



Dundee: A Creative City

2024-2034



Visitors to the Victoria Gallery at The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery & Museum / © Ben Douglas

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Foreword

Dundee has a rich history and an exceptional cultural offering, with a wide array of organisations, places and people helping to tell the city's stories and to project ideas about our future.

It has always been a city that looked out into the world, making connections and generating new ideas and thinking. Culture is at the heart of that exchange, creating and innovating, sharing and celebrating history and heritage as we look to the future.

Culture, means different things to different people but at its core, its about who we are, how we express the ideas and values of our time and look back to learn more. It keeps us ambitious, it challenges us and brings us together in good and hard times. Culture is one of the things that we enjoy most, with 91% of adult Dundonians taking part in cultural activities over the past year.

This strategy sets out how the culture sector will work together with partners locally, nationally and internationally to flourish over the next decade, with outcomes that support artists and practitioners, organisations and buildings, and communities and work for the benefit of all of our city.

Following some difficult years recently, I am optimistic about the coming years for the culture sector. The focus of the city is on addressing our collective challenges and working together towards our common goals, and culture plays a key role in that work.

Dundee is a city that speaks to the world, a UNESCO City of design, an art school city, a city of art & heritage, of dance, music, play, theatre and of words and learning. Many organisations are drawing people and international projects to the city for everyone to take part in and enjoy. I look forward to working with the sector over the coming years to deliver this strategy Dundee: A Creative City.

Cllr Mark Flynn
Leader of Dundee City Council

Executive Summary

Dundee: A Creative City 2024-2034, represents a city bursting with creative talent who came together to create this new strategy which signals a way through the coming years of challenges and opportunities.

It highlights the culture sector as bold collaborators and key contributors to Dundee and Scotland's success; positioning culture at the heart of Dundee's future development, city plans and policies, ensuring that everyone in Dundee can engage with and enjoy cultural activities. It envisions a vibrant cultural hub that fosters innovation and successful creative careers supporting communities, artists and the creative workforce to prosper.

The strategy covers the next decade, however it is written to be dynamic, sitting alongside an action plan that can be agile: recognising that it is hard to keep moving forward at pace.

It is a plan that celebrates how far the city has come and looks forward to future progress but it does not hide from the challenges facing the culture sector in Dundee, across Scotland and across the UK. The collective impacts of reduced public spending, inflation, and the current cost of living have left the sector at the end of available resources, and while the strategy works within the existing envelope of support, there will be impacts if that investment and opportunity to generate income is further reduced.

The key vision outlines Dundee as a creative city, a beacon for all which celebrates diversity, embraces innovation and inspires collaboration.

To make that vision a reality, the outcomes support the people of the city who are the core audience, together with makers and practitioners, students and learners, the young people who live and work in the region and its visitors and tourists.

The strategy outlines four key outcomes:

Inspire Future Possibilities - to support the culture sector as bold collaborators and key contributors to Dundee and Scotland's success.

Implement Equity of Opportunity - to support audiences and communities to create and take part in cultural activity

Ignite Ambition and Creativity – to support artists and the wider creative workforce to prosper.

Innovate to Strengthen, Sustain and Prosper - to support cultural organisations to thrive.

The vision positions Dundee as a thriving creative and cultural centre, developing, attracting and retaining talent, valuing its heritage and creative excellence, and working collaboratively to drive positive change locally and globally.





Welcome

Dundee's culture sector creates exceptional impacts for people and place, contributing to outcomes across economy, health, wellbeing, learning, and delivering incredible activity and projects for audiences from near and far.

This Culture Strategy sets out the shared priorities for the culture sector in Dundee to ensure a future where everyone can participate and enjoy culture, where Dundee develops, attracts and retains creative talent and grows its reputation further.

It supports cultural organisations and creative careers to thrive here, with the city sustaining a relevant and resilient sector doing excellent work with agencies and partners to deliver Dundee and Scotland's ambitions.

Recognising that the culture sectors across Scotland and the UK are in a fragile and perilous state, the strategy action plan is lean, and supports ways in which the sector will work together to achieve collective outcomes. The sector is struggling with the decline in public spend on culture over the past ten years and increased costs due to high inflation. Meanwhile the cost of living has impacted customers, audience, participants and supporters, reducing the opportunities for earning and for business cash sponsorship. The sector is at a turning point, with the reduction in output and impacts across all elements of artistic activity now apparent.

The strategy outlines contributions to the outcomes set out in local and national policies where culture supports Dundee and Scotland to be a fairer society, where the root causes of poverty have been tackled, to create a wealthier society with economic opportunities and fair work. The goal is for people to reach their potential through communities who are empowered, prosperous and safe and to be a greener place, working to net zero carbon emissions.

Dundee is also part of a wider Tay Cities area with our neighbours in the east of Scotland and those connections and the spaces where our strategies align will continue to be explored.

At the heart of this Culture Strategy lies a commitment to celebrate diversity, foster inclusivity, and amplify voices. Culture is not static but evolves through constant dialogue and exchange, reflecting the ever-changing landscape of our society.

