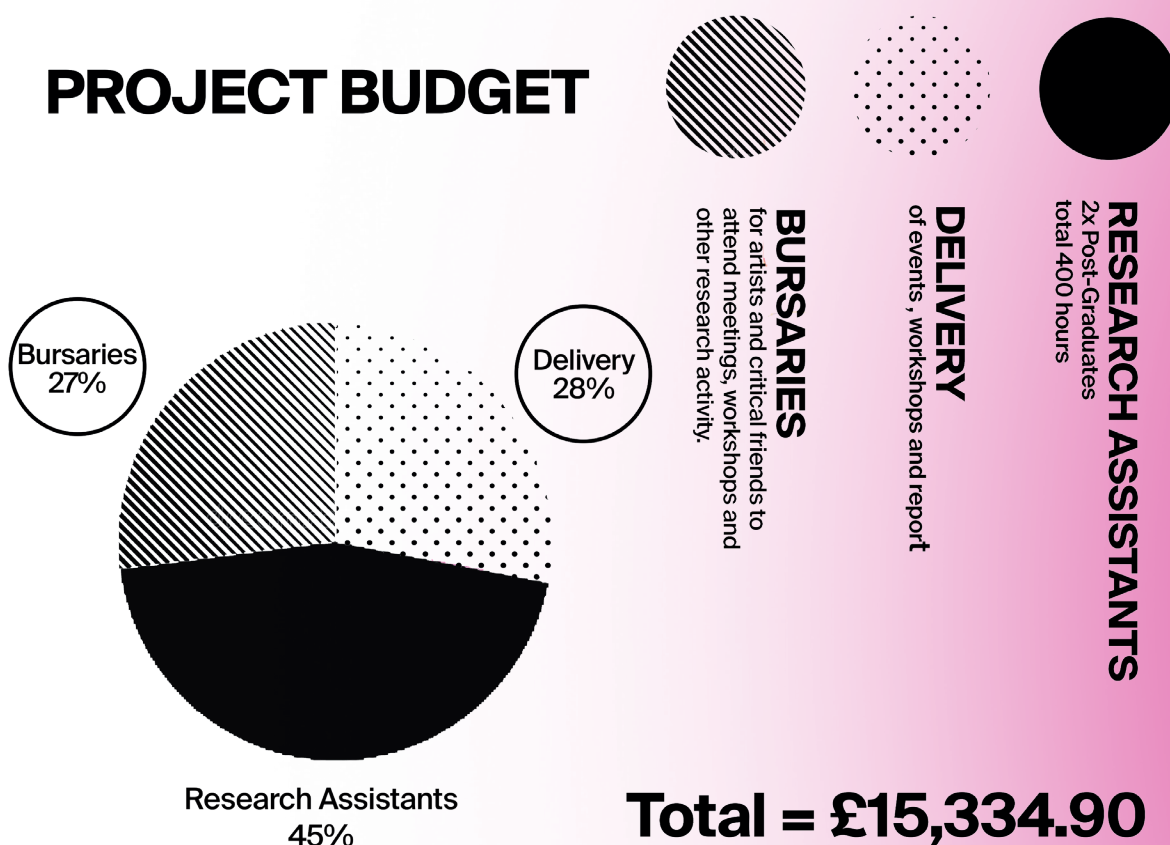
Whilst we don't know exactly what the £1.7million is going to be spent on, we do know some of the things that have been earmarked. We know that the first round of a Workspace Small Grant Scheme was announced this month. We also know that a new Project Manager has been appointed (Vikki Leaney) and that packages of skills and business support are being developed.

If you have any specific questions about the money, let us know and we'll do our best to find out. We'll share what we learn on this blog, at future events and in our final report.

Our project budget

So far, we've provided some key information about the money for the Clayton Street Corridor (as far as we know). But we haven't yet told you who pays for our project, and what the money will be spent on. And we want to be transparent about that too. So, here goes...

- Our research project is funded by Newcastle City Council
- The cost of this nine-month project is £15,334.90



This chart shows a breakdown of the budget as we intend to spend it. Just under half of the funds will pay for two Research Assistants to work on the project (Hannah Marsden and Daniel Newberry). All other academics contribute their time in kind (i.e. for free, as they are already paid by their respective universities) as do the members of Newcastle City Council.

Just over a quarter of the funds will be spent on the delivery of the workshops, events and reports. This includes things like venue hire, printing (including the design and print copies of this workbook) and biscuits. The final quarter has been allocated for bursaries to support artists and critical friends to attend meetings, workshops and other research activities.

*In the end, our spending was slightly different to this plan. We decided to host more events (and to pay for venue hire, biscuits etc.) and to have more bursaries for grassroots artists and creative practitioners. To pay for this, we used an underspend in the money claimed by our four Critical Friends.

3c. Who is the project for?

written by Hannah Marsden

In our project, we focus on 'grassroots artists and creative practitioners'. We want to be as inclusive as possible. But we realise that sometimes these terms aren't clear, and that some people who may benefit from our project may not feel that those terms include them, or describe what they do.

We want to emphasize
that everyone is welcome!

We don't just mean people who make art. We know there are lots of people who work in the arts, or who work with artists, or use arts methods, who wouldn't feel comfortable calling themselves an artist or creative practitioner. This might include youth workers, exhibition makers, music promoters and more.

We're not restricted to visual arts practitioners. This project aims to benefit practitioners from all disciplines – writing, film, theatre, dance, crafts, music, etc. etc. In that, we include freelancers, hobbyists, students, people who work alone or in groups or for organisations, paid or unpaid.

We don't just mean the young folk. The Business Plan for the Clayton Street Corridor emphasises an aim to support young artists and entrepreneurs to establish and develop a sustainable practice. But we know from prior research that supporting artists' development requires an ecology of practitioners of all stages and disciplines. There is no upper age limit to an artist's learning.

You don't have to be based on Clayton Street to benefit. The workspace, skills and business development opportunities will be available to artists based outside the Clayton Street Corridor from all parts of Newcastle and surrounding towns, cities and rural areas.

But I still don't understand
what the Clayton Street Corridor is!

Neither do we, really. But if you'd like to see how local policy might benefit you, you are very welcome to come on a journey with us. This project supports you to ask questions, challenge language, and demystify concepts and processes so that the Clayton Street Corridor can better address the needs of grassroots artists/creative practitioners. The Clayton Street Corridor will be what we make of it. So, get involved and have a say.



3d. RESOURCE: Welcome statement

written by Emma Coffield

We know that people don't always feel welcome or comfortable when they come along to events. We developed a welcome statement to try and address some of those feelings, and to make some key expectations and rules clear. Many thanks to everyone who has made suggestions or changes.

The welcome statement is included here as a resource for you to use, if you would like to. Please feel free to adapt it as you see fit.

Welcome statement

I'd like to welcome everyone to this session today, on behalf of the organising team, including [names]. As part of that welcome, I'd like to explicitly recognise our role and responsibilities, by setting out a few expectations for our discussions today. We hope these will support and enable conversation, and help everyone feel welcomed.

- Everyone is welcome here.
- This is your space. Move around the room as you wish. Make yourself comfortable. Ask for changes. You don't need permission to leave, or return.
- If you are speaking, think carefully about the terms you are using. We all come from different disciplines and backgrounds. We will speak in different languages. What is obvious to you may be impenetrable to others. Explain everything you are saying. Allow us all access to your ideas.
- Questions are welcome here. No question is ever too obvious, or too stupid.
- In some sessions, you can ask questions right away. In others, we might ask you to hold onto those questions until the end. This will be made clear at the beginning of each session.

- Feedback is welcome here. We welcome discussion and recognise that we can all learn from each other. This means that it is ok to be critical, or to reject ideas and suggestions. Tell us what won't work and why. We understand that in taking the time to do this, you are helping us/others to improve. You will not, in Sara Ahmed's words, 'become the problem' in speaking of the problem. We will make the time to listen, and to act.
- Being critical isn't the same as being cruel. For example, not everyone speaks from the same position. Some of us have (or traditionally have had) more power in these discussions than others. Are people dependant on what you say here? Might they find it difficult to speak, or to join a conversation? Please keep that in mind when you respond.
- Some of our language is likely to involve values or understandings not shared by others. Think about what you might be perpetuating. For example, don't generalise about groups of people. Artists are not all the same. Neither are academics, or policy-makers, or developers. To generalise is to wash away difference, to render people invisible. Generalisation can be deeply offensive.
- Sometimes we all get it wrong. Don't worry if you don't have the 'right' terms or haven't yet found a way to phrase things yet. See this as a space to try and find those words. Be kind to those trying to find their way. If you get it wrong, it's ok to say sorry, listen, and try again.
- If you start to feel uncomfortable, don't wait. Interrupt. Raise your hand, and [names] and I will stop the conversation. You don't have to explain.
- Hate speech, of any kind, will not be tolerated. We can, and we will, ask you to leave.
- This is your space, and you are all welcome here.

Note One: With thanks to Ashley Mason, Loes Veldpaus, Sara Ahmed and Alison Phipps whose thoughts and work informed initial versions of this statement.

Note Two: Following feedback we have removed the term 'safe space' from this statement, in recognition that no space is safe for everyone, and there is still much work to be done.

Reference: Ahmed, S. (2017) *Living A Feminist Life*. Durham and London. Duke University Press

4. Why?

A really good question we often get asked is: why are you doing this?

Why does the Making the Clayton Street Corridor project need to exist?

As we pointed out above, the Clayton Street Corridor aims to support a whole host of different communities and individuals, based right across the Cultural and Creative Industries. Some of those sectors are, traditionally, very well established within policy-making. They are high-profile, have paid staff (and thus time), nominated representatives, established networks, and can easily attend meetings. They already have a seat at the table, as it were.

We don't believe that grassroots artists and creative practitioners have a seat at the table.

Our previous research has found that grassroots artists and creative practitioners can feel invisible when it comes to policy-making and long-term support (Coffield et al. 2020: 6). They often don't have the resource to attend meetings or get involved, as there are very few paid members of staff with capacity to take this on. Others are working multiple jobs already, or are so busy setting things up/running arts initiatives that there is no time to spare. It is important to recognise that grassroots work is often exhausting – and that grassroots artists and creative practitioners are unlikely to be able to call upon a dedicated and paid IT or HR team. Many lack access to basic equipment (e.g. photocopiers, printers or storage space). Moreover, while cultural freelancers in the North East have recently started to advocate for themselves (via NE Cultural Freelancers), grassroots artists and creative practitioners have no such 'voice' or network at present.

There are other problems too. Grassroots artists and creative practitioners are unlikely to have training in policy-making, and some of the terms and 'languages' used here can be deeply off-putting. Channels of communication between grassroots artists and creative practitioners and policy-makers can be opaque. There exists no 'space' where these groups regularly come together. There is also a historical lack of trust and unease.

This all means that grassroots artists and creative practitioners frequently miss out on the funding and support made available to other sectors within the Cultural and Creative Industries.

We want that to change. We want grassroots artists and creative practitioners to have a seat at the table.



