

EVALUATING PLACE-BASED WORK

WHAT IT IS, WHAT ITS OUTCOMES ARE, AND HOW TO MEASURE THEM

Prepared by Claire Booth-Kurpnieks, Marc Dunford and John Knell; Counting What Counts
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1 INTRODUCTION

Place-based working has become a buzz word across the arts and cultural sector in recent years. This topical currency has been fuelled by the Government's prominent emphasis on 'levelling up', and Arts Council England's (ACE) emphasis on priority places as part of its overall investment strategy¹. The language of cultural placemaking has therefore moved more centre stage when discussing how cultural investment and activity can produce discrete outcomes in a specific place².

However, as is so often with 'current' public policy and funding initiatives, the recent 'levelling up' narrative has involved the rediscovery and relabelling of long discussed sets of practices and outcomes. Particularly for the arts and cultural sector, the notion of place-based working is neither novel nor ground-breaking.

Terms like 'place-based work' and 'placemaking' have been used in the cultural and community development fields since the 1960s³, and consideration of cultural relevance, responsiveness, and co-production have steadily grown more prominent across a wide range of cultural engagement and programming.

This short report is not the place for a full review of the historic research literature on place-based working and how it intersects with adjacent debates about cultural and creative place making. However, we do seek to connect the research findings we present in this report to these wider debates and draw out some of the implications for future practice in these areas.

¹ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/your-area/priority-places-and-levelling-culture-places>

² 'Partner, Investor, Champion: An introduction to the Arts Council England's role in placemaking' Bunting, C. and Fleming, T. (2018) https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Partner%20Investor%20Champion_Placemaking%20report%202018.pdf

³ 'Everything you wanted to know about Creative Placemaking' McCormack, L. (2018) <https://www.lisc.org/our-stories/story/creative-placemaking-q-and-a/#:~:text=The%20term%20>

2 RESEARCH PROJECT AIMS

The primary aim of this research project was to fill a gap. As Counting What Counts (CWC) reviewed how we can best support cultural organisations to evaluate their work, we could find no existing toolkits explicitly designed for evaluating place-based work in the cultural sector.

There is, of course, an ongoing methodological debate about how to best monitor the effects of projects over a particular period of time in a particular area⁴, but there is no systematic treatment of how to measure and evaluate people's experiences of and responses to particular place-based projects.

In response, as part of our ongoing work on the Impact & Insight Toolkit project, CWC designed a research project to work with cultural organisations to fill the gaps by developing new measurement statements reflecting the aims of their place-based work, and then testing those statements through evaluating their work.

In developing these new measurement tools, we sought to work with the participating organisations to answer our 3 key research questions:

1. How can we define place-based working?
2. What are the different types of place-based work?
3. What are the intended outcomes of place-based work?

⁴ For example, when the Government published its 'Levelling Up White Paper' last year it issued a Technical Annex which discusses the indicators and challenges around measuring some of the White Paper's Mission, including those on improving well-being in every area of the UK, and Mission 9 focusing on pride in place and measuring people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community. (see pages 32 -35 - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/620b772be90e0710a7b3ffca/Technical_annex_-_missions_and_metrics.pdf)