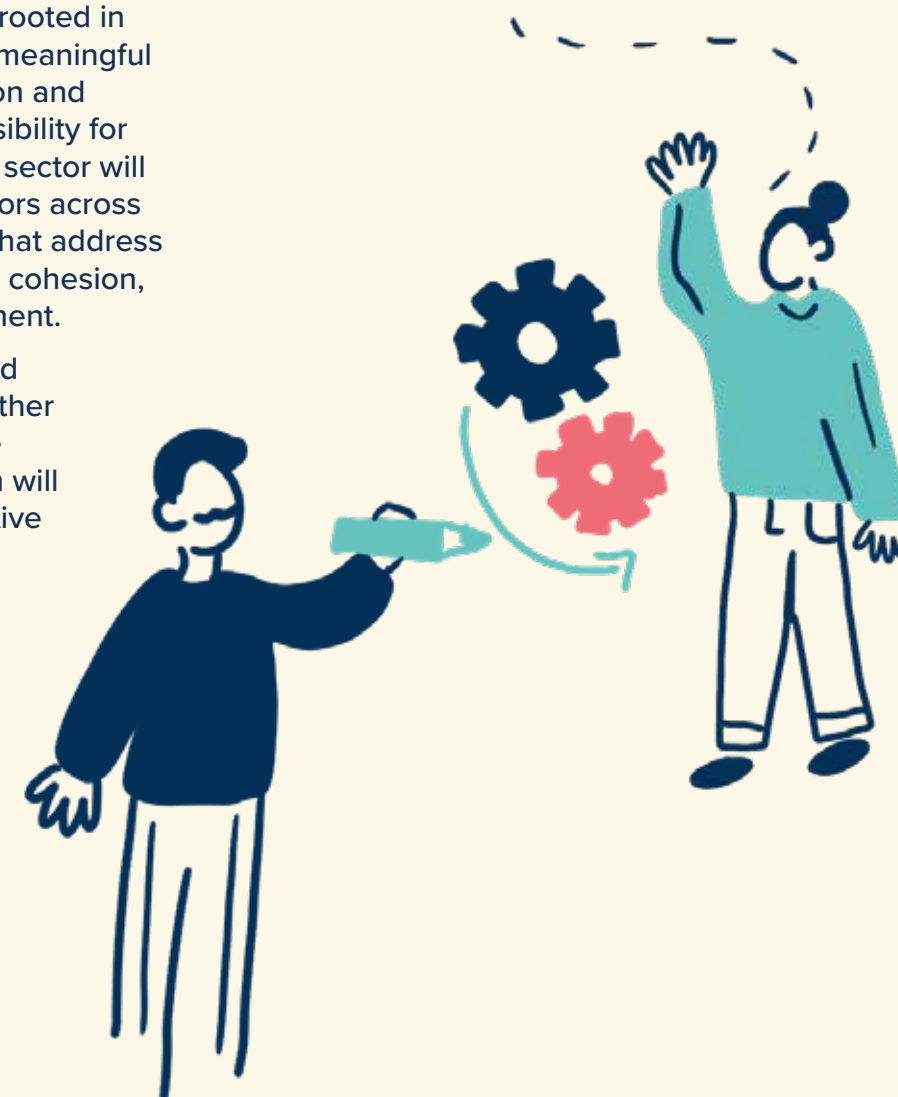
THIS CULTURE STRATEGY EMBRACES CULTURE AS THE ENTIRETY OF CREATIVE EXPRESSION IN DUNDEE. FROM OUR HERITAGE, STORIES AND EVERYDAY EXPRESSION, TO CONTEMPORARY PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE ACROSS THE ARTS, WE WEAVE TOGETHER DIVERSE NARRATIVES THAT SHAPE OUR IDENTITIES.



Spring Holiday Pop Up / DCA / © Erika Stevenson

This Culture Strategy is deeply rooted in collaboration, recognising that meaningful change requires collective action and that we each must take responsibility for contributing to its success. The sector will actively engage with collaborators across sectors to co-create initiatives that address pressing issues, promote social cohesion, and drive sustainable development.

Through prioritising projects and partnerships, and working together to secure investment and share resources, a thriving ecosystem will be nurtured where artists, creative and cultural practitioners and freelancers can flourish. This requires access to resources, spaces, and platforms that empower individuals and communities to express themselves authentically and contribute to the collective tapestry of our city and region.





Vision 2024-2034

DUNDEE IS A CREATIVE CITY.

Together, we strive to position Dundee as a beacon for all, celebrating diversity, embracing innovation, and inspiring collaboration.



Mission

DUNDEE IS A CITY WHERE CULTURE...

INSPIRES FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

to bring the city to life. Culture is at the heart of shaping city plans, policy and the transformative power of creativity and culture drives the city's ambition, reputation and potential. Dundee is international in outlook and locally rooted with distinct heritages and a vibrant cultural landscape, a centre of excellence for creativity locally and globally.

IMPLEMENTS EQUITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND ACCESS FOR ALL

to ensure that everyone in Dundee has the opportunity to experience and contribute to our cultural life. By promoting participation, collaboration, skills development, learning, shared experiences, and representation, we create spaces and initiatives where imagination, trust, care, and diversity thrive. Culture flourishes here, fostering community pride, prosperity, skills and identity.

IGNITES AMBITION AND CREATIVITY

to embrace innovation and excellence and to celebrate our cultural heritage and contemporary cultures. Talent is nurtured and we encourage experimentation, idea development, joy, risk-taking, and the development of skills in accessible spaces.

INNOVATES TO STRENGTHEN, SUSTAIN AND PROSPER

to ensure the culture sector will flourish sustainably, with a mix of revenue streams, forward-thinking practices, and a circular economy ethos. By managing growth thoughtfully, mitigating environmental impact, and supporting grassroots organisations, we contribute to a resilient and thriving cultural landscape that reflects the vitality of our community.

EXCELLENCE

creating and presenting a rich range of cultural and creative experiences and opportunities

FAIRNESS

ensuring opportunities for all to create and enjoy culture

SHARED

working together to achieve ambitions

PRIDE

celebrating each other's achievements

DUNDEE'S VALUES

AMBITION

stretching further and pushing ahead

RELEVANT

valuing culture for its contribution to improving lives

BRAVERY

taking risks and enabling others to take risks

OUTWARD LOOKING

striving to encourage and inspire innovation and creativity, to be open-minded and learn from others



Dundee / © Shahbaz Majeed / Frame Focus Capture Photography

Context

PLACE

DUNDEE IS A CREATIVE CITY.

Ideally located on the banks of the Tay as the river meets the sea, the quality of light in the east of Scotland attracts artists to the city and region.

The people of Dundee are ambitious and resilient, their stories are built on a history of global trade and travel which has created a city of designers and makers. In recent times the culture sector has been a successful driver for regeneration and a catalyst for positive change, reshaping the city economy around creative industries and innovation.

Dundee is a thriving visitor destination at the heart of Tayside, within easy travelling distance for most of Scotland. It is a walkable city with cultural venues within easy reach of each other. Development across the culture sector has driven the visitor economy and won accolades for the city, attracting investment, jobs and income. STEAM (Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) data from 2023 reveals that visitor numbers have increased by 10% since 2019 to 1.35 million people, and that there has been a 27% increase in overnights stays.