4a. A note on waste

from Tom Hopkins

Critical Friend, Tom Hopkins, recently set up and opened The Lubber Fiend, a non-profit, DIY music venue and bar within the CCZ in Newcastle along with 2 other directors.

We asked Tom to share his experience of waste, especially in terms of resource and time loss, to highlight the issues that many grassroots artists and creative practitioners face when setting up their own spaces. He has illustrated this below.

This diagram shows the critical moments in the construction phase of the venue. It gives an overview of time loss due to external factors, some of which can be mitigated by better support for new arts organisations.

THE LUBBER FIEND



The Lubber Fiend Time Loss & Waste

Planning

1



SIX WEEKS LOST

The Planning Department exceeded their own deadline. Lack of communication compounded delays.

FIVE WEEKS LOST

No pattern of communication with Building Control. Complex matters were unresolved and we had to delay opening.



2

Building Control

FOUR MONTHS LOST

Massive delays as a result of poor communication and lack of a site visit. This was compounded by the surge in wholesale gas and oil. We were left unable to secure a Business Energy Provider.

Northern Powergrid

3



FIVE WEEKS LOST

The cost of materials rose significantly over the course of the build. Delays at the planning and building control phases meant we delayed buying certain materials. As they increased, our budget and contingency was quickly exhausted.

We were only able to continue by additional fundraising and using our personal savings.



4

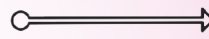
Material Costs

3 MONTHS LOST

Our budget did not allow for wages/reimbursement. We all (3 Directors) continued working and/or using personal savings to cover living costs. This impacted the time we could dedicate to opening the venue.

Cost of Living

5



Summary

We opened to the public in May 2022, but we believe that January 2022 would have been achievable. Delays from external bodies had a direct impact on our finances. Delays at points 1, 2 & 3 impacted our material costs explained in point 4. We worked with a modest budget of approximately £60,000 for the complete renovation of a warehouse space and equipping it as a music venue. Around £7,000 to £7,500 of these costs occurred as a result of escalating building material prices. Time lost creates wasted time. This impacts finances and the viability of certain projects. Our delays impacted potential earned income. A Four Month delay to our initial opening date meant we lost £70,000 to £80,000 in potential earned income.

4b. Making Space / Keeping Space

written by Kitty McKay

[This text was originally shared as a blog post on our webpage, and was later amended in line with Kitty's wishes. Many thanks to Kitty for letting us share it again here]

We invited artist Kitty McKay to share her reflections following a knowledge exchange workshop at Pop Recs in Sunderland. The event was intended to facilitate an honest exchange on how to make adaptive reuse for culture happen. It was organised by Loes Veldpaus, Ashley Mason and Emma Coffield (all from Newcastle University), and Martin Hulse from the Tyne & Wear Building Preservation Trust as part of the OpenHeritage series (you can find out more at OpenHeritage.eu).

Kitty is an artist and facilitator. She runs the group walking project Incursions with Archie Smith, a socially-engaged practice invested in the facilitation of alternative economies and community, in and outside of arts spaces.

Kitty (with Incursions) is the back-up Grassroots Artists' Rep for the Clayton Street Corridor Advisory Group, standing in for Jenny McNamara as needed. Here's what Kitty shared with us.

Making Space / Keeping Space

How do we disrupt and counteract power imbalances, policies, and decision-making processes?
How can we support adaptive reuse for culture towards sustainability?

Practicalities first, just to iron out my brain a bit. Going to Pop Recs was great (though I wish I knew there was a tab for coffee before splashing out a really expensive flat white on arrival). It's a really exciting space and the food was nice!! As a disabled person, the space felt accessible with clear signage and an atmosphere where needs could be communicated. Staff were lush and accommodating. Great loos - in the same way we've broadly come to realise we can't use venues without step-free access, I think we need to move beyond spaces with gendered toilets.

Too often, the venues used for these kinds of events feel like classrooms or clinics or Premier Inns so being able to ease into an airy, creative environment made me feel less surveilled and out of place, especially as we talked about making and keeping space, making a case for disruption and counteraction of power imbalances within. This space reflected back the possibilities of our work.

Would've been good to share pronouns?

On our table, there was a clear division between folks I'll term as 'space-bureaucrats' and 'space-users'. I think I am a 'space-user' and, despite wanting to know more about how and where and why to acquire space for grassroots / DIY arts work, I, as an artist and the grassroots rep in attendance, am a user of the space that the 'space-bureaucrats' were talking about acquiring, building, making and keeping.

They were so much louder and used a lot of language I didn't understand and when I did try and talk about being a 'space-user' they seemed to be unable to properly listen. The question posed in Ashley's email - How do we connect, collaborate, learn, and listen with others? - fell away a bit. I thought that perhaps groups could've been curated or arranged to give a better mix of people from different disciplines and backgrounds, with different experiences to offer to make it feel a bit more like an exchange (though I am unconvinced because over-organising groups could veer us back into the classroom we managed to escape with the venue choice...). Or we need some sessions on breaking apart some of the alienating language - or we could build a glossary to democratise the access to what feels like gate kept knowledge.

Across the day, something I felt came up a lot was 'civic pride'. It entered the conversation initially with Martin talking about how and if civic pride can be measured, specifically how space or developments within a local context are received by users and dwellers: if people 'identify' with something; if people see themselves in something. We talked about the near-impossibility of measuring civic pride with the languages and matrices that developers and councils use. I'm still formulating what my matrix for measuring pride would look like, or if it's necessary, for if we can't easily represent or measure civic pride, does it make it less susceptible to co-option, exploitation or monetisation by the forces we aim to disrupt?

I've forgotten their name but the person involved in setting up Pop Recs with ginger hair talked about being proud of the space; proud of Pop Recs within the context of Sunderland and being excited for how it might be used by people in the area. They talked about their mum being proud and the pride they had in being able to offer the space free of charge to groups who mightn't be able to afford it, or open it up for socially good activities to happen outside or beyond a capitalist value system. Martin talked about Sunderland's bid for City of Culture too - a certified badge of civic pride - and Pop Recs' development was part of that bid in a way. Pop Recs seemed to be part of an ecosystem in the area that lots of different people used and saw as useful, and took pride in.

Then I thought about this in relation to Dan and ReadingRoom. Does or can ReadingRoom inspire a sense of civic pride for folks living locally, shopping on that high street, using that part of the city in the same way people might identify with Pop Recs? When I roundabout asked if Dan thought local people felt any pride, he said "I think people are just glad the space is being used." And I felt, as we chatted to Dan about the project and the free labour he was putting in with Harley (and the artists), a bit pessimistic about being able to cultivate sustainable sense of pride, when the gallery will inevitably be transient, due to lack of time, money and energy from those who put into it. And it'll probably enforce an assumption of meanwhile-artist-space as temporary, fleeting, flighty and un-embedded. And because some can only do the free work because of privilege from elsewhere (examples for anyone could be a salaried job, stipends, familial wealth, race, class, gender intersections) the way they interact with the (art) world is different to marginalised approaches. The other question posed at the beginning of the session felt a bit crumbly too: *How can we support adaptive reuse for culture towards sustainability?*

Often the work artists do is seen as a luxury or a hobby at best, or ineffective and useless at worst, through the lenses of capitalism and some of the attitudes in the room at the event reflected this, which ultimately undermines the work we do. I have the words of a colleague ringing in my ears after recently publishing something on social media about their precariousness within the arts and what is valued and what is not.

Izzy Finch wrote: “neoliberal thought [has] led us to a place in society where creativity and culture are not valued economically...the state perceives this sector as something that is not a serious priority worthy of investing in as it will not effectively contribute to capitalism.”

It made me think about how we, as artists and ‘space-users’ need the value of our work recognised, remunerated and supported financially in the same way ‘space-bureaucrats’ do. Attitudes towards artists probably need to change as well as having our work and time paid for. We need more investment in the communities we conjure and the spaces we create as I do think these things combined with a promise of (some kind of) permanence can cultivate valuable and meaningful civic pride. We also probably need to be empowered to build, acquire or make space as I think we’d do it really, really well with our embedded experiences and knowledge.

But we also, as artists or space-users, need to stop doing things for free to avoid setting that as precedent, for our own sake and the sake of more marginalised arts workers who cannot afford to give their free time and free labour for free-ish space.

This then is less of a recap of the day, because I don’t really know how to condense all that information - a lot of it I didn’t understand - and more of a series of thoughts and feelings in response. It’s great to see success stories like Pop Recs and host events like this one there. I feel stupid admitting this but I wish I knew more developer-y language, or more of the logistics and I can’t tell if this is my responsibility to go seek out info and educate for myself or there should be more of a glossary to allow more artists / space-users / normal everyday people to get involved and build, acquire or make space with our experiences driving the process.

– Kitty McKay, July 2022 (revisions November 2022)

5. What has been happening?

written by Emma Coffield

The Making the Clayton Street corridor project began in March 2022. Our key aim was to ‘meaningfully engage grassroots artists and creative practitioners with the plans for a Cultural and Creative Zone (CCZ – known as the Clayton Street Corridor) in Newcastle’.

We hoped to do this by:

- Opening up spaces for dialogue
- Demystifying policy and planning in the arts
- Welcoming people

This work is important, because there currently exists no space (in-person or otherwise) that regularly brings policy-makers into contact with grassroots artists and creative practitioners. As some of our earlier research points out (Coffield et al. 2020), artists often don’t know who to contact in their local council and can feel ignored or invisible – especially in relation to ‘bigger’ or ‘landmark’ cultural venues.

Our earlier projects also pointed to the need to not just include artists and creative practitioners, but for change to be driven by them – with artists involved and engaged at every level of decision-making.

This is often difficult to achieve, not least because grassroots artists and creative practitioners often lack time (mainly because they are working in multiple jobs and cannot afford, literally, to work for free). In addition, the language used in arts policy can be off-putting, and the spaces involved in decision-making (e.g. group meetings) can be uncomfortable spaces.

In order to proactively change this, we set out to work with four ‘Critical Friends’, who would each be paid for up to 25 hours of their time to help guide the project, alongside an academic team (see above for the full list of team members). We would then:

1. Run at least 2 events to support grassroots artists to engage with the Clayton Street Corridor proposals in ‘real-time’.
2. Carry out qualitative research that would inform the Clayton Street Corridor proposals.

In the end, we did far more than this as we responded to suggestions and requests made by artists and creative practitioners as well as opportunities as they arose. This work included:

- Designing and developing a dedicated webpage and blog
- Running an election
- Organising and facilitating three ‘moving tours’
- Organising and facilitating three coffee mornings
- Conducting a survey on creative workspace
- A variety of other things, such as mentorship, informal coffees, answering questions, passing on information, and working with students.

In this section, we provide a little bit more information about each of the areas listed above.

5a. Initial events

written by Emma Coffield

Our original plans for the Making the Clayton Street Corridor project involved at least two events, where we hoped to 'open up' and facilitate a space where policy-makers and artists and creative practitioners could meet each other.

In this section, we provide a quick summary of those first two events – and how the discussions that took place went on to shape the rest of the project.