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

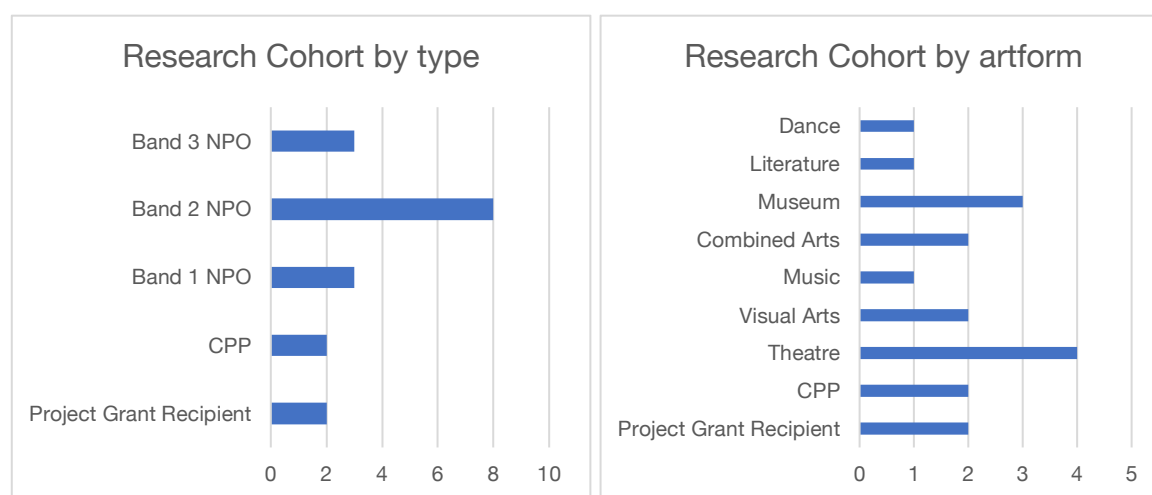
3.1 Project participants

Participation in the project was open to all ACE funding streams including National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs), National Lottery Project Grant recipients (NLPGs) and Creative People and Places projects (CPPs). We sent a callout for expressions of interest through our newsletter and social media channels. We received 42 expressions of interest. These were reviewed by the project team to select 18 organisations.

As part of the Expression of Interest, organisations were asked to describe their approach to working in place, and any intentions for the project. These were then graded by the project team; the selection process also took note of the distributions of art form, type of organisation and region.

In total, we ended up with a cohort made up of: 8 Band 2 NPOs, 3 Band 3 NPOs, 3 Band 1 NPOs, 2 CPPs and 2 NLPGs⁵. The largest type of organisation by artform was Theatre (4 organisations) followed by Museums (3 organisations), Combined Arts (2 Organisations) and Visual Arts (2 Organisations). Dance and Literature had 1 organisation represented each (see Figures 1 and 2 below for more details on the participating organisations.)

Figure 1: Participating Cohort Breakdown



⁵ At the time of the project, 2022-23, NPOs were divided into three categories: band 1, band 2 and band 3. Band 1 NPOs received the least amount of funding and were generally smaller in size, whereas band 3 NPOs received the most amount of funding and were generally larger in size. Since the commencement of the 2023-26 funding round, this categorisation has been removed by ACE and there is no public differentiation between NPOs of different sizes/investment.

Figure 2: List of participating organisations:

Organisation Name	Main Artform	Funding Stream
Barnsley Museums	Museum	Band 2 NPO
Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust	Museum	Band 1 NPO
Derby Theatre/ Derby CAN	Theatre	Band 2 NPO
Festival of Making CIC	NLPG	NLPG
Flux Rotherham	CPP	CPP
Leicester Theatre Trust (Curve Theatre)	Theatre	Band 3 NPO
Live & Local Ltd	Combined Arts	Band 2 NPO
Ludus Dance	Dance	Band 1 NPO
Manchester Museums Partnership	Museum	Band 3 NPO
Orchestras Live	Music	Band 2 NPO
Out There Arts	Combined Arts	Band 2 NPO
Spread the Word	Literature	Band 1 NPO
TACO! (Thamesmead Arts and Culture Office)	NLPG	NLPG
The Leap (Creative People and Places)	CPP	CPP
The New Art Gallery Walsall, Walsall Council	Visual Arts	Band 2 NPO
Theatre by the Lake	Theatre	Band 2 NPO
Theatre Hullabaloo	Theatre	Band 2 NPO
Yorkshire Sculpture Park	Visual Arts	Band 3 NPO

3.2 Phases of project

The project had three key phases:

- **Phase 1: Place-based definition & statement development (July-August 2022)**
 - o One-to-one interviews
 - o Workshops
 - o Feedback point: statement review (August 2022)
- **Phase 2: Data Collection (September 2022-February 2023)**
 - o Using new statements and place-attachment scale
 - o Feedback point: process review (February 2023)
- **Phase 3: Data Analysis (February-March 2023)**
 - o Feedback point: analysis review (March 2023)

The focus in phase 1 was unlocking answers to our research questions and generating new measurement tools for evaluating place-based work. The focus of phases 2 and 3 was to test the new measurement tools in real evaluations to understand how they work in practice. We describe each of these phases in more detail below.