SECTOR



Dundee's culture sector is a skilled, interconnected community, delivering meaningful and impactful activities across the city and beyond. The sector's strengths lie in its people, organisations, networks and infrastructure, and in a shared understanding of the importance of partnership working collectively for the common good. The sector's reputation is supported through its strong leadership sharing a rich record of accomplishment and positive delivery, and its distinct communities and varied grassroots activity. It is an attractive place for national bodies and international partners looking for collaboration with recognised, knowledgeable peers.

The sector in Dundee is successful and forward looking, made up of established organisations across art forms, a strong pool of artists, designers, freelance practitioners, informal creatives and a keen audience.

Dundee is a university city. The University of Dundee, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design (DJCAD), Abertay University and Dundee & Angus College are key drivers of learning, research and skills development across the culture sector, bringing artists and designers to the city. Abertay's innovations in screen technologies and strong gaming and play development, combined with DJCAD's teaching and research in art, design, architecture and urban planning, foster the excellence of the creative and cultural industries in the city and beyond. They promote interdisciplinary approaches and support thousands of creative students and practitioners each year.

Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee Rep & Scottish Dance Theatre, Discovery Point, Verdant Works, the McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum, the city's libraries, DJCAD's Cooper Gallery, HMS Unicorn and Dundee Science Centre are locally successful, internationally connected centres of excellence. There are many strong community based and young people focused organisations across the city including Art Angel, Scrapantics, Front Lounge and Hot Chocolate Trust, all ensuring creativity and expression for their participants. V&A Dundee is making a significant difference to the city, creating a new public museum and platform for design, contributing to positive outcomes and attracting visitors from across the city, Scotland and internationally to Dundee's waterfront.

The imminent move of Dundee Museum of Transport to a new home in a tram depot in Maryfield will add to the appeal of the eastern side of the city, as will the incoming Eden Project Dundee. The UNESCO City of Design designation opens connections to other creative cities across the globe, while Creative Dundee supports networks on our doorstep, nationally and internationally, centring creative communities as powerful catalysts for positive change. Live performance and music play a key role in the city and people's lives with gigs, schools' music, dramatic societies and choirs providing a soundscape to the city, and the Dundee Gaelic choir offering an opportunity to celebrate the Gaelic language. The variety



and breadth of activity and participation results in engaged audiences who are vocal advocates for activity, they are active attendees and participants, looking for opportunities to find play, joy and fun.

Despite the recognised positive social impact of arts and culture, recent years have seen real terms decline in investment from public funds and an increasingly competitive market for business sponsorship, in philanthropic giving and income from trusts and foundations. The impacts of inflation and increased costs of living have reduced the ability of audiences and participants to take part. Culture organisations and individuals each delicately balance a diverse range of income streams, and with activity dependent on a balanced web, there is a risk that the scales will tip and some organisations, and the people and activity upon which they rely will fall. The sector is in a period of intense difficulty, where the impacts of reduced income can no longer be hidden back-of-house or shored up through spending reserves. There is a curtailment of output from the sector in Dundee, where comparison

between data from 2019/20 and 2023/24 shows a reduction in school engagement activity, a reduction in volunteers and volunteer hours contributed, and a reduction in employed posts available for artists. Maintaining existing levels of support and income is critical to ensure that the sector continues to produce work for audiences, develop talent, engage the public and positively impact lives, and that cornerstone organisations remain available to support less well-resourced individuals and groups across the sector and in communities.

Climate change poses its own unique challenges, both in terms of how the sector reduces negative impacts and in terms of how it can be directly affected, and becoming carbon neutral requires expenditure to be maintained or implemented. As the building infrastructure ages, and as weather patterns bring more extreme weather events, the sector is navigating spaces that are not always safe and weather tight. Creative practitioners play a key role in helping people imagine, dream, aspire and create better futures to reduce negative impacts.



Creative Dundee PechaKucha Night Dundee Vol. 29 / Nov 2022 / © Ben Douglas

CITY

Dundee is committed to improving outcomes for its people and the recently developed City Plan for Dundee is focussed on addressing the challenges of inequality and poverty. The culture sector is working to address these issues and support city policies across portfolios.

The sector leads on fair work practices, recognising that fair pay leads to more sustainable careers which will benefit the sector in the long term.

Taking part in arts and cultural activity supports instrumental outcomes regarding health and wellbeing, social isolation and place making. Dundee will come together to work creatively for benefits across positive outcomes for health, wellbeing, happiness, isolation, and quality of life for the benefit of our residents, visitors and businesses, celebrating Dundee’s cultural strengths and making the most of our cultural assets for the advantage of all. The work of the culture sector is ever more vital to bring people together, to create connections and support imaginative new futures.

“DUNDEE HAS AN INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION FOR USING CULTURE AND CREATIVITY AS A CATALYST FOR BUILDING RESILIENT AND ROBUST COMMUNITIES. OUR STRONG HISTORY OF CULTURAL INVESTMENT MEANS DUNDEE IS A VIBRANT PLACE WHICH HARNESSSES ITS CREATIVITY AND CULTURAL RICHNESS TO SUPPORT THE ENGAGEMENT, AMBITION, ACHIEVEMENTS AND WELLBEING OF ITS CITIZENS.”

Dundee City Plan 2022-2032

STRATEGY

The strategy supports the National Performance Framework outcome for culture outlining that the country is ‘creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely’.

It also supports the Scottish Government’s A Culture Strategy for Scotland which places culture as a central consideration across all policy areas including health and wellbeing, economy, education, reducing inequality and realising a greener and more innovative future, as well as Scotland’s International Culture Strategy 2024-30 which has a focus on innovation, international connections and enhanced reputation for Scotland.

It speaks directly to Creative Scotland’s ambitions to support and develop quality and excellence, and to promote understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of arts and culture, as well as Scotland’s Museums and Galleries Strategy ambitions that collections are cared for, accessible and shared.

The strategy is deeply relevant to the City Plan for Dundee 2022-32 and the culture outcomes directly connect to the plan’s objectives to:

- REDUCE** child poverty and inequalities in incomes, education & health
- TACKLE** Climate Change and reach Net Zero carbon emissions by 2045
- DELIVER** Inclusive Economic Growth (including Community Wealth Building)

The sector looks forward to playing a key part in reporting to these national strategies and to further integrating into regional and local strategies across the Tay Cities Deal, Dundee’s City Centre Strategic Investment Plan 2050, and tourism, climate and city policies.