Event One – Imagining the Clayton Street Corridor

29th March 2022, Newcastle University Business School (NUBS)

24 participants

[The following text is adapted from a blog post written for the More Than Meanwhile Spaces webpage]

For our first event, we wanted to hold a workshop to introduce the plans for the Clayton Street Corridor with room for artists and creative practitioners to ask questions and get involved. We asked Andrew Rothwell and Ed Banks (Newcastle City Council) to give us an overview of the development to date. We then split into groups to 'roadmap' some key questions, possibilities and sticking points.

One really important point to emerge was that most artists and creative practitioners didn't know what the Clayton Street Corridor was, what it might do, or who it was for. What was the end goal?

Other ideas and questions included:

- The desire for more information (and more accessible information) on the Clayton Street Corridor plans. Lots of artists and creative practitioners didn't know what was going on and were asking the same questions. Where was this information held and shared?
- The suggestion to create a physical, visible 'shopfront' in the corridor with drop in events and a chance to meet those involved and ask questions.
- The need to learn from all the zones, corridors and cultural hubs, quarters etc. out there. What should we / shouldn't we repeat?
- There were important questions around ownership, gentrification, and who had been consulted thus far (e.g. landlords? Neighbours? Commercial tenants?).
- How might artists and creative practitioners begin to unpack such a seemingly huge 'thing-that-fixes-everything-for-everyone' and understand its potential, bit by bit? How might expectations be managed, to make sure that no-one was disappointed?

Several 'action points' arose from this discussion – some of which went on to significantly shape the Making the Clayton Street Corridor project. For example:

- It became clear that artists and creative practitioners wanted a 'one-stop-shop' for information about the Clayton Street Corridor, which might answer some of the key questions being asked. It was suggested that the Making the Clayton Street Corridor team develop a webpage to gather this information together and share it.
- During their presentation, Andrew Rothwell and Ed Banks raised the possibility of a grassroots artists/creative practitioner sitting on the Advisory Group for the Clayton Street Corridor (in a paid capacity) in order to allow top-level input. It was suggested that the Making the Clayton Street Corridor team facilitate the selection process.
- There was a clear and urgent need for regular meetings between policy-makers and artists and creative practitioners (e.g. something monthly rather than one-off events). We agreed to facilitate this.

Event Two

8th June 2022, The Lubber Fiend

12 participants (plus 60 voting online)

At the first event, it was suggested that a grassroots artist was appointed to the Advisory Group, to ensure that grassroots artists had a clear 'voice' in policy-making. But who should it be? One idea to emerge from the event was an election, whereby artists and creative practitioners could put themselves forwards and be elected by a community of their peers. We agreed to facilitate this process.

Interested artists and creative practitioners were asked to send a 100-word statement answering the question, 'why would I be a good rep?' by the 27th May. On the 30th May, we published all the entries on our webpage (then the More Than Meanwhile Spaces webpage).

Artists and creative practitioners used a link to vote online, and the reps (Jenny McNamara and Kitty McKay) were announced during the event and online.

We also spent some time at this event networking and asking questions. During this discussion (and the discussion within the team that followed), it became clear that:

- The Making the Clayton Street Corridor team needed to think about access in much more detail, as some artists and creative practitioners were unable to attend and others did not feel comfortable in the venue. On reflection, other artists and creative practitioners had felt similarly uncomfortable in the previous venue too. This was our fault, and we accepted that we needed to set a higher standard. Our thanks again to Nadia Iftkhar for raising this with us.
- Our approach to the language of policy-making was not quite right. We had hoped to encourage artists and creative practitioners to become involved by stressing that members of the Making the Clayton Street Corridor team often didn't understand key terms, and that not knowing was alright. However, in doing so, we missed the opportunity to empower artists and creative practitioners by actually explaining key terms and ideas.

These discussions informed the way we approached the coffee mornings and resulted in the 'glossary' – both of which are discussed below.

5b. Say hello to your reps!

written by Emma Coffield, Jenny McNamara and Kitty McKay

Some background

As described above, between May-June we facilitated an election whereby interested artists and creative practitioners could put themselves forward for the role of grassroots artist rep and be selected by a community of their peers.

Original 'advert' for the grassroots rep position *[as published on the More Than Meanwhile Spaces webpage]*.

Want to be the rep? Great! You'll need to:

attend up to five sessions per year (around 2 hours each) including the first session on Friday 10th June 2022, 2-4pm (online).

act as a representative for the grassroots arts sector in Newcastle in those sessions.

share news and updates with the grassroots arts sector.

You'll be paid £150 per session (a half-day rate to include prep time and follow up actions, as per the rates set out by Artists' Union England) by Newcastle City Council. If you want to use this webpage to share news/updates, you are more than welcome.

7 artists and creative practitioners put themselves forward and 60 votes were counted before the cut-off point.

Your reps!

The current Representative for Grassroots Artists is: Jenny McNamara. Kitty McKay was selected as the reserve rep.

About Jenny

Jenny is an artist/designer and arts organiser. She runs The Spaghetti Factory with Eve Cromwell.

As part of this role, Jenny:

- Represents grassroots artists and creative practitioners in Advisory Group meetings
- Uploads the minutes from Advisory Group meetings to the Making the Clayton Street Corridor webpage (<https://makingtheclaytonstreetcorridor.wordpress.com/grassroots-artists-rep/>) for everyone to read
- Provides updates at the coffee mornings
- Promoted the creative workspace survey to gather information that could be used to shape the development of the Clayton Street Corridor and shared this with other Advisory Group members

Although this role is not formally attached to the Making the Clayton Street Corridor project, we offer support and mentorship.

If you have a question for Jenny, please email her at jenny.claytonstreetcorridor@gmail.com

About Kitty

Kitty McKay is an artist/creative practitioner. She runs Incursions, a collaborative and participatory project with Archie Smith, exploring Newcastle with others through psycho-geography. She is particularly interested in socially-engaged practice and the facilitation of alternative economies, in and outside of arts spaces.

As a reserve rep, Kitty is there to attend Advisory Group meetings that Jenny is unable to attend. Alongside Jenny, she works closely with the core Making the Clayton Street Corridor team to offer feedback from Advisory Group meetings and disseminate this information further.

Sc. Say hello to the Project Manager!

written by Vikki Leaney

[This text was originally shared as a blog post on our webpage. Many thanks to Vikki for letting us share it again here]

Hello, I'm Vikki Leaney (she/her), the new project manager for the Culture and Creative Zone project (also known as CCZ and Clayton Street Corridor) at Newcastle City Council. I thought I would introduce myself and share my contact details as you'll see me out and about at the coffee mornings, moving tours and events we have coming up.

My background has been in the culture and creative sector in the North East for the last 15 years, previously the Culture Team at NewcastleGateshead Initiative, working to plan, deliver and support a range of programmes, festivals and events working directly with artists and creative practitioners and organisations (as well as funders, councils and wider stakeholders), and also as a freelancer supporting various creative projects in the region.

I have just finished a fixed term contract of 2.5 years working for a Climate Change NGO, which has been excellent for cross sector learning.

I'm genuinely thrilled to get the chance to work on this project which I know will be exciting, fun and challenging, and I would love to engage with the sector as much as possible and get up to speed.

You can get in touch with me on Vikki.leaney@newcastle.gov.uk (I'm also often working from Newcastle Civic Centre a few times a week for in person catch ups) and you'll see me at the upcoming coffee mornings and moving tours. I can also advise on the various opportunities linked to the CCZ as they arise, or just give you an update on the project/find out more about your interest in the Zone.

Hope to meet some of you soon.

5d. Welcome to the webpage/blog

written by Emma Coffield

One of the clearest action points to emerge from our early events was the need for a central point or space where information about the Clayton Street Corridor might be collected, shared, and regularly updated.

This sounded like something we could take on as a team. At first, we thought to use our existing webpage (<https://morethanmeanwhile.wordpress.com>). This was free and easy for us to update. But we quickly realised it wasn't working. The existing webpage was more of a static list of previous projects, designed to share reports. We had started a mailing list too, but became aware that we were still writing 'like academics' – and some of you told us you found that off-putting.

Clearly, we needed a new strategy, and a webpage/blog built with artists and creative practitioners in mind. Something that would be much more accessible active and engaging.

We started work on a new, dedicated webpage and blog (<https://makingtheclaytonstreetcorridor.wordpress.com/>), which launched in August 2022. We extend heartfelt thanks to Daniel Newberry for working so tirelessly on the design and set up of the webpage/blog, and to Nadia Iftkhar who provided us with invaluable advice throughout this early period. Nadia also suggested that we look at Unlimited (<https://weareunlimited.org.uk/resources/>) – and we would likewise highly recommend their (free) resources.

Since we launched, we have written over 20 blog posts covering everything from where the money comes from, updates and feedback from our events, links to new developments and pots of funding, and contributions from our Critical Friends and the Grassroots Artist reps. These posts sit alongside regularly updated pages, where you can find out more about the project, the team, and upcoming activities and events.

Importantly, we wanted to pull together a whole suite of resources. This currently includes:

- The minutes from each Advisory Group (or a record of each meeting), available for download at the bottom of the 'Grassroots Artist's Rep' page.
- Any PowerPoints or other resources used in events and coffee mornings (you can find and download these via our 'Resources' page, under 'Get Involved'.
- A list of free, open access resources – including interesting unions and organisations, and sector reports.

In the five months we've been running the site, 1,132 visitors have viewed the pages and blog posts 3,344 times. We've also seen 76 downloads of the Advisory Group minutes – a really great indication that artists and creative practitioners want detailed information about the plans.

We also started a Twitter account (@MakingCSC) to help us reach and connect with more people.



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100% Human Hair Extensions, Clipping Extension, Full Wig, Lace Front Wig,
Hair Pieces, Wigs, Afro & European Cosmetics, Hair Accessories
www.haircityonline.co.uk

The storefront window for Hair City is filled with various advertisements and product displays. On the left, there's a poster of a woman's face. In the center, a large poster shows two women, one with long hair. To the right, there's a poster of a woman with long hair. The window also displays several bottles of hair products and other items. A black signpost is visible in the foreground on the left side.

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5e. Creative workspace in Newcastle: A survey

written by Emma Coffield with support from Hannah Marsden, Daniel Newberry and Jenny McNamara

One of the things we are keen, as a team, to do is support the grassroots artist reps when they ask us for help. A key issue, raised by Jenny McNamara, was a lack of data on creative workspace in Newcastle. To help Jenny make this point in Advisory Group meetings, Hannah Marsden designed a survey, which Jenny then shared through her networks as well as through the mailing list for the Making the Clayton Street Corridor project.