4 PHASE 1: PLACE-BASED DEFINITION AND STATEMENT DEVELOPMENT

In this phase we collaborated with the participating organisations, facilitating the group in answering the key research questions.

4.1 Interviews

We began the project by interviewing each of the organisations individually. The purpose of the interview was to get a sense of the work that the organisation was planning; their understanding of place-based working; and to identify any relevant projects that they were running during the period of the research project. The interviews were divided between the research team and the resulting notes were compared and summarised.

4.1.1 Key insights

There is an enormous diversity of types of work

Through the initial scoping interviews, we found that this cohort contained a great variety of different types and sizes of organisations that deliver, produce and commission work in various combinations: venue based and non-venue-based organisations; organisations that work within one specific community and/or locality or organisations that work across many different communities/localities. Figure 3 below summarises some of the common themes that emerged in the interviews in terms of the ambitions of place-based work projects being pursued by the participating organisations.

There is a wide range of event types

We also discovered that a wide range of 'event types' were being planned by the participating organisations. Works that could be evaluated during the pilot test period included:

- Large open-air events
- Touring theatre productions
- Artist and community development programmes
- Socially engaged artist projects
- Co-creative community projects
- Heritage and local history projects
- Exhibitions by local artists or communities
- Creative workshops
- Projects for early years and school age children
- Community commissioning projects
- Projects for older adults
- Virtual reality (VR) experiences
- Pop-ups on the high street

There are queries about how a general tool can best respond to this diversity of work and event types

There is a desire to get more from qualitative feedback, and/or develop a framework for managing qualitative feedback. Furthermore, there are aspirations to develop a framework or set of metrics to be used consistently by different organisations within a locality.

Overall, the engagement interviews highlighted the challenges of producing evaluation tools that can work effectively with the diversity of the cultural sector's purposes and place-based work activities.

Figure 3: Common themes of place-based work by the participating organisations

1. Artist/Creative Community development

Identifying what local creatives need to thrive.
Creating conditions to support a sustainable creative sector.
Buying or commissioning work from local artists.
Providing opportunities for local artists.
Building infrastructure in place for community development.

2. Access, co-production and partnership working

Supporting co-creation with local communities and/or local artists
Creating work focusing on specific local areas of interest.
Engaging with stakeholders of different engagement levels e.g., artists, communities of interest, general audiences.
Working with different kinds of organisations who are embedded in local contexts e.g. local councils, social housing providers, community associations or groups, libraries, schools, music education hubs.
Increasing access to collections and experiences to those who wouldn't normally have access.

3. Targeted work with specific communities/groups

Engaging with specific communities e.g., children, young people, older adults, people living with dementia in their local area, specific communities of interest.
Supporting intergenerational projects.
Engaging with audiences who do not normally engage with funded arts or cultural activity.

4.2 Workshops

4.2.1 Workshop 1- Defining place-based work

In the first workshop with the participating organisations, we wanted to build a definition and typology for place-based work. To do this we considered the differences between place-based working and other types of working, such as socially engaged and traditional distribution models (e.g., a theatre production or gallery exhibition).

We also considered the different types of place-based work, contrasted it to placemaking, and tried to place these different types of work on a spectrum.

From our interviews with the organisations, we saw a lot of overlap between descriptions of place-based working, co-creation and what might also be described as socially engaged art practice. Furthermore, we identified differences between being or making a 'place' as an organisation and working within a place.

The aim of this first workshop was to draw out some of these distinctions. To structure the session, we asked the participating organisations the following questions:

1. What are the differences and similarities between place-based work and socially engaged art practice?
2. What might different types of place-based work look like?
3. What are the differences and similarities between placemaking and working in place?

4.2.1.1 Question 1: What are the differences and similarities between place-based work and socially engaged art practice?