This Culture Strategy is for culture and creative organisations, partners, artists, audiences, supporters and funders, business leads, policy makers across health, education and economy, elected members and the public; rooting culture and creativity in the city’s story and its priorities over the next ten years. Within that timeframe is a refresh strategy to re-examine the action plan on a three-year cycle to keep it relevant and responsive to opportunities as they arise.





OUTCOME 1

SUPPORTS THE CULTURE SECTOR AS BOLD COLLABORATORS AND KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO DUNDEE AND SCOTLAND'S SUCCESS.

Inspire Future Possibilities

- a) Dundee is celebrated as a vibrant centre for cultural excellence and innovation, a creative leader, innovating through design and practice.
- b) Culture and creativity are woven through city policies and contribute to city priorities.
- c) Positive health and wellbeing, and placemaking outcomes are achieved through culture.
- d) The city's cultural reputation and offering is used to attract visitors, investors and new residents.

WHAT DOES FUTURE SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Dundee is a vibrant and dynamic city that people choose to live in and visit. It is making the most of its cultural assets and creative people to address the shared priorities for the city, region and nationally. Those priorities are focused on tackling the root causes of poverty, ensuring a sustainable city economy with strong communities, tackling climate change and reaching net zero carbon emissions. The culture sector in Dundee is central to the success of the city, providing outcomes in health and wellbeing, placemaking and civic pride, sustainable careers and carbon targets. Culture is a cross-cutting part of the city's plans, and cultural representatives are a key part of the Dundee Partnership Group. There is a traceable line of reporting which describes the sector's work and relevance to local outcomes and the National Performance Framework.

Visitors continue to choose Dundee as a destination, taking part in cultural activity, visiting cultural venues and contributing to positive economic outcomes. The successful culture sector is used to sell the city to investors and attract new residents. The quality of creative provision and activity in the city is celebrated locally and internationally. Leadership skills are developed with pilot projects, innovation, and good practice from Dundee adopted elsewhere. Dundee remains ambitious for the work and reach of its culture and creative sectors.

There is a strong sense of place with each community secure in its unique offer, with access to a variety of cultural activity and opportunities supporting a reduction in isolation, community cohesion and delivering health and wellbeing outcomes.



Dundee Science Centre / Outreach at St Mary's Primary / © Dundee Science Centre



October Soundbase 2023 / Caird Hall / © Sarah Smart

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Culture is central to Dundee's profile as a liveable city and in addressing the city's identified priorities. Sector wide collective data collection will be established and maintained and participation in city forums will drive outcomes that support reporting to the local and national ambitions.

Working with the tourism sector, culture will play a key role in maintaining Dundee's attractiveness as a destination to live work and visit and to develop the offer to visitors year-round.

Dundee will innovate and find creative uses for digital tools, in AI, AR and new screen technologies.

Third level research skills and collaborative projects will also support this outcome, through robust research and data collection metrics, describing the work of the sector and its tangible impacts.





OUTCOME 2

SUPPORTS AUDIENCES AND COMMUNITIES TO
CREATE AND TAKE PART IN CULTURAL ACTIVITY.

Implement Equity of Opportunity

- a) Everyone can enjoy the experience of culture in Dundee. Audience members, participants and volunteers are involved and included in creative and cultural activities and decision making.
- b) A wide variety of activity is generated and available and is reflective of the richness of our community identities. Communities have distinctive offers and vibrant connections.
- c) There are spaces and initiatives that foster collaboration, trust, and care within the community, ensuring that everyone feels valued and represented.

WHAT DOES FUTURE SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Dundee has inclusive cultural projects across the city and across the year available for all to enjoy. Audiences enjoy a range of activity across scale, price, location and type. There are opportunities to volunteer and take part in culture, and decision-making opportunities to develop leadership and ensure relevance to communities of interest or to geographical communities.

Everyone has the opportunity for cultural expression and celebration. Neighbourhoods mark their place through distinctive offers, activity or good design. Activity is accessible and designed equitably with all collaborators in mind. There are playful interventions and joyous expressions of place.

Groups gather, support each other, learn from each other and share resources, buildings and ideas to collaborate and add value. Libraries foster learning and skills, support community cohesion and local identity in strong communities.