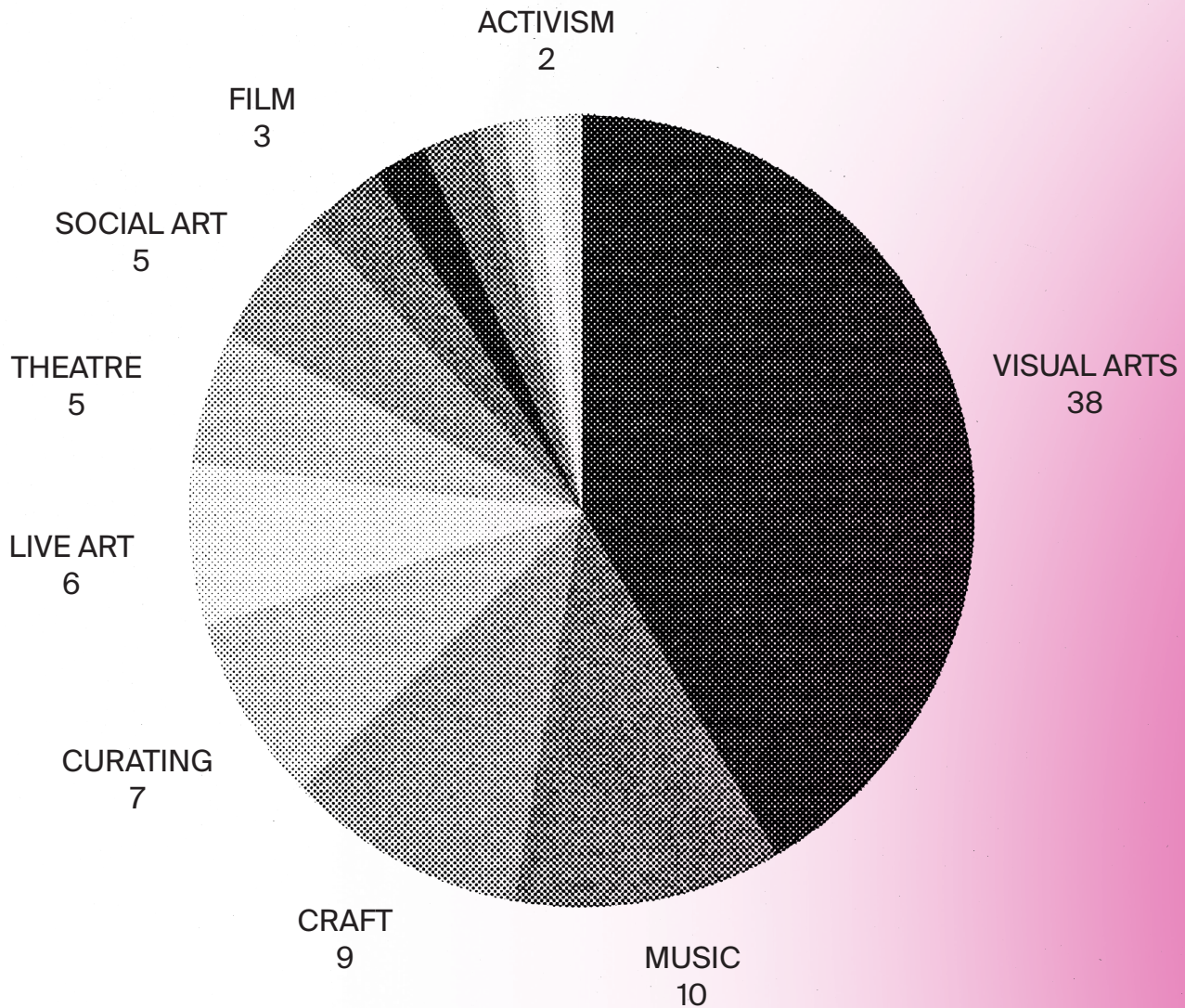
The following report, written by Emma Coffield with graphics by Daniel Newberry, was originally shared as four blog posts, and is reprinted here with small edits.

Re-thinking creative workspace (1/4)

In September, we supported Jenny McNamara to conduct a survey on creative workspace. We collected this information in order to feed into the current plans for the Clayton Street Corridor. But we also wanted to share it more widely. So, over a series of four blog posts, we will be doing just that.

This first blog post will provide a bit of an overview (e.g. who participated in the survey) and share some 'headline' findings. But we also want to dig a little deeper than that too! So, our second post looks at the availability of the creative workspace in Newcastle, and the condition of those spaces. The third looks in more detail at what 'affordability' means. And the fourth blog post explores some of the dynamics currently impacting creative workspace – including reports of unwelcoming environments and abuse.

Who participated in the survey?



The survey received 46 responses in 7 days. Respondents were predominantly practitioners involved in the visual arts (38) but also included practitioners in music (10), craft (9), curating (7), live art (6), theatre (5), social art (5), film (3), dance (2), activism (2), design (1), digital (1), science and games (1), podcasting and writing (1). 32 currently had a studio/creative space, 14 did not. Of those with creative workspace, 2 were currently working from home, with 30 working elsewhere.

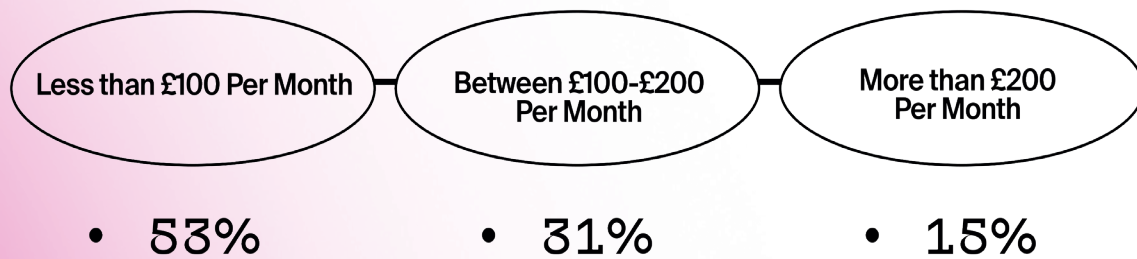
Why focus on creative workspace?

Creative workspace matters. There are many different kinds of creative workspace (from hot-desks to sound-proof rooms to studio provision and more), and we believe that they are all vital. Artists and creative practitioners need somewhere to work, and not everyone can work from home. Some artists and creative practitioners need large spaces in order to make large-scale work, others need access to shared equipment and facilities, to rehearsal spaces, storage spaces, and/or spaces suitable for working with community groups.

Some creative workspace allows for communities of support to form.

Without creative workspace, there can be no creative community in Newcastle.

How much are artists currently paying for their creative workspace?

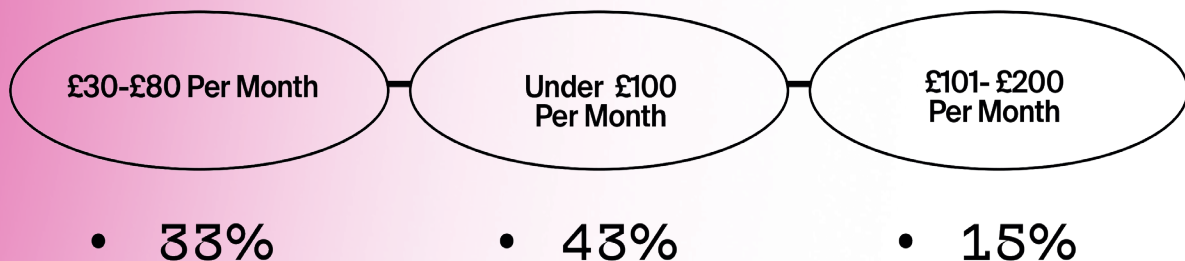


There was a huge variation in the amount of money artists and creative practitioners were currently paying for their creative workspace, ranging from £30 per month to more than £800 per month. This range is likely due to the variation in spaces themselves, which ranged in location, size, type and access to other facilities, and were either single spaces or shared between multiple people.

53% of those with creative workspace reported paying less than £100 per month (17 people). 31% (10 people) reported paying between £100-200 per month. 15% (5 people) reported paying more than £200 per month.

62% of artists and creative practitioners with creative workspaces (20) expected to have to pay more in the coming year.

What do artists/creative practitioners class as 'affordable'?



When asked about affordability, 43% (20) of artists and creative practitioners thought an 'affordable' creative workspace would be £100 per month or less. 33% (15) opted for something between £30-80 per month. 15% thought an affordable space would cost between £101-200 per month.

These differences are important, as they indicate that an increase of £20-80 per month could 'price out' around a third of those who responded to the survey.

The biggest issue overall was the lack of available space. 52% of artists and creative practitioners described negative experiences of finding suitable space in the city, with many noting the impact of long waiting lists. Demand for spaces was perceived to be so competitive that some artists and creative practitioners had either found other solutions (e.g. work from home) or had given up.

The second biggest issue concerned the quality of the available spaces. 13 people told us about spaces that were unsafe, inaccessible, lacked security or were of otherwise poor quality. There were more positive experiences too. 11 artists and creative practitioners (34% of those who had secured a space) suggested they were happy with their current space, often using terms like 'lucky' or 'fortunate' to describe their situation.

Other dynamics and factors impacting creative workspaces were raised too – including racism, ableism, transphobia and homophobia.

Summary

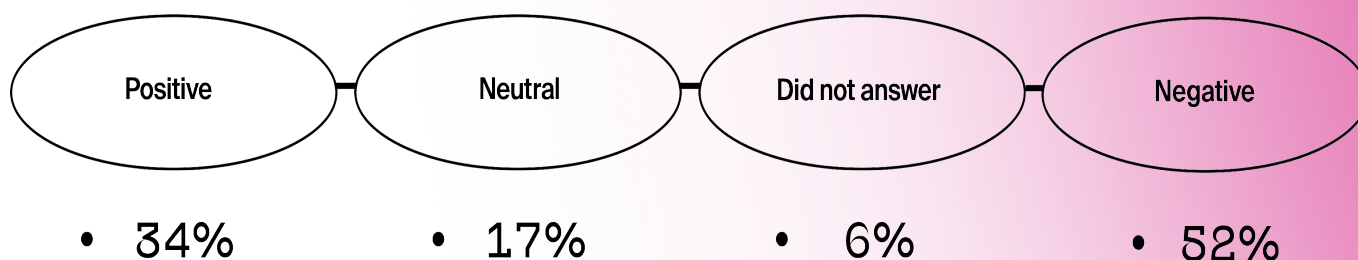
The survey we ran wasn't perfect. It was only open for a short time, and the language we used probably catered more for visual artists than any other group. We know that artists and creative practitioners are often asked to fill in surveys – for free – and there is considerable survey fatigue. As a result, there are many missing perspectives and experiences. We also know that there are more than 46 artists and creative practitioners active in Newcastle.

However, our survey indicates that Newcastle has a creative workspace problem. There simply isn't enough workspace to go around, meaning that even poor-quality spaces are now in high demand.

What workspace is currently available, and what nick is it in? (2/4)

The single biggest issue raised in our survey was the lack of creative workspace currently available in Newcastle.

Experience of finding creative workspace



Of the 46 people asked about their experience of finding creative workspace, 11 (24% of the total group, or 34% of those with a space) suggested the experience had been positive and that they were happy with their current space.

3 people did not answer the question (6%).

8 (17%) gave replies that couldn't be characterised as positive or negative (e.g. often because they did not yet need space or hadn't looked).