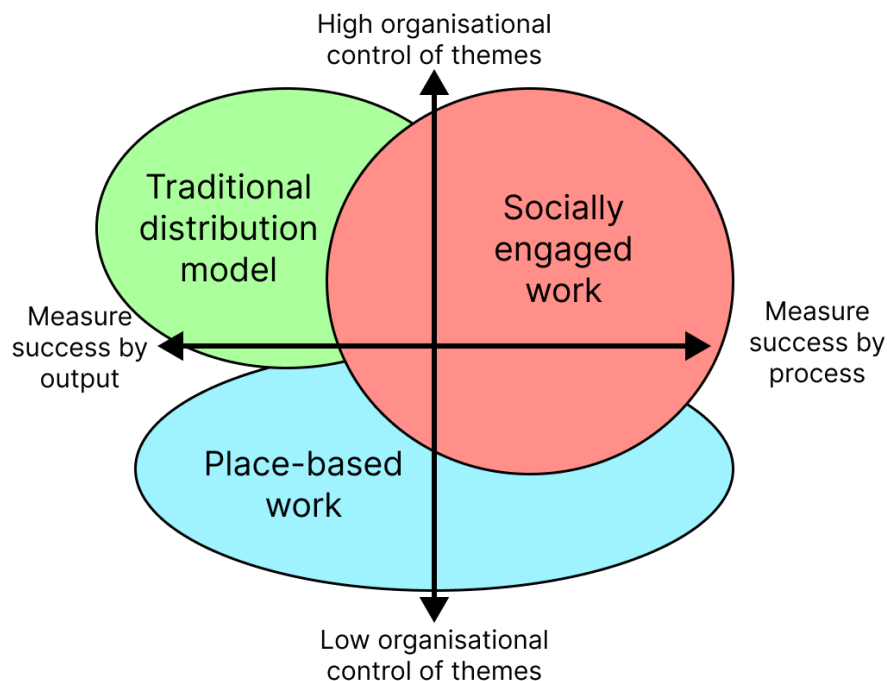
The key insights that emerged from our group discussions are summarised in Figure 4 below, which plots place-based work alongside socially engaged art practice and traditional distribution models onto a chart with 2 different axes.

On the X-axis we have a scale for how the organisation weights its assessment of success, between work which measures success more by its process, and work which measures success more by its output. All work will have a process to create it and an artistic output, and both will always be important in assessing success. However, the weighting of importance between these two aspects will differ along this axis.

On the Y-axis we have a scale representing the level of control the organisation has over the themes and content of the work. High organisational control means that the themes for the work are artform-led and decided by the organisation without considering the interests of specific communities. Low organisational control means that the themes are generated by communities or locations outside the organisation,

and the organisation may also cede control of choice of artistic content entirely to these communities.

Figure 4: Differences and similarities between place-based work and socially engaged art practice.



Based on these axes, we can see the relative position of different types of work, as depicted by the three coloured ovals in Figure 4 above:

- **Traditional distribution model:** Greater focus on the outputs than the process. Themes for the work are mostly artform-led. Artistic vision and ambition have significant or complete influence over what the outputs are. For example, an organisation chooses to innovate and skilfully deliver a fresh interpretation of a story.
- **Socially engaged working:** Greater focus on the process than the outputs. Themes can come from outside the organisation and channelled through the artform, but are more often chosen by the organisation. For example, the organisation has an interest in a social issue and that issue defines the themes for their work; the organisation still chooses the issue and selects which of the potential themes they run with. The outputs can be very relevant to people, but not specific to any place.
- **Place-based working:** Can be either output-focussed or process-focussed. Themes for the work can be completely defined outside the organisation and can be defined by the place in which the organisation is situated or focussed

on. For example, an organisation engages a local community to learn what issues are relevant to them and supports them in delivering work with artistic themes based on these issues.

As Figure 4 demonstrates, there is an overlap between socially engaged working and place-based working, where both take their themes from outside the organisation and have a focus on the process. Socially engaged work derives its themes from communities of interest, producing work that is relevant to them but is not necessarily place specific i.e. it could also be relevant to people elsewhere.