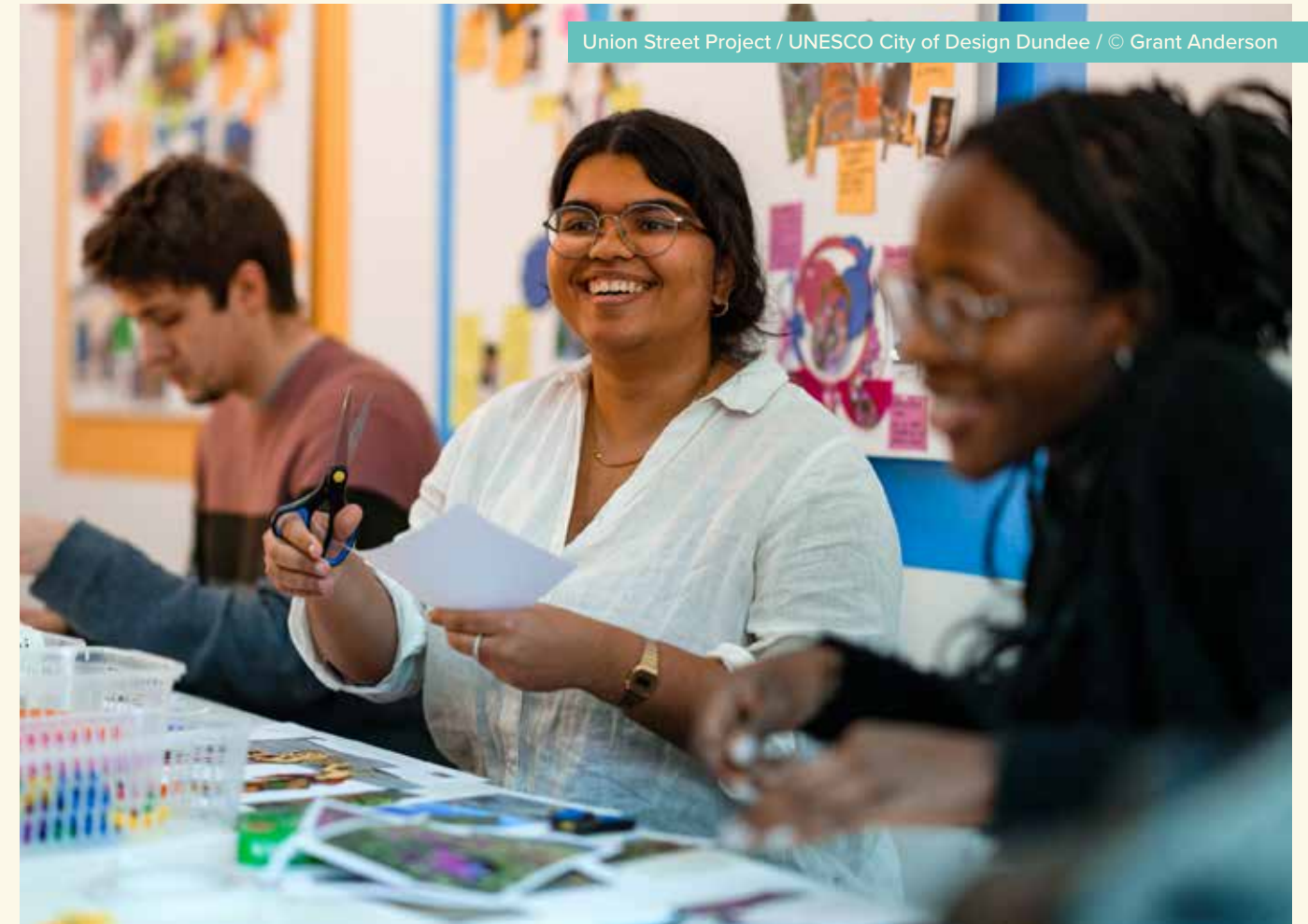
HOW TO GET THERE?

Communities are creative spaces where people connect with their neighbours, have civic pride, and can generate and show their creativity. Dundee's people want the best for themselves, their families, and their neighbourhoods. They want easy access to relevant cultural activity local to them, affordable and across a variety of interests and audiences. They are concerned with fairness and equitable access to those activities.

The culture sector will continue to reach across all wards of the city with a common goal to improve quality of life. The positive impact on health and wellbeing, on reducing isolation, and the positive outcomes for the city in terms of reducing child poverty and inequalities in incomes and educational attainment from cultural activity will be captured and promoted.

The culture sector celebrates work for and with young people across artforms and recognises the city's commitment to music in schools while also acknowledging a wider reduction of investment in arts in schools. Opportunities for young people as audiences, creators and leaders will be developed.

The sector will work together to deliver targeted programmes to address issues of exclusion and social justice, committed to a fair spread of activity and to value hidden or marginalised cultural expressions through unexpected collaborations. The work to decolonise our museum collections and archives will continue and inform work across the city.



Union Street Project / UNESCO City of Design Dundee / © Grant Anderson



Saoirse Amira Anis / Art Night Dundee / © Erika Stevenson



OUTCOME 3

SUPPORTS ARTISTS AND THE WIDER
CREATIVE WORKFORCE TO PROSPER.

Ignite Ambition and Creativity

- a) Dundee attracts and retains talent. Cultural practitioners are supported and encouraged to develop their practice, lead fulfilling careers, and achieve ambitions.
- b) Lifelong engagement in creativity is supported and there are opportunities for experimentation, risk-taking, and skills development.
- c) Physical spaces are accessible, affordable and available for performance, making, exhibition and co-working.
- d) There is a culture of innovation and openness to new ideas, recognising and celebrating the diverse cultural heritages and artistic expressions within Dundee.

WHAT DOES FUTURE SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

The sector has the resources it requires to survive, the space, people and funds to generate activity and to maintain attractiveness. The cultural quality of the work produced and presented in the city is maintained in a community that also creatively challenges for continual improvement.

A diverse array of career advancement opportunities exist across all levels within the sector, empowering individuals to progress and excel in their chosen fields. The gap in opportunity for mid-career practitioners, who often use a broad portfolio of contract work to sustain themselves, is addressed through robust fair work practices and an expansion to activities across the sector. The city's population, artists, makers, performers and collections have safe, dry, warm spaces to exist, to make work and to look after work, to share it with the public and to celebrate Dundee's stories. Those spaces are affordable across a variety of scales of operation, with room for co-working, production and business as well as presentation.

Artists and practitioners enjoy a wide variety of stimulating opportunities to make and present work, take risks and experiment. Children and young people are inspired to life long enjoyment and embrace creative careers and expression. Communities are open and share their stories and heritage, creating vibrant connected communities with celebratory moments.

HOW TO GET THERE?

In order to retain and attract artists and designers, Dundee must be a welcoming and appealing place for them to base themselves and their businesses and must provide opportunities for them to secure commissions, develop their skills and find career progression.

Data tracked across 2019/20 to 2023/24 suggests an increase in commissions for new work from 96 to 144 opportunities, 48 more, a 50% increase. However, there is a decline in employment opportunities for artists from 276 to 201 posts which is 75 fewer, a 27% decline.

The sector will establish opportunities for career progression and inclusion for freelance practitioners, young people and marginalised groups. The City Centre Strategic Investment Plan for Dundee encourages a vibrant night-time economy, with mixed use spaces on the high street, and a desire that cultural organisations, designers and makers add animation and interest. The sector will work in partnership with city leaders to address the challenge of accessing high street spaces with security of tenure and affordability built in. Dundee needs more studios, workspaces, and presenting spaces to retain and attract talent, and to maintain its cultural reputation. Without music venues and gigs, and without affordable studio spaces, Dundee is facing a creative talent drain. The culture sector will continue to imagine ambitious capital investments ideas, ready to respond to opportunities as they arise.





OUTCOME 4

SUPPORTS CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS TO THRIVE.