24 people (or 52%) described more negative experiences, with 16 people (or 35%) specifically mentioning that suitable space was "difficult to come by".

A space shortage?

Many of the artists and creative practitioners who responded to the survey felt there simply wasn't enough creative workspace in the city.

“There's a crazy huge shortage of affordable artists spaces in Newcastle”

“Finding studios in the Northeast is not easy”

This lack of space was often connected to the demand for existing creative workspace, where long waiting-lists were common. 9 people specifically raised the issue of waiting-lists, noting their frustration at being on such lists for very long periods of time (in some cases, years). Others, aware of the waiting lists, described themselves as “lucky” or “fortunate” to have found a space.

“It was hard to get my studio space and I'm not happy with the space I have. I literally cannot find another space. I add myself to all the waiting lists and it's been years and I've heard nothing”

Re-location, re-location

A key problem is that creative workspaces are often 'meanwhile' spaces, and so can be pulled down, renovated, or otherwise reclaimed at very short notice. 12 artists and creative practitioners mentioned spaces they had used previously which had since been demolished (Pilgrim Street was the most common example shared with us). Two more artists and creative practitioners added that they would need to move (again) soon.

This constant relocation was “frustrating”, and several artists and creative practitioners called for longer-term planning; where any short-term “wow factor” might be ditched in favour of “long-term flourishing”.

Others mentioned the need for future workspace to include “long-term legal guarantees of fixed rent or ownership”.

“Artists' studios as a stopgap measure for property developers and as a catalyst for gentrification is a cycle that needs to stop. Artists need long term solutions, not to be moved on every few years”

But the studios are empty!

A question we hear a lot when talking about the creative workspace shortage in Newcastle is: “But the studios are empty, so how can there be a shortage of space?”. We would urge caution here. In order to have time to spend in a creative workspace, artists and creative practitioners often have to work in other jobs.

For example, we know that the average income for a visual artist is approx. £15,000 per year with many earning much less following the impact of COVID (CVAN 2021). Visual artists therefore often earn less than the National Living Wage for their work, and less again if they are female or have a disability (ACE 2018). 68% of visual artists have a second (or third, fourth) job (ACE 2018). Professional musicians may earn a little more (around £20,000 per year according to figures from the DCMS, 2019) although the live music sector was amongst the worst hit by COVID closures with revenue falling by 81% (Carey and Chambers 2020) and we recognise that the figure of £20,000 per year is not reflective of earnings in the North East. Performing art and theatre were also severely hit by COVID (Owen et al. 2020) while freelancers were the least likely to be eligible for government support (Florisson et al. 2021). In each group therefore, it is likely that people will have sought additional income(s).

Artists may additionally have families, other caring responsibilities, or simply things going on in their lives. Some use workspace as more of a hobby space, and so will balance this around other commitments.

As things become more expensive, it is likely that artists and creative practitioners actually have less and less time to spend in creative workspaces. This doesn't mean that the space isn't valued. In fact, it is a good argument for making space as affordable as possible!

What condition are existing spaces in?

The lack of creative workspace was not the only problem raised. 14 artists and creative practitioners talked of workspace that was either unsafe, inaccessible or of poor quality. Common issues here included safety, leaks, cold temperatures, and a lack of natural light.

"The first studio I had [...] was cold, dark and difficult to be in"

"Studios very cold, no hot water"

"I used to have a studio [that] was shit and tiny and leaked water from the ceiling"

It was also clear that existing creative workspace didn't always address the needs of artists and creative practitioners. For some, this primarily concerned access to "specialized equipment" or space that would accommodate "audio recording" or "making music", or that provided certain facilities such as mail boxes, storage space, "space for dirty work" or 24-hour access. Others pointed to the need for workshop space that was safe and accessible, in order to facilitate work with communities. Artists and creative practitioners also pointed to the value of space in the city-centre.

"I have never even bothered trying to find somewhere to rehearse music as places are few and far between and pricey"

Accessibility was also a strong factor, with artists and creative practitioners commenting that "sensory issues aren't taken into account at all", while "obvious things" such as spaces with lifts, street level access, wide doorways and parking were difficult to find.

"[The spaces] don't suit the way I work or my access needs"

Who can afford creative workspace? (3/4)

In this post, we want to look at 'affordability' in a little more depth.

Affordability (or what people can afford to pay) is a big issue when it comes to creative workspace. There is no point building a whole load of spaces that people can't afford to use, after all. But what is affordable in Newcastle, and for whom?

What is affordable?

This is a really tricky question, as what is affordable for one person might be extortionate for another. There is also the need to take into consideration what people are paying for. A small, shared space or hot-desk is likely to be much more affordable than a large single-occupancy space with access to certain facilities. But if hot-desk space isn't what you need, then it isn't a good investment either.

"I know that having a private studio space may cost more [but] sharing a space comes with other costs [e.g.] compromise, potential conflict etc."

This all makes affordability very difficult to pin down.

There is some data. For example, we know that visual artists are 'among the lowest earners in the creative industries' and so 'rely upon low-cost space' (Scott 2022: 5). In London, Scott suggested the benchmark is around £11 per square foot (although she notes that most rents are above this)

How much are artists/creative practitioners paying?

In our survey, 53% of those with creative workspace reported paying less than £100 per month. 31% reported paying between £100-200 per month. 15% reported paying more than £200 per month.

Importantly, however, only 9 artists and creative practitioners reported these rates were affordable – and they were usually paying between £30-100 per month.

Of the 13 artists and creative practitioners who wanted to pay less, 10 suggested a rate that was £100 per month or less, and 6 suggested a rate that was around £50 a month.

9 artists and creative practitioners indicated they would be willing to pay more – often in return for access to better quality facilities. The increases suggested were relatively small however. For example, 7 were willing to pay £150 a month or less, with most suggesting an increase of between £13-25 per month.

What do artists/creative practitioners class as affordable?

This means that, overall, 43% (20) of artists and creative practitioners thought an ‘affordable’ creative workspace would be £100 per month or less. 33% (15) opted for something between £30-80 per month. 15% thought an affordable space would cost between £101-200 per month.

This is important, as the figures above demonstrate that an increase in payments of between £20-80 would be enough to ‘price out’ around a third of those who responded to the survey. This is particularly worrying as 62% of artists and creative practitioners with creative workspace expected to have to pay more in the coming year.

“My current space is only possible for me because it is unusually cheap”

“Solo artists in rehearsal are not able to pay high hourly rates”

“It feels like everywhere within my budget [has] no space for the foreseeable”

The impact of affordability

Of course, affordability isn’t just about the numbers. It was very clear from the survey that lots of people were already struggling to cover the costs of creative workspace or felt ‘priced out’ of space altogether. Comments included:

“At the moment, I am on a waiting list for a variety of studios which are probably too expensive – but I’m getting desperate.”

“Not everyone making art is also making money from it. We shouldn’t stifle creativity by pricing people out and only putting emphasis on money making”

“If space doesn’t become available, artists will leave the area”

“I work full-time as a self-employed artist, and I have really struggled to cover studio space in the past. £200+ a month is not affordable for me”

“I have real concerns that the price of studio space will rise beyond the reach of the majority of younger practitioners.”

“[Our new studio] will be £30 more than what we already pay and we are worried that we will struggle to pay this. Simultaneously, I feel I have no choice and I need to hold on [...] as I have heard how difficult it is to secure any studios in the area”

There was also some recognition that those who could least afford creative workspace were likely to be systemically marginalised artists and creative practitioners and/or have low-paid jobs.

“It sometimes feels like maintaining your creative practice is only for those who can afford it [...] other creative voices then fade away and the creative scene becomes less diverse and inclusive.”

What about free space? That’s affordable!

A few artists and creative practitioners raised the possibility of free creative workspace. For some, this was a kind of dream, or wish. For others, free space was already a reality. For example, one person noted the positive impact that ‘in-kind’ rehearsal space had made, while another spoke of volunteering in return for space (although they felt that, in this instance, they had put in more time than the space actually cost). One person suggested a membership scheme that would provide hours of free space in return.

“Studios should be free [...] Art work is vital to this region”

Other ideas:

Many of you made other suggestions to improve affordability. These included bursaries for marginalised artists and those on low incomes, lobbying for better funding to support art organisations in the region, planning on a longer-term basis, and ring-fencing funding that could be used to subsidise workspace.

“Studios would be more affordable if organisations did not have to work on such a short-term basis”

What makes a ‘good’ creative workspace? (4/4)

In this final blog post, we explore some of the experiences of creative workspace that artists and participants shared with us.

What makes a ‘good’ creative workspace?

Clearly, factors like availability, affordability and suitability were top of the list for almost everyone. Given the demand for space, some artists and creative practitioners seemed grateful just to have found a space at all.

“I feel extremely fortunate”

“I have been lucky enough to find a couple of shared spaces with friends”

“It has been good for me, but I think I was lucky with timing”

Others simply reported that they liked their current spaces.

“Delighted by my studio space”

3 artists and creative practitioners additionally mentioned the support they had received as part of a professional development programme, which offered reduced rate studios for a period of time and then “first dibs” on available space thereafter. Others positively commented that their “studio [...] offers a community and opportunities” in addition to the physical space, or noted that they wanted to be “part of a ‘creative community’ where ideas and projects can be shared and we can support and learn from each other”.

“Collective space is so important”

“Studios with a clear and committed intention to raise the profile of the artist [...] are much more appealing”

What about when it goes wrong?

Others were not as fortunate. Networks emerged as one key factor, for while some artists and creative practitioners could rely “on my network” to help them find space, others did not seem to have such contacts, or mentioned the existence of “cliques”.

“It’s all about who you know, getting someone to put a word in for you”

Some artists and creative practitioners had not been able to find a space, and instead were working from home or utilizing other arrangements. While this was often reported to be cheaper, there were associated problems including isolation, interruption and a lack of access.

“[I am] now completely isolated from the community of artists”

“I have a makeshift workspace at home but it is far from ideal and difficult to keep proper work hours. Constant interruptions”

Most worryingly of all, two artists and creative practitioners raised instances of racism, ableism, transphobia and homophobia.

“The space [...] had homophobic abuse [...] people aren’t welcoming to newcomers or black artists”

“As a trans and disabled person I haven’t always felt safe in the studios that are available to me [...] I have experienced a lot of ableism and transphobia [...] I had to leave the studio because of this”

How do we make creative workspace better?

Again, many of you made suggestions. There was a general hope that creative workspaces might become more “welcoming [and] actively used by a diversity of artists and [...] communities”, would “involve more people without prejudice”, and would be “inclusive” spaces that were not driven by preference or the “favourites” of those with power.

One more detailed idea was for the development of a “charter” signed by all creative workspaces, that clearly outlined policies to safeguard artists and creative practitioners (as monitored by an external agency) and devised “by a panel of artists which is at least 50% marginalised artists in conjunction with the city council” as well as SHAPE Arts.



Thank you

We’d like to express our thanks again to everyone who supported this survey, either by taking the time to complete it, and/or by helping us to share the word. We know how hard it is to find time for yet another survey, and we hope these blog posts have done justice to the feedback we received.