This differs to place-based work which derives its themes from locations, producing work that is both relevant and specific i.e. it is relevant to the local people and would not be relevant (or would be much less relevant) elsewhere. Place-based working can also be more output-focussed and can give up more control of the themes for the work. In this way, the local community completely defines the artistic vision.

Both socially engaged work and place-based work can have varying levels of co-production, so this factor is not a decisive differentiator between these types of working, but levels of co-production relate directly to the different types of place-based working as outlined next⁶.

4.2.1.2 Question 2: What might different types of place-based work look like?

When reviewing what we learned from the workshop and the interviews, it became clear that a focus on the degree of co-creation in a piece or work helps unlock key differences between different types of place-based work.

The participating organisations talked about the different roles that the community might take in different types of place-based work, for example from producer, co-creator, collaborator, and participant, through to being an audience member. Some of these roles are actively involved in the creative process and some are not. Moreover, the outcomes for a community producer would be different to those of a community collaborator, and an audience member.

We therefore concluded that this separation between those that produce the work and those that receive the work is another way for us to think about the type of place-based work which is being produced.

Using these insights, and in collaboration with the participating cultural organisations, we have identified 3 key types of place-based work, all of which are distinct from a necessary definition of 'place agnostic' work:

⁶ This report is an excellent resource for those relatively unfamiliar with the phrase co-production in an arts and cultural context – 'Considering Co-Creation' – A report produced by Heart of Glass & Battersea Arts Centre (2021) - <https://www.culturehive.co.uk/resources/considering-co-creation/>

- **Place agnostic:** The intention of the organisation is to skilfully express ideas via their artform. The themes of the work are purely artform defined, not place defined. Those receiving the work may either spectate or participate, but there is not a specific target community that the work is intended to address.

1. **Community/place defined & co-created (BY):**

The intention of the cultural organisation is to facilitate the creation of work by the community for the needs of a specific place defined by that community.

This is place-based work conceived by and delivered by, through co-creation, the community in question. Co-creation here implies the community has direct influence over the themes and content of the output.

Therefore, the community is in a leadership role and not just a co-operative role. The cultural organisations involved largely cede control of key themes. Enabling this through their knowledge of producing artistic outputs, they seek to play a minimal role in the production of the work.

Using the concept of 'by, with, and for', which has been frequently used by the cultural sector regarding its work with children and young people, this is very much work being produced 'by' a specific community in that place.

2. **Community/place collaboration (WITH):**

The intention of the cultural organisation is to collaborate, on approximately equal terms, with a particular community, involving them in the process of creating the work as well as having the themes of the work influenced or defined by place.

Again, it is intended that the outputs of the work are relevant to the local people in a way that it would not be for people in a different place.

When compared to the community/placed-defined and co-created model above, the community has less control over the themes and content of the output but is consulted and involved in the creative process.

This is very much work being produced 'with' a specific community in that place.

3. **Place specific focus (FOR):**

The cultural organisation's intention is to produce work whose outputs are relevant and specific to the people in a defined place. However, there

remains a strong element of cultural organisational control around the themes.

In these instances, the community does not take a role in the production of the work, but it is intended that the outputs will be relevant to them in a way that it would not be for people in a different place.

This is very much work being produced 'for' a specific place, but not work being produced 'with' or 'by' a specific community in that place.

Figure 5 below demonstrates how these 3 key models of place-based work can be distinguished on a 'by, with, and for' scale, with the level of cultural organisational control over theme and creative process increasing as we move from left to right (from 'by' to 'with' and 'for.')

Figure 5: Types of Place-Based Work (by, with and for)

'BY'	'WITH'	'FOR'
Community/place defined & co-created	Community/place collaboration	Place specific focus

4.2.1.3 Question 3: What are the differences and similarities between placemaking and working in place?

It was clear that the participating cultural organisations felt that placemaking and working in place were different, and we spent much less time talking about this in the workshop sessions.

Indeed, placemaking was not considered to be of relevance for this project, and we were quickly able to define some distinguishing points between the two:

- Placemaking work is more focussed on the output than the process.
- Placemaking work is likely to have a more limited artform component.
- Placemaking work is normally linked to a 'built' or man-made location.
- Placemaking work is focussed on the intentions of a wider range of stakeholders than just the community.