Innovate to Strengthen, Sustain and Prosper

- a) The culture sector is positioned for enduring prosperity and sustainability, designed to flourish with secure revenue streams and forward-looking practices.
- b) Seed funding and ongoing support are consistently provided to nurture grassroots organisations, fostering a resilient and diverse cultural landscape that reflects the richness of our communities.
- c) Growth within our cultural organisations is carefully managed to align with their capacities and interests, ensuring a balanced and sustainable expansion trajectory.
- d) The cultural sector actively contributes to the city's response to the climate crisis, implementing initiatives and practices that mitigate environmental impact and promote sustainability.

WHAT DOES FUTURE SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

The resilience and economic sustainability of our creative businesses is secured, with risk taking applauded. Businesses are encouraged to start and to grow, embedded in their communities. Public funds are invested in cultural activities that ensure a thriving city with an international outlook, and private money is levered in to generate additionality to core projects and programmes.

Buildings and physical infrastructure enjoy a cycle of continued investment to maintain the physical fabric to protect collections, creation of work, and our stories for the future.

Funding to encourage grassroots activity and growth is available across artforms on a regular and recurring basis to encourage pilot activity and sustain successful projects. This critical mass of activity provides work for freelance and small businesses to maintain their portfolio earnings and prosper.

The spread and range of funds available allows for smaller organisations and interest groups to access support, gain visibility and be celebrated.

Reports from the sector promote quality and depth of engagement and reach. Growth for its own sake and pursuit of increased numbers is challenged in favour of meaningful interactions, quality of life and sustainable careers. Reporting and metrics are gathered which reflect the quality of experiences and impacts on participants.

Environmental sustainability is at the heart of all actions, supporting a just transition to net zero and environmental goals set out in Scotland's Climate Change Plan and in the Climate Action Plan developed by Dundee City Council and partners following their declaration of a climate emergency in 2019. Embracing a circular economy ethos, materials are repurposed, equipment and resource sharing is facilitated, and collaborative ecosystem is fostered to minimise waste and maximise efficiency.

*V&A Dundee, DCA, Dundee Rep Theatre, HMS Unicorn, Creative Dundee, UNESCO City of Design Dundee, Hot Chocolate Trust, Dundee Science Centre, UoD Museums, Open Close, The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery & Museum, Cooper Gallery, Shaper Caper

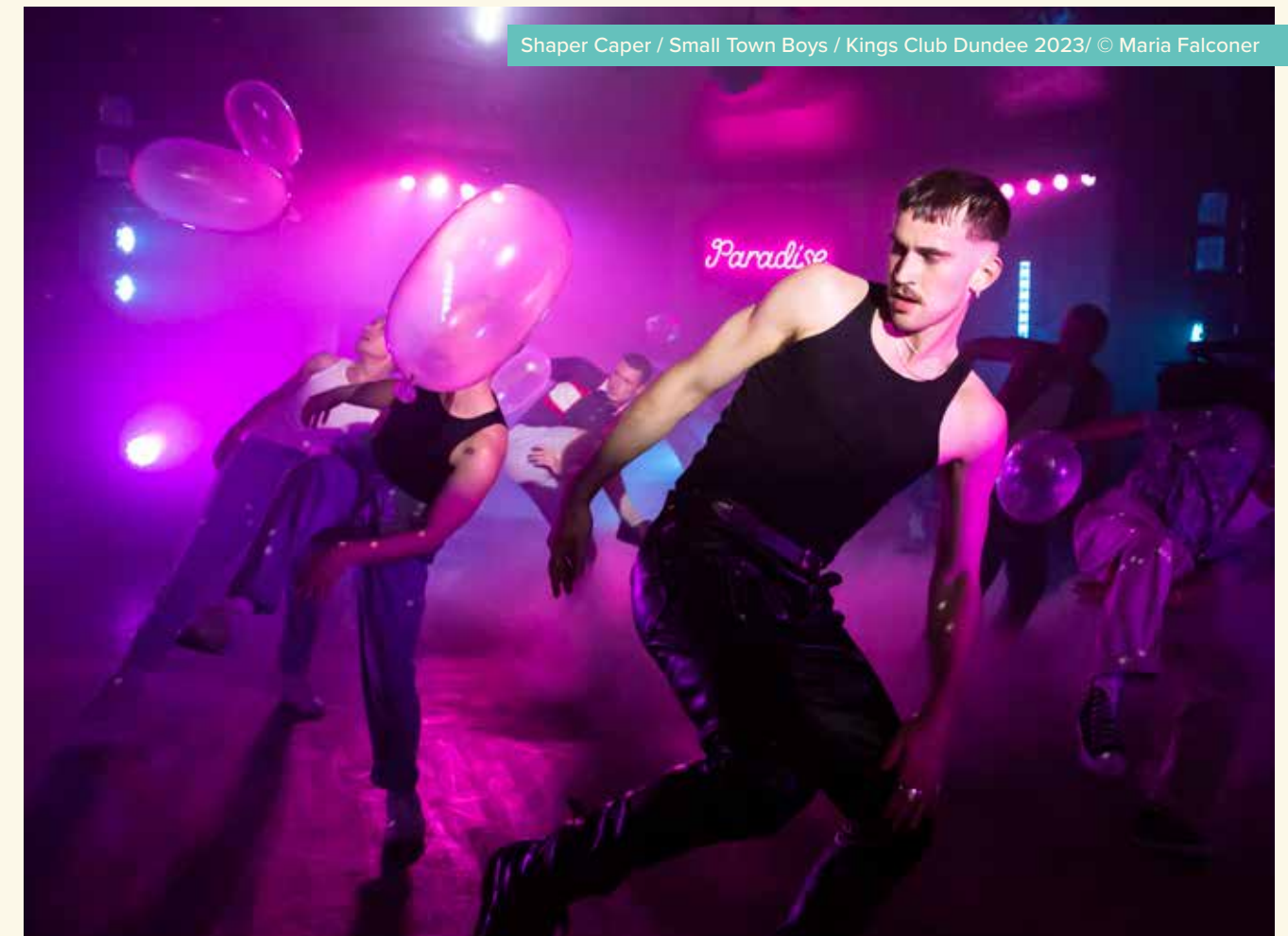
HOW TO GET THERE?