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5f. A report from the coffee mornings

written by Hannah Marsden

Participants at the first workshop (Section 5a) told us they wanted a space to meet regularly to access information about the Clayton Street Corridor. In response, we held three coffee mornings - roughly one per month - to support artists and creative practitioners to engage with the process of the Clayton Street Corridor as it develops. Each event had a different agenda and topic for conversation hosted by an expert in the field. Colleagues from Newcastle City Council who are working on the Clayton Street Corridor and members of our research team were on hand to answer questions over a cup of tea.

In contrast to the moving tours (Section 5g), the coffee mornings were not recorded and did not generate 'data' for the research project. This was intentional. We wanted to create an informal space where people could ask questions, raise concerns and share ideas. These spaces help to build relationships of trust and are therefore key to the possibility of change.

To help disseminate information beyond the coffee mornings, short recaps were shared via the blog. These are copied below, followed by reflections on what we have learnt from piloting the coffee mornings.

Coffee Morning Recap - 29 September 2022

Meet Your Grassroots Artists' Rep

The first coffee morning was held at Newcastle Arts Centre, a hub for creative events, courses and workshops located in the 'zone'. Here's what happened:

- Grassroots Artists' Rep, Jenny McNamara shared her experience of being on the Advisory Group for the Clayton Street Corridor, which so far has been very challenging.
- We talked about how to support Jenny and Kitty McKay (backup rep) and what channels of communication could be supported between the reps and grassroots artists/creative practitioners.
- Andrew Rothwell (Newcastle City Council) explained the governance structure for the Clayton Street Corridor.
- Concerns were raised about who isn't part of these conversations and we discussed how we can address these gaps.
- We discussed what Clayton Street Corridor might be able to unlock in terms of buildings for cultural use and some of the challenges regarding the state of the buildings and current ownership.

Outcomes / next steps:

Jenny and Kitty will continue to use the Making the Clayton Street Corridor website to share information and request input. More info here: <https://makingtheclaytonstreetcorridor.wordpress.com/grassroots-artists-rep/> and Jenny can be contacted by email jenny.claytonstreetcorridor@gmail.com

1. Making the Clayton Street Corridor research team will offer more structured support to the reps.
2. We're working on a diagram to explain the governance structure for the Clayton Street Corridor.
3. The coffee morning in October will focus on the skills and knowledge needed to develop and support our cultural and creative sector; November will focus on buildings.

We want to say a big thank you to everyone who came along and contributed to the discussion. Thanks also to the team at Newcastle Arts Centre for hosting us so generously. Extra thanks to Jenny McNamara (Grassroots Artists' Rep) for sharing her experiences and concerns with us and setting the tone for an honest and open exchange about the challenges artists face.

Coffee Morning Recap / 27 October 2022

Knowledge and Skills

The second coffee morning was held at Alphabetti Theatre, an independent producing theatre located in the 'zone'. Here's what happened:

- We were 18 people with practices including music, visual arts, theatre, jewelry design, venue management, artists development, research, economic development, and more.
- Grassroots artist reps Jenny McNamara and Kitty McKay shared updates from the Advisory Group Meetings and Communications Task and Finish Group.
- We discussed a range of resources that could help to inform understandings of what artists and creative practitioners do and need.
- Ed Banks (Newcastle City Council) introduced the Open Call for a fund to support knowledge and skills development in the creative sector. Follow this link for more details on Newcastle City Council's website <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/our-city/culture-newcastle/cultural-and-creative-zone>
- We discussed a range of barriers that might prevent grassroots artists/creative practitioners from applying to the fund and some of the ways these could be addressed – although we didn't have all the answers!
- We talked about the buildings in the Clayton Street Corridor and whether they were suitable for the needs of grassroots artists/creative practitioners. Follow this link to our blog post about rethinking creative workspace provision: makingtheclaytonstreetcorridor.wordpress.com/2022/10/19/re-thinking-creative-workspace/

Next steps:

1. We directed anyone interested in applying to the fund to an online information session hosted by Vikki Leaney, Project Manager for the Clayton Street Corridor.
2. The project team at Making the Clayton Street Corridor is keen to support grassroots artists/creative practitioners to develop strong proposals to the fund. If you have any questions or ideas for how we could support you, please do get in touch with us via the project email at: makingtheclaytonstreetcorridor@gmail.com
3. The next Coffee Morning will focus on what the Clayton Street Corridor might unlock in terms of city centre buildings for cultural and creative use.

Big thanks to everyone who came and contributed, especially Jenny, Kitty and Ed for sharing their knowledge. Thanks also to Sam and Ali at Alphabetti for providing a welcoming space and a feast of donuts.

Coffee Morning Recap / 8 December 2022

Buildings

This event happened too close to the publication of this workbook to be recorded here – but you will be able to find a blog post at:

<https://makingtheclaytonstreetcorridor.wordpress.com>

Learning from the Coffee Mornings

This was a pilot series to test out what works and what doesn't. There are several learning points for us as a team:

- Artists (and people from organisations that support artists) tell us that they benefit from a regular, informal space to share experience and knowledge between each other and policy-makers.
- Don't pack the agenda - leave room for talking and responding to what comes up.
- There is no ideal time of the week to suit everyone. Try alternating different times and find ways to disseminate what happened to those who couldn't attend.
- Access is really important – we need to set the standard here in terms of providing clear, detailed information about the spaces we are using.
- There is a noticeable lack of diversity and representation. We need to think carefully about how to widen the range of artforms and communities that currently engage with the coffee mornings.

5g. A report from the moving tours

written by Daniel Newberry

Moving Tours: An Overview

In September we ran three 'Moving Tours' along the Clayton Street Corridor. These tours included members of the project team (Emma and Daniel), artist Kitty McKay, and a number of artists and creative practitioners who had signed up via an online form. For the first two tours, we were also accompanied by members of Newcastle City Council (Ed Banks and Vikki Leaney) and John Seager (the Director of Broadoaks – a company recently appointed as 'Property Champion' to the Clayton Street Corridor) who was able to get us into a building they had earmarked for potential artist use.

Key numbers:

- The first tour took place on 12th September 2022 (12:00-13:00) with 5 participants.
- The second tour took place on 26th September 2022 (12:00-13:00) with 6 participants.
- The third tour took place on 29th September 2022 (17:30-18:30) with 1 participant.
- The first two tours were fully subscribed. We offered 7 bursary places to allow artists and creative practitioners to participate.

Key findings

The need for creative workspace is varied. Artists and creative practitioners shared that they needed space for: festivals, music practice, storage, visual arts, photography, hot desk office space, collaboration, archives, education, theatre.

The building that we looked around was very large, in a substantial state of disrepair, and would need a great deal of money, time and expertise to get it to a standard where it would be usable, safe and warm.

Most participants on the tours who looked around this building were excited about the possibilities it offered – but there is a real need for funding and skills training that would enable this use. Most artists and creative practitioners were unsure about how to access either funding or training and did not feel they had the skills already to take on such a large project.

Participants had varied understandings about the Clayton Street Corridor. Some thought of it more in terms of geographic mapping of space, some thought of it as a constructed community or network, some thought of it as an opportunity for professional development, and some thought the language was too inaccessible to even begin to understand what it was.

Most artists and creative practitioners were concerned about the proposed zone being in the area surrounding Clayton Street, citing potential safety issues as well as concerns around gentrification.

Team reflections

- We wanted to vary the tours on different days and times to allow more people the opportunity to take part. Lunch tours proved to be the most popular, although we appreciate that artists and creative practitioners often work non-standard hours. In the future, we would like to run moving tours with more variation in terms of the times and dates, to ensure as many artists and creative practitioners as possible can come along.
- The conversations on the first and second tour were quite similar, but very different on the third tour when we did not go inside any buildings. This is an interesting mix we would like to see continue.
- The bursary places were very popular. Artists are often expected to work for free or for minimal payment and this forms a barrier to engagement. It is imperative that we set the standard and pay artists and creative practitioners fairly for their time, knowledge and experience.



Reflections on visiting the space

We wanted to look more at the thoughts, feelings and questions that artists and creative practitioners posed while in a building on Clayton Street. This building has been earmarked by Newcastle City Council and Broadoaks as a potential space for artists and creative practitioners. Before seeing it in person, artists and creative practitioners had some interesting expectations:

“I think my interest is in the empty space, what is available, who owns it, access, how it can be used, what for, what kinds of activities, how much is it going to cost, all of those more practical things firstly”

“I’m quite excited. It is also like, I guess, when you talk to people about it, it is really hard to image what it look like inside”

“I presume a lot of the spaces are above the ground floor”

“Pigeon crap probably, and big empty space from the sounds of it, a few ceiling tiles missing too”

These impressions shifted once we had entered the space:

“I think I was quite surprised at how run down it was because you could see what the possibilities could be, but it worries me about the time frame and the amount of money that can go into it”

“A building like this is a massive project and it is going to need a lot of resources, funding, just the management of the project is going to be a big overhead”

“I think it was quite intimidating, you walk around it and think ‘this is incredible there is so much space’, but then maybe there is a reality check of ‘oh my god this is massive, and it is like a really bad state of condition in some places”

“[Our new studio] will be £30 more than what we already pay and we are worried that we will struggle to pay this. Simultaneously, I feel I have no choice and I need to hold on [...] as I have heard how difficult it is to secure any studios in the area”

On both tours, we noted this mix of optimism (usually around the size of the space and its potential) and reserve (usually connected to the amount of work needed to get the building up to a suitable and habitable standard).

In terms of what to use the space for, there were a variety of suggestions:

“I think because of the diversity of the practices that would be involved it would mean the space would be multidisciplinary and so it would need to be able to work for lots of different things from the offset and that would then invite a lot of different people, as opposed to just a visual arts studio or just bog-standard arts studios”

“It would be easy to have hot desks or visual arts, but there aren’t many spaces for musicians that can work together and have rehearsals, which would be good to see”

“If you’re going to have music and dance you will want to be bringing young people in to learn and participate”

There were a lot of things that the artists/creative practitioners thought were missing (beyond functioning walls and doors):

“I used to have a studio that was really cold, so is there any infrastructure for the heating or anything like that?”

“To make something like this work there may need to be a theme because it could end up so mixed, sometimes that can work but sometimes it just puts people off”

“Access, so like stairs and an elevator, thinking about moving in big equipment or if you were hosting activities and workshops in general you don’t want to cut off a big portion of people... it feels good to do things in accessible places”

There were a lot of positive comments about the building, especially when thinking about long-term development:

“I think there needs to be some sort of management of the space so that you can have a point of contact and it isn’t just people floating in and floating out and there is some sort of consistency”

“It’s got incredible potential, it is just getting access to it and then having the funding but the structure itself and obviously the location is good”

“It’s a solid building, secure, easy public transport, it could be really impactful”

“It seems a shame that it is empty, something has to happen here doesn’t it”

At this point on the first tour (and earlier in the second) artists and creative practitioners began to ask quite concrete questions about funding. Representatives from Newcastle City Council (Ed Banks and Vikki Leaney) and Broadoaks (John Seager) explained that Newcastle City Council did not have the funds to buy the property (or any property) outright. Rather, Broadoaks would help to broker relationships between artists and creative practitioners and landowners. This news was often met with disappointment, as a sense of the scale of the task became apparent. It was also not yet clear how interested artists and creative practitioners might get in touch to access this support or get things moving.