4.2.2 Workshop 2- Developing Outcome Statements

Having made progress in defining the different types of place-based work, CWC then worked with the participating organisations on the experiences of the people in different place-based working roles (e.g., makers, audiences).

The aim was to brainstorm a comprehensive set of ideas as to what the desired outcomes are for this type of work. The process is facilitated by asking people to write down short statements which encapsulate the sorts of things we would like these people to be thinking (or, conversely, not thinking!) about their experiences.

Organisations were divided into different groups depending on the type of place-based work that they typically focus on. Each group brainstormed the outcome statements independently on a prepared whiteboard (an example can be found in the appendix), and we subsequently brought the groups together to share and discuss their ideas.

In the workshop, we collectively devised a large set of unrefined outcome statements. There were some overlaps with existing outcome statements available to users of the Toolkit, and many which were new.

4.2.2.1 Emerging Outcome Areas

Through a process of reviewing the outcome statements, we found that there were recurring themes, and that a large number of them could be grouped together around a smaller number of outcome areas.

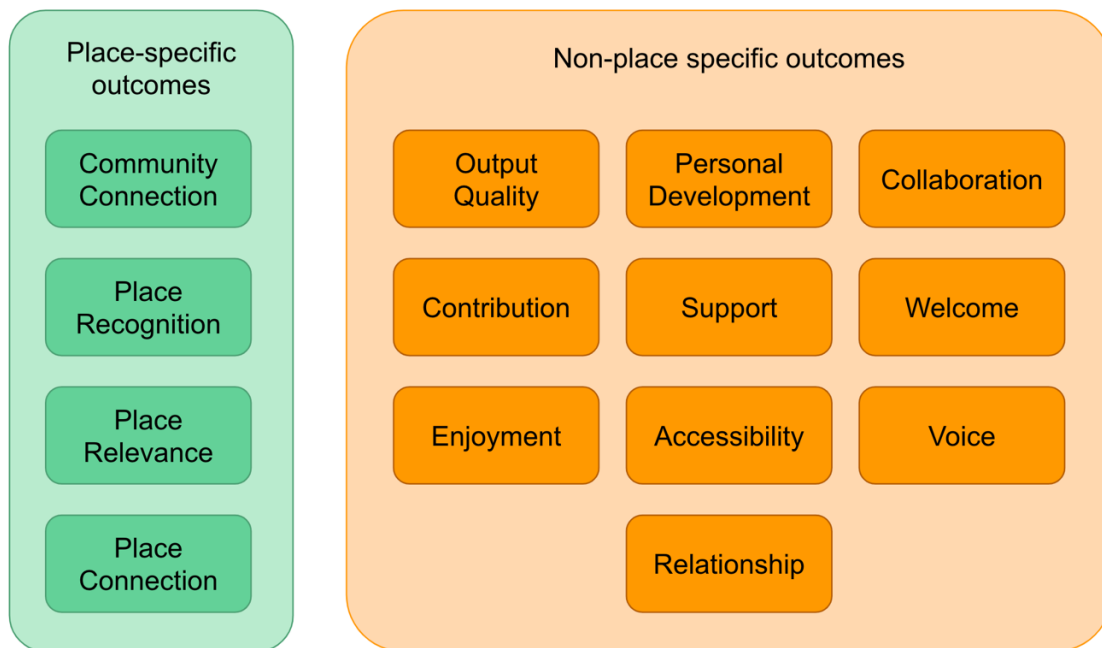
We also found that whilst many of the outcomes were clearly specific to place-based work, not all of them were.

The first set of place specific outcomes are about the people involved in, or experiencing, a piece of work feeling like their local place has been recognised and understood, and that they have built stronger connections with the ideas of that place or with the other people who live there. These are outcomes which are specific goals of place-based working.

The second set of outcomes are not specific to place, but will often be relevant to different types of place-based work. There is an overlap here with the existing 'Participatory' category of dimensions in the Toolkit; however, the new outcomes identified in this pilot close gaps for co-created work.