The cultural organisations of Dundee are a celebrated success story with long histories of exciting work, vibrant projects and excellence. This success is hard won, and recent years of standstill investment has depleted reserves, staffing levels, capacity, resources and energy. Leaders need capacity in order to collaborate, to look regionally, nationally and internationally for opportunities, and the business of staying afloat must be secured and buildings shored up before big vision and ambitions are acted upon. The sector will use the foundations of decades of success to advocate and celebrate impact, with fair work and social justice at its heart.

Financial sustainability is a requirement for the sector to thrive. In 2023/24 the sector had a combined income of c£18,462,776*, with 46% of that earned or privately donated, levered in from Local Authority public investment of 13% of that total.

The sector is skilled at taking local investment and attracting further external funds, generating economic impact and adding to Dundee's prosperity and employment figures. Recognising that Fair Work requires expenditure, maintaining public spend on culture is key to this additionality in fundraising and income generation. The sector will collectively fundraise for a mechanism to disburse local funding, and will continue to make the ongoing case for cultural investment.

The sector is committed to climate action and a just transition to net zero. Activity is underway to ensure organisations are part of Circular Tayside and the Circular Arts Network as well as good practice sharing groups like the Climate Cafe or the Sustainable Dundee Network.



Shaper Caper / Small Town Boys / Kings Club Dundee 2023/ © Maria Falconer



Visitors at The Dundee Tapestry at V&A Dundee / © Michael McGurk for V&A Dundee



OKOLO Exhibition at Generator Projects 2023 / © Ben Douglas

Action Plan

The sector will work together on key collective actions to support the delivery of the strategy ambitions, engaging with key networks and partners through the Dundee Partnership Cultural Development Group (CDG) and using its strategic sub-groups – the Cultural Agencies Network (CAN), Festivals and Events Coordinating Group (FECG), Cultural Engagement Development Group (CEDG), the Heritage Development Group (HDG) and the Performing Arts Development group (PADG).

The action plan will be reviewed every three years to remain fresh and to ensure that there is built-in flexibility to respond to opportunities.

Key highlights include

- An annual culture summit to explore relevant opportunities, to share learning, discuss issues and to identify solutions.
- Mapping exercises to better understand the sector landscape, generate data and identify projects for development across public engagement and practitioner career development.
- Support for local businesses to engage with procurement processes, and for a platform to highlight opportunities with and for artists, freelancers and designers.
- Support for freelancers to take an active part in the sector development meetings.
- A taskforce to look for ways to develop workspaces for creative practitioners and SME businesses.
- A series of key public milestone events or season of events to galvanise and create impact and profile including year of play in 2026/2027.



Storm at Hubfest Dundee / © Frame Focus Capture Photography



Stereophonics at Slessor Gardens 2022 / © Tim Craig

Outcome	Action	Responsible	Timeline	Deliverable
INSPIRE FUTURE POSSIBILITIES				
1b 4a	Advocate for the power of cultural interventions to be recognised by ensuring representation at key decision making platforms and articulate clearly the impact of public funds	CDG LACD	Ongoing	Referenced in key city documents
1a	Joint initiatives to support Tourism Leadership Group and City Promotion Team with city/regional campaigns and to develop the offer for visitors.	CDG LACD TLG DCC	2025-34	Visitor numbers increased
1c	Create shared PhD research opportunities, partnership work placement schemes and development projects in the city	UoD Abertay D&A College CDG	2025-28	2 research projects and 2 placements by 2026
1c	Identify ways to develop evaluation metrics to report culture's contribution to outcomes	DG CEDG	2025-28	Useable metrics
1d 1c 2a	Create a city-wide umbrella celebration, beginning with a Year of Play, to build a critical mass to attract funding, attention and audiences.	CDG CEDG	2027	Event
IMPLEMENT EQUITY OF OPPORTUNITY				
2b	Map provision by cultural organisations, to analyse opportunities and the health/education/fairness focus in the city	CEDG	2024-25	Report
2a 2b 2c	Develop a cross organisational collective engagement programme to target identified gaps.	CDG CDEG	2025-28	New targeted programme



Outcome	Action	Responsible	Timeline	Deliverable
IGNITE AMBITION AND CREATIVITY				
3a	Develop and collectively invest in visible mentoring, internship and cultural leadership opportunities, including freelance attendance at city forums	CDG	2025-27	4 opportunities available
3a	Commission a mapping exercise to evidence whether artists, musicians and others are leaving Dundee due to lack of opportunities.	UoD Abertay CDG	2025- 26	Data collection and report
3a	Identify how fair work practice and community wealth building can be implemented in a local creative context.	CDG	2024-26	Part of Culture Summit
3a	Support a platform to share local opportunities and to connect to local practitioners and businesses. Track commissioning processes to ensure balance of local, national and international talent is supported,	LACD CD V&A UNESCO	2025-26	Web platform
3a 3b	Highlight continuing professional development courses, identify shared training and skills development including skills on Public Contracts Scotland across staff teams and freelancers.	CDG DCC	2025-26	2 shared trainings, 4 more creative businesses using PCS
3c	Establish a taskforce to find solutions to the issues with workspaces and presentation spaces in the city.	UoD CDG CD	2024	Actions arising
3d	Enhance city centre confidence and cultural infrastructure through a portfolio of business cases including large scale live music venue.	DCC City Development	2024-30	Investment on spaces by 2030
INNOVATE TO STRENGTHEN, SUSTAIN AND PROSPER				
4a	Advocate the importance of adequate building repair fit for national touring productions, objects and collections.	LACD DCC	Ongoing	Buildings safe
4b	Develop an accountable and open funding mechanism to disburse local funds to activity.	CDG LACD	2024-34	Funds available
4d	Support the reuse of materials and sharing of resources across the sector.	ALL working with Circular and recycling networks	Ongoing targets to 2030	Organisational annual reporting

Delivering the strategy



This strategy was developed with input from a broad selection of collaborators and interested parties through consultation workshops and focus groups with the culture and creative sector in Dundee, community practitioners, organisers of informal creative activities and external supporters from national organisations. A culture sector survey gathered statistical data on workforce, finance and engagement and allowed direct comparison to the financial year 2019/20.

Over 190 people communicated their priorities, key themes and actions and painted a vibrant picture of the sector as seen by the people who work within it, who enjoy it and take part in it.

The key themes and priorities consistently emerged, giving a focus for collective action across four outcomes for city, community, practitioners, and organisations, and to drive the action planning.