As a team, we are working to find out how that might happen and will share any updates.

Reflections on visiting the corridor

We also wanted look at the thoughts, feelings and questions that artists and creative practitioners had about the Clayton Street Corridor area more generally. These were generally somewhat negative, and included concerns around personal safety, gentrification, and a general sense of confusion as to why the 'zone' was situated in and around Clayton Street (as opposed to elsewhere in the city).

We started all of the moving tours by asking artists and creative practitioners what they thought the Clayton Street Corridor was and what they already knew about it. Replies ranged considerably, where some artists and creative practitioners were already familiar and comfortable with terms like 'enterprise zones', for example, while others had come on the tour to find out. It is worth noting that those who knew more had often engaged with the Making the Clayton Street Corridor project events and materials beforehand, or one of the previous projects.

"It is sort of coming up with a feasibility study to sort of look at how something like creative enterprises in London could work up here, so the idea of like the creative enterprise zone, kind of mapping out an area that is of like particular interest perhaps to a particular industry, so fashion or something like that, and then you sort of give different provisions for that, so it might be reduced rent, or that sort of thing"

"It is not just a corridor, but a sort of network, web, area, place, community"

"You're also interested in professional development for artists as well as other activities that you could carry out in this space"

"It feels like it is an attempt to regenerate this particular area and get activities happening because the high street as a whole is struggling to get footfall and engagement"

"I feel like I know some stuff about it, but it is incredibly hard to grasp because there's a lot of language that I am just unsure about"

"I don't know how much of this we are actually able to access"

Gentrification was a big concern for a lot of artists and creative practitioners, who were concerned about the potential impact of any change for existing communities, and being 'moved-on' themselves in a few years:

"If you bring artists in just temporarily to regenerate an area and then take the soul out you're going to lose any trust"

"Bringing artists in and then changing the dynamic and then selling out so to speak isn't really an acceptable long-term proposition"

There were also concerns about the scale of the potential changes, and what they might mean in terms of the benefit for artists and creative practitioners:

"I don't know how I feel about gathering a load of artists together, what benefit does that actually have for the community of artists"

"They're calling it a zone but is it just going to be one main building, and can you call it a creative and cultural zone if you have just got everyone in the one building?"

Some artists and creative practitioners were unsure about whether the money was being spent in the right place:

“I’m curious as to why the money can’t be invested in spaces that already exist”

“There is such a cost to fixing everything up and obviously there is potential here, but how much does this project all cost and where does all this money even come from?”

“Is it too much to ask to just have access to studio space at affordable costs.”

Some were similarly unsure about whether Clayton Street itself was the best place for the corridor, raising issues around safety:

“Ideally you have 24 hours access, 7 days a week and I need a functioning space that fits to my needs, and because I have to work so many jobs, I need to be able to go to the studio when I can so I think that is quite important and there is just no way I would feel safe [here]”

“I don’t actually feel very safe in and around this part of Newcastle”

“There is obviously a traffic issue too, this is not built for pedestrians”

“As a street I don’t like Clayton Street [...] I think if there was a community in there, and I think about the vibrancy of some other areas where artists have worked really well with the local community, thinking Shieldfield, but there is nothing like that along here that would work in the same way”

What did we learn?

In summary, it felt like the ‘vision’ Newcastle City Council had for the area - which resulted in the area in and around Clayton Street being chosen as the site for the zone - was not very clear to artists and creative practitioners, especially when they remained at street level. There are also significant challenges that need to be addressed around safety and gentrification. Once artists and creative practitioners accessed the buildings, however, there was often a sense of ambition and excitement as the possibilities became real, although we note that this excitement was often tempered by the scale of the task, and that significant support is required if these buildings are to become affordable and safe creative workspaces.

Thank you!

We would like to say thank you to everyone for sharing their thoughts and taking the time to be a part of a moving tour. We know that seeing things in ‘real-life’ really moves the conversation forward, and we are currently looking for funding for 2023-24 that would allow us to run more tours. We hope to see you at one very soon!

5h. RESOURCE: Prompt cards used on the tours

written by Emma Coffield and Kitty McKay

I don't understand

I have a question

How does it feel?

What would you need to work here?

How could we use this space?

Who could be using this space?

Who or what is invisible here? What is silent?

How might this space be nourished?

What forms of power are here?

What is possible here?

What do you need to change this?

What does this look like in 10 years?

What are we missing?

What should this space look like?

What do you need to say about this?




5i. Beginning a 'Glossary'

written by Emma Coffield, Hannah Marsden and Daniel Newberry

One of the most difficult things about a project like this, is that people tend to use very different languages. This often isn't intentional, but it can make people feel like they can't follow the conversation. We often hear from artists and creative practitioners who feel 'stupid' because they didn't understand what, for example, a Compulsory Purchase Order (or CPO) was.

In the past, we tried to navigate this by explaining that we didn't know the answers, and that it was ok not to know. But we realise (following conversations with lots of you – and particularly Nadia Iftkhar, Kitty McKay and Jenny McNamara) that this approach doesn't really help. It encourages, but it doesn't empower.

We want everyone to be able to join the conversation – not just listen to it!



So, we developed sections of the 'Welcome Statement' to explicitly address this issue and to try and make people more aware of the language they were using.

We also began work on a glossary, asking people who came to the coffee mornings and events to list for us the terms and phrases they didn't understand. We want to share some of these below, with definitions and further information where possible. We are still working on a much more comprehensive list, which we hope to share with you in 2023.



Anchor Organisation

An organisation that acts as a hub/resource for local people and plays an active role in what is needed for the wider benefit of their communities. They often also have an important role providing local leadership and facilitating partnerships.

In the context of the CCZ, an 'anchor' can refer to an occupier of a building whose presence has a positive impact on the surrounding area. For instance, the presence of an 'anchor' may encourage other like-minded organisations to locate nearby to benefit from being part of a local cluster. Or, an 'anchor' could be an organisation who is willing to commit their long-term future to a property, paying market (or above market) rate rent for their space, which effectively subsidises the property costs of other, small organisations who base themselves within the same property.

Ed Banks, Newcastle City Council

Community Asset Transfer

Community Asset Transfer (CAT) involves the transfer of management and/or ownership of land and buildings from a public sector body to a community-based organisation. These can include a local charity, community interest company or industrial and provident society.

Newcastle has strong, vibrant communities with active citizens who are ready and able to get involved and make a difference to their local area. We wish to encourage anyone with an interest in taking forward community ownership of relevant buildings, land and or services through Community Asset Transfer. This is where we transfer an asset at less than its full market value to promote local social, economic and or environmental objectives. Community asset transfer may take a variety of forms but the most common is a long lease.

Newcastle City Council, Community Asset Transfer

Cultural and Creative Zone

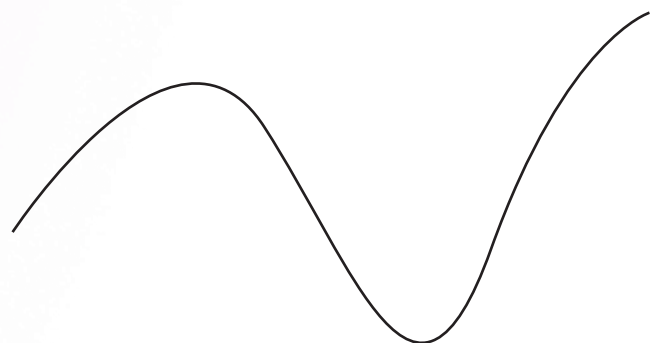
A Culture and Creative Zone, or CCZ for short, is defined by the North of Tyne Combined Authority as: "a place-based approach to investing in the development, sustainability and growth of the culture and creative sector."

This definition links CCZs to a history of urban development strategies which identify culture and creativity as key to economic regeneration of cities. CCZ is a fuzzy term and hard to distinguish from similar terms such as cultural quarter, creative cluster, cultural district, creative hub, and creative enterprise zone.

The Clayton Street Corridor in Newcastle upon Tyne is one of three CCZs being developed in the North of Tyne area. The others are in Berwick upon Tweed and North Shields. Examples of other CCZs can be found in London, Birmingham and Manchester.

Packed with architectural interest and a rich history, the CCZ is at the forefront of the reinvention and revitalisation of Newcastle city centre. Already populated by a wealth of well-established cultural and creative organisations and with excellent communication and public transport links, our ambition is to make the area the destination in the North-East to develop a creative career – with a distinctive profile and ambience; workspace, skills and business development opportunities available cheek-by-jowl; and creative making, sharing, networking and social facilities on every street and street corner.

Newcastle City Council, Cultural and Creative Zone



Grassroots

Working on a grassroots level involves community action on local priorities. It often relates to work that amplifies a community's voice, organising to increase community power, and championing the right of communities to take action on issues that affect them.

Listed Buildings

A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II* or II with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and any buildings or permanent structures within its boundary.

A listed building can be considered in both positive and negative terms. Positive in the sense that the building likely has some heritage value, and may be considered by some to be architecturally attractive. But also negative, in the sense that the building may be old, constructed using outdated building techniques, meaning the property could be cold, drafty, lacking in modern amenities and/or in a general state of disrepair. Listed status also means that special planning permission is required to make repairs/changes to the building; and only certain types of repairs/changes may be allowed which can often be more expensive compared to non-listed buildings. Owners of listed buildings do not need to pay Empty Property rates; so they can be less motivated to spend money to improve their properties to encourage occupation; often leading to listed buildings sitting unoccupied for long periods of time.

Ed Banks, Newcastle City Council

Third Place

A Third Place is a social setting, separate from a person's home (First Place), or work (Second Place), which is essential to civic engagement and well-being. Examples of Third Places can include public parks, libraries, religious spaces, restaurants, stores and transit – anywhere a person might spend time between home and work.

Thank you to the following sources for information and definitions:

Evergreen - www.evergreen.ca

Forecast Public Art
www.forecastpublicart.org

Katherine Wheeler
www.katharinewheeler.com

Historic England
www.historicengland.org.uk

Libraries Connected
www.librariesconnected.org.uk

Planning Portal
www.planningportal.co.uk

Thank you also to everyone who came along to our events and provided questions, suggestions and answers in terms of the terminology we use.

5j. Other stuff written by Emma Coffield

Alongside the activity listed above, we have been doing a range of other things – sometime behind the scenes.