An initial working model was created around this differentiation between place specific and place agnostic outcome areas as summarised in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Initial model of outcome areas for place-based work



This initial model provided structure which helped to advance our thinking about what place-based work is trying to achieve and to begin organising the outcome statements. However, through the process of fitting the granular statements into this model (as opposed to conducting a thematic analysis), we found that:

1. Within an outcome area from Figure 6 you might have both place specific and place agnostic statements. For example: 'It gave me the opportunity to meet new people' and 'I was able to build new relationships with people in my community' both fall under the Relationships outcome area, but the former is place agnostic and the latter is place specific.
2. Some of the outcome areas were much broader categories with many facets, and others were more specific. For example: it became clear that place recognition encompassed place relevance as well as outcomes around celebration, visibility and perceived value. Conversely, an outcome area such as voice has only a single facet of the individual feeling heard.

This resulted in an update to the initial model such that Outcome Areas became multi-faceted, broad categories, and the distinction between place specific and place agnostic occurred at the statement level. The results of this update are shown in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7: Final model of outcome areas for place-based work

Outcome area	Outcome	Summary
Place recognition	Value	The place where a person lives, or works, is made to feel important and valued through the work/project
	Celebration	The place where a person lives, or works, is celebrated through the work/project
	Visibility	A place, or its cultural heritage, is made visible through the work/project whether locally or nationally.
	Place relevance	The work produced felt relevant to the place it was produced with/for.
Process recognition	Community recognition	The audience recognised that the project/work was made by/with members of the community
	Maker recognition	The people involved in the project (makers) felt that their contribution to the project was recognised.
Connection	Community bond	The work/project made people feel more connected to their community or strengthened their sense of community. For the organisation it might have changed how they engaged with their community.
	Place Connection	The work/project made people feel more connected to a particular place.
Relationships	Personal Relationships	The work/project gave people the opportunity to build or strengthen their personal relationship e.g., friends and family.
	Networks	The work/project gave people the opportunity to build or strengthen their social networks, e.g., meeting new people.
	Community Networks	The work/project gave people the opportunity to build or strengthen their networks specifically in their community.
Communication	Expectations	The work/project was what people expected
	Interpretation	The interpretation was clear and enabled people to engage with the work
Facilitation	Confidence	Participants/makers felt comfortable and confident in their role in the project.
	Support	Participants/makers felt supported in the project.
	Voice	Makers felt like they were listened to and that their voice was heard and acted upon; audience members could recognise that there were multiple voices involved in the work.
	Collaboration	Makers felt like it was a collaborative/co-productive experience and that they had ownership over the process/ output. The organisation can reflect on the process of collaboration.
Inclusivity	Welcome	People felt welcome and included into the organisation/ project.
	Accessibility	People were able to access all the different parts of the projects.
Personal Development	Motivation	People feel motivated to do creative things or take part in something like this again/ in the future.
	Skills	Participants and makers gained new skills from taking part in the project.
	Opportunities	The work/project gave people the opportunity to access new experiences or opened up new opportunities.
Empowerment	Agency	Respondents feel like they can make change in their communities.
	Capability	Respondents feel capable to try new things and work in different ways.
Reflection	Personal reflection	The project enabled respondents to reflect or discover something new about themselves or their creative practice.
	Place reflection	The project enabled respondents to reflect or discover something new about the place or their community.

To measure one of the outcome areas in Figure 7 above, we might use a few survey questions in combination. For example, for Facilitation, we might want to ask co-creators: whether they felt under pressure; whether they felt free to explore; and whether they felt confident in their role. Together, the answers to these questions would provide us with good information as to whether the co-creators were supported by the organisation and, as such, a measure of the Facilitation outcome.

CWC then worked on populating the finished model with a refined set of outcome statements that had been generated in the brainstorming workshop, and seeking review and feedback from the participants.

4.2.2.2 Refining Outcome Statements

The final part of this phase was the statement refinement and review process. The aim of this was to convert brainstormed ideas into questions which could be easily inserted into surveys as Likert scale questions.