The Culture Strategy for Dundee will be delivered by the Dundee Partnership Cultural Development Group, which is made up of key leadership representatives from artforms across Dundee*. The group meet quarterly to:

- promote joint working between agencies whose remits have a focus and interest in the cultural development of Dundee
- support the Dundee Partnership in delivering the City Plan by focusing on strategic priorities where culture is relevant

- oversee the implementation of the Culture Strategy for the city
- promote the importance of community and cultural engagement at a strategic level across the Dundee Partnership in relation to wellbeing, quality of life, health, the vibrancy and sustainability of the city of Dundee.

It is supported by sub-groups - the Cultural Agencies Network (CAN), Festivals and Events Coordinating Group (FECG), Cultural Engagement Development Group (CEDG), Heritage Development Group (HDG) and Performing Arts Development group (PADG).

The Dundee Partnership Cultural Development Group are accountable for generating the collaborations required to achieve the shared outcomes, for fundraising to deliver specific targets and for communicating with stakeholders. Each partner will take responsibility and accountability for the success of the strategy, working with Dundee City Council and city partners to achieve the action plan.

*Abertay University, Creative Dundee, D&A College, Dundee City Council, Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee Heritage Trust, Dundee Rep Theatre and Scottish Dance Theatre, Dundee School's Music Dundee City Council, Dundee Science Centre, Dundee Social Enterprise Network, Eden Project Dundee, Hot Chocolate Trust, HMS Unicorn, Leisure and Culture Dundee, UNESCO City of Design Dundee, University of Dundee, V&A Dundee.



Evaluation and measurement

The success of the strategy will be based on achieving the shared outcomes. The action plans at each outcome have clear targets to measure progress and to support reporting to stakeholders. External evaluation will be commissioned to measure and report on progress.

The strategy is a living document, designed to be able respond to opportunities over its timeline. The action plan will have a three year refresh cycle, so that it is regularly reviewed, is accountable and flexible to change.

Evaluate the strategy/sector	2026-2027	CDG	Report to track progress and to inform action plan refresh
Action plan refresh every three years to keep it relevant and respond to opportunities	2027-28	CDG	Refreshed Action Plan

Sharp As River-Silver

(A DUNDONIAN PATCHWORK POEM)

nou tell the world, tell it loud
write it a letter and stick on oor postage stamp
from the Laa Hill's fortress tae the North Carr Light
waiting for the tide to turn

bridge with ower mony shadows,
cormorants perched on ghost piers

three masts against a lucid sky
stubborn-hulled and well-seasoned

wish upon a star, catalogued by a Nethergate lass
for Billy in his beret and a bevy of whippets

street names like Granny Sookers on my tongue
Couttie's Wynd, Brown Constable Street, Peep o' Day Lane

at the end of quiet South Baffin Street
a small plaque commemorating Mary Shelley's digs
prior to the Monster gaining his bones and meat
erse like a kail pot but he'll do a job

Tannadice Shed elbow to elbow with The Bobby Cox
the baa's on the slates

jute jam an jings
these are a few o meh favourite things

first date: new jeans on
meet under the Wellgate clock

MacGonagall, Fanny Wright, the Wedderburns
thai strippit the willow and dashed the white sergeant

wi the Broons, The Beano, and Oor Wullie
roond circles whether o cundies or Hell

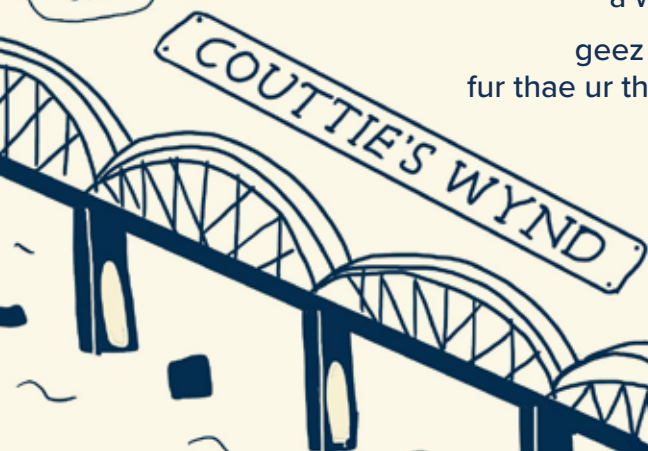
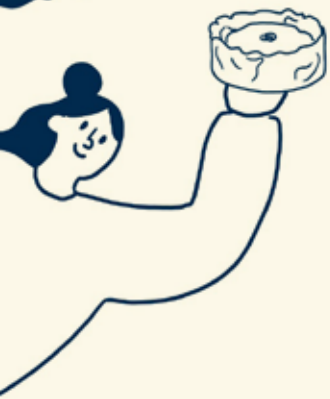
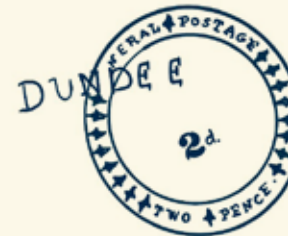
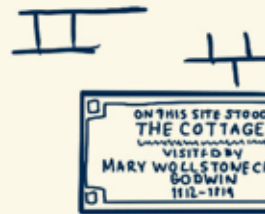
aa the bairnies' bonny fisses delivered in
a stork's wing o The Courier

Eh furgoat tae mention the haute cuisine
o pehs an bridies served hot wi beans

a plenn ane an an ingin ane an aa
or if yir a veggie yi kin lust eftir

comfort slid into paper bag
a warmed macaroni pie

geez aa the human pleshurz
fur thae ur the maist Dundonian o trehshurz



A patchwork poem is a communal writing practice in which many voices work together to achieve a whole. It reflects the Dundee way of working together for the common good as well as the collaborative process of writing a culture strategy. Dundonians were asked to contribute to a poem inspired by Dundee's cultural contributions to the world. Dundee Makar Bill Herbert and Poetry Scotland editor Andy Jackson, who work together on the Dundee Renga and Whaleback City Press, took one or more lines from every submission they could and stitched it all together.



Radio 1's Big Weekend / Dundee 2023 / © Mark Thomas



Loadsaweeminsinging at Pride 2024 / © Dylan Drummond