For example, we have:

- Met with Jenny McNamara and Kitty McKay (the grassroots art reps) to debrief after Advisory Group meetings and to provide support more generally (e.g. asking what tasks we might take on, providing mentoring).
- Met with Vikki Leaney (The Clayton Street Corridor Project Manager) to provide support.
- Worked with the ‘Property Champion’ to advise on the processes that might ‘match’ artists and creative practitioners with new creative workspaces.
- Held individual meetings with artists and creative practitioners who wanted to know more about the project in general, or who wanted help in specific areas (e.g. artists and creative practitioners who were thinking about putting applications to various calls associated with the Clayton Street Corridor).
- Presented our work, alongside contributors and collaborators across the grassroots sector, at the Creative FUSE Conference in September 2022. This involved four sessions (three panel talks and one presentation session) as organised by Emma Coffield and Paul Richter.
- Fed into the forthcoming Inclusive Economic Strategy for Newcastle (conducted by CLES and Newcastle City Council), looking into the role that culture might play in developing and driving an inclusive economy.
- Collaborated with three cohorts of Urban Planning students at Newcastle University whose project involves the Clayton Street Corridor proposal (e.g. delivering lectures, connecting lecturers with grassroots artists and creative practitioners etc.).



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6. Is it making a difference?

written by Emma Coffield

In all of our work on the Making the Clayton Street Corridor project, we aim to create change. We don't just want to write reports. We want our work to have an impact.

But are we making a difference?

This is a really hard question, particularly as the kind of change we want to see is often slow and involves frustrations, missed opportunities, and that things move 'forward' only to then move 'back' again. We know that what we might view as success, others might question. There is always more to be done and nothing happens overnight.

We write this here not because we don't believe in our work (we do!) but because we want to be honest. We understand how difficult this work is, and how many people and perspectives are involved. There will be no simple answers.

There are encouraging signs of progress, however.

We've grouped some below:

Grassroots artists and creative practitioners as decision-makers

For the first time, Newcastle City Council have made space (and paid) for grassroots artist reps on the Advisory Group and in one of the Task & Finish groups. They also invited artists to be part of an interview panel and have indicated they will do so again in the future. This is really encouraging.

A culture shift?

The language used by Newcastle City Council is changing - we are seeing the term 'grassroots-led' more and more. We see this as indicative of emerging confidence and relationship building between Newcastle City Council and grassroots artists and creative practitioners.

Quick action

In opening up spaces for critical dialogue and discussion, misunderstandings and areas of confusion can be identified and put right quickly. This means that more grassroots artists and creative practitioners know what is going on, feel able to apply for opportunities, and can 'stick with' developments.

Demand for involvement

It is clear from the numbers of artists and creative practitioners engaging with our project that there is demand for sustained, critical dialogue with policy-makers.

Increased transparency and knowledge sharing

Having all the information in one place really helps. It means that artists and creative practitioners can find out what is going on without searching in multiple locations. It means we can share information quickly and easily.

Willingness to engage

For many people, the work involved in this project is not easy. It is often frustrating; there are old (and new) tensions and suspicions. Listening and speaking out can be deeply uncomfortable acts. Yet, people continue to engage and to try. We see the energy and time that goes into this on all sides. Artists and creative practitioners have asked brave and difficult questions. Newcastle City Council have, in paying for this project, enabled the sharing of sometimes very critical perspectives. It is because of this kind of negotiation, and the willingness to engage and try again, that we believe progress can be made.

Building partnerships

Having a project team means we can facilitate new relationships, put people in touch with each other, and act as a 'network of networks'. For example, we worked with Broadoaks (the 'Property Champion') to get artists and creative practitioners access to the buildings on Clayton Street, put artists and creative practitioners working on similar bids in touch with each other, and connected lecturers and students in Urban Planning with artists and creative practitioners.

We know that some of these changes might seem too small. Why only one grassroots artist rep on the Advisory Group? Why do small changes in language matter, when so many artists and creative practitioners need urgent help now? Is this real change, or is it wishful thinking – or worse?

Rest assured, there is much more we would like to see happen.

But we believe that the above actions are indicative of a burgeoning relationship. Artists and creative practitioners have the space and time to ask (sometimes difficult) questions, and to make suggestions. Policy-makers are listening, and they are starting to make changes in response. We have seen this on the ground. We are starting to build trust and understanding.

This is just a start. Fundamental change will require consistent effort over a period of years. The path will not be smooth. We do not know what the outcome will be, and the team on the Making the Clayton Street Corridor project do not have the power to effect change directly.

But we believe we will achieve something by continuing to hold open that space for dialogue and exchange.

7. What comes next?

The Making the Clayton Street Corridor project had funding to run from March to December 2022. That means we are at the end of our funding period – and writing and printing this workbook is one of the last things we will do.

We are keen to keep going and keep the momentum up. Newcastle City Council have indicated that they want to continue to support our work, and we have started discussions with them about what that might include. There is also a possibility that we will be able to expand the scope of the project and similarly support the Cultural and Creative Zones being developed in Northumberland and North Tyneside.

There are some key lessons we have learned, and want to take forward:

- The webpage/blog is a solid foundation that we should aim to build upon and expand. We could develop our social media presence however – perhaps by starting an Instagram account (we know lots of you are already there!).
- The reps are doing a fantastic job, but this is difficult (and at times exhausting and emotional) work that needs more support – and perhaps a re-think so that there is more diversity, there are more voices, and no-one feels the pressure to ‘represent’ a whole sector.
- Events are really popular, but we know that bursaries to help with attendance are important and that timings can be an issue. We need to think about events ‘outside’ the 9-5 to allow everyone to join in. We also need to re-think how we promote events – and the project – so that more artists and creative practitioners know about it and can get involved.
- All events (and blogs etc.) need to think carefully about accessibility. We need to set the standard in this regard.
- There is much more to be done! We would like to expand the glossary, write more blog posts, put on more events, design a map for the Clayton Street Corridor – and much more. In order for this work to be sector-led, we need to ask for informal feedback and suggestions from artists and creative practitioners more often.
- Our two Research Assistants have been invaluable – and we would like to thank them again here for their tireless efforts. We will apply for funding to keep these positions.

There are also some additional things that artists and creative practitioners have suggested, which we would like to pick up:

- We need to get better at storytelling / ‘consciousness raising’ so that the concerns of grassroots artists (and what they do) is really powerful.
- We know you’d like to see workshops led by artists and creative practitioners for artists and creative practitioners (rather than workshops facilitated by us).

We are putting these ideas into various funding bids as we type and will let you know how we get on.

8. Final thoughts

When we started the Making the Clayton Street Corridor project we envisaged a couple of events, some data collection, and a short report.

In the end, we have done far, far more than that. We would like to thank everyone who has made a suggestion, asked a question, or who generally prompted us to work in ways we hadn't imagined at the time. In many ways, the project has responded to, and been shaped by, these prompts.

So, we would like to say a massive "thank you" again to everyone who has taken part, or contributed, in one way or another. We do not take your time and energy for granted and appreciate every suggestion. We hope to have done you justice.

We would like to again thank Jenny McNamara and Kitty McKay for taking on the challenge of being the first ever grassroots art reps. Our two Research Assistants, Hannah Marsden and Daniel Newberry, have been fabulous – we thank them again for the hours of effort they have poured into this project. We would like to thank our Critical Friends and the wider team for their invaluable input along the way, Newcastle City Council (particularly Vikki Leaney, Ed Banks and Andrew Rothwell), and all those working on the Clayton Street Corridor in one form or another, for their support and time.

Perhaps most importantly, we want to acknowledge the open and generous spirit that people have approached our project with. We hope to be back very soon to continue this important work. In the meantime, if you have a question or a suggestion – please continue to get in touch with us at: makingtheclaytonstreetcorridor@gmail.com. We will be listening.

With our best wishes,

The Making the Clayton Street Corridor team.





9. Useful links and materials

We have drawn upon many useful resources over the course of this project and have listed some of our favourites here, in case they are useful to you too. Everything listed below is open access (e.g. free).

You can find our previous reports here:

Coffield E, Markham K, Richter P, Huggan R, Butler D, Wainwright E, Prescott R. (2019) 'More Than Meanwhile Spaces' [online]

Available at <https://morethanmeanwhile.wordpress.com/publications/>

Coffield E, Richter P, Huggan R, Prescott R, Butler D, Beveridge R, Goodman D, Monroe J. (2020) 'More Than Meanwhile Spaces II': Creative Enterprise/Action Zones – Exploring the Scope for Supporting Artist-Run Initiatives and Cultural Workspaces in North East England [Feasibility report] [online]

Available at <https://morethanmeanwhile.wordpress.com/publications/>

You can find more information on Newcastle's Cultural and Creative Zone (the Clayton Street Corridor) here:

North of Tyne Combined Authority (2021) 'North of Tyne Culture & Creative Zones Prospectus' [online]

Available at <https://www.northoftyne-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/NTCA-Culture-and-Creative-Zone-Prospectus.pdf>

Newcastle City Council (2022) 'Cultural and Creative Zone' [online]

Available at <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/our-city/culture-newcastle/cultural-and-creative-zone>

We often draw upon these reports/articles/posts:

Carey C, and Chambers T. (2020) 'UK Live music: At a cliff edge' [online]

Available at https://concertpromotersassociation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/REPORT_UK-Live-Music-at-a-Cliff-Edge.pdf

Earthen Lamp (commissioned by CVAN Contemporary Visual Arts Network England, Artquest, Red Eye – The Photography Network, and Visual Arts Group Wales) (2021) 'The Impact of the Pandemic on the Livelihood of Visual Arts Workers' [online]

Available at <https://cvan.art/work-campaigns/arts-workers/>

Florisson R, O'Brien D, Taylor M, McAndrew S, and Feder T. (2021) 'The impact of Covid-19 on jobs in the cultural sector' [online]

Available at <https://www.culturehive.co.uk/CVIresources/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-jobs-in-the-cultural-sector-part-3/>

House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee (2019) 'Live Music, Ninth Report of Session 2017-19' [online]

Available at <http://musicvenue trust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Digital-Culture-Media-and-Sport-Comittee-Live-Music-Ninth-Report-of-Session-2017-2019.pdf>

Owen G, O'Brien D, and Taylor M. (2020) 'A jobs crisis in the cultural and creative industries' [online]

Available at <https://pec.ac.uk/blog/how-covid-19-is-impacting-the-cultural-sector-with-the-loss-of-55-000-jobs-in-the-arts>

Scott R. (2022) 'Artists' workspace consultation report' [online]

Available at https://creativelandtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/KCL_ArtistsWorkspaceConsultationReport_June2022.pdf

TBR (with support from a-n The Artists information Company and James Doeser) (2018) 'Livelihoods of Visual Artists Report' [online]

Available at <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/livelihoods-visual-artists-report>

We have found lots of useful information (e.g. rates of pay, articles, advice) via the following organisations:

- a-n The Artists Information Company <https://www.a-n.co.uk/>
- Artists' Union England <https://www.artistsunionengland.org.uk/>
- Centre for Cultural Value <https://www.culturehive.co.uk/browse-all-resources/>
- Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre <https://pec.ac.uk/>
- Creative Workspace Network <https://creativeworkspacenetWORK.org/>
- Musicians' Union <https://musiciansunion.org.uk/>
- Music Venue Trust <https://www.musicvenue trust.com/>
- Theatres Trust <http://www.theatre trust.org.uk/>
- We are Unlimited <https://weareunlimited.org.uk/resources/>