The first part of this was done by the CWC research team who refined statements for the key outcome areas identified by the participating organisations, as detailed in Figure 7. The refined statements were based heavily on the statements which the participants had generated in the workshop, but with minor edits made where it would be easier for a survey respondent to interpret what was being asked of them.

Using the typologies developed in the workshop process, the statements were then also assigned:

- A relevant respondent type (e.g. audience, participant, community maker, or organisation (self) respondent)
- An output or process focus
- Place specific or place agnostic
- A type of place-based project it would be relevant to, as per our definitions of different types of place-based work

Figure 8 below provides an example of the result of this process for the Place reflection outcome in the Reflection outcome area.

Participating organisations were asked to review all the proposed statements and give suggested changes, including whether they would use the statement for their work. These reviews were then collated, and the statements were refined again.

There were only five statements which were voted as being useful by every participant. These were:

- Place value: It made [place] feel [valued/like it matters]
- Place celebration: It felt like a celebration of [place]
- Community connection: It strengthened [my/our] connection to [my community/the local community]

- Community networks: [I was/we were] able to strengthen relationships with others in [my/the local] community
- Community agency: I felt like we had a positive impact on our community

A full list of the statements developed and approved by the participating cultural organisations can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

Figure 8: Reflection Outcome Area Development Process

Outcome Area: Reflection						
Label	Outcome (statement)	Statement variant	Respondent type	Output/ Process	Type of place-based project	Place specific
Place reflection	It helped me to better understand the place and people where I live	No variant	Audience Participant Community maker	Output/ Process	Place informed Co-productive Community produced	Yes
	I discovered something new about [my community/ the community we were working with]	I discovered something new about my community	Audience Participant Community maker	Output/ Process	Place informed Co-productive Community produced	Yes
		I discovered something new about the community we were working with	Organisation (self)			
	It made me see [place] differently	No variant	Audience Participant Community maker Organisation (self)	Output/ Process	Place informed Co-productive Community produced	Yes
	I discovered something new about [place]	No variant	Audience Participant Community maker Organisation (self)	Output/ Process	Place informed Co-productive Community produced	Yes

4.2.3 Workshop 3 – Introducing Place Attachment and Survey Structure

In this third and final workshop, we took the opportunity to reflect on what we had learned so far and to present what we were imagining the coming evaluation and data collection phase would look like in practice.

At this stage of our work with the participating organisations, and as the CWC research team was continuing to deepen its understanding of the academic literature on working in place, a clearer picture of what we should be doing next was emerging.

4.2.3.1 Place Attachment

The development of the new place-based outcomes we were developing with the cultural organisations would be necessary to produce a highly successful place-based evaluation tool for cultural organisations, but additional factors would also need to be measured to fully understand the outcomes.

Our assessment test here was that any new evaluation tool had to be capable of generating powerful insights about the dynamics of working in place and of interacting with different audiences/participants/collaborators etc.

Our deductive starting point was that, if we are measuring place-specific outcomes like relevance and recognition, we might only expect these to be felt strongly by people who also have an attachment with that place. Therefore, being able to filter our analyses by this measure will help with the quality of insight we can get from the collected survey data. This thinking led us to the concept of place attachment.

Place attachment refers to the emotional bond between people and the places they live and visit. This concept has been used by psychologists for decades to describe and measure the phenomenon of people forming emotional bonds with physical places⁷.

Two primary components that are often seen in the literature around place attachment, and which are used as a lens for measuring it, are **place identity** and **place dependence**.

Place identity refers to the emotional or symbolic attachment associated with a specific place. It can grow with personal experiences that create meaning for an individual.

Place dependence refers to more of a functional relationship between an individual and a place, where the characteristics of a place enable a person to carry out their

⁷https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235356897_Beyond_the_Commodity_Metaphor_Examining_Emotional_and_Symbolic_Attachment_to_Place

activities and goals. This includes things like being able to do preferred physical activities outdoors.

A quantitative measure of place attachment can be taken by asking people a set of questions which relate to each of place identity and place dependence. These responses are then combined to form a result, indicating the measure of place attachment⁸.

For our purposes, we took an existing short form questionnaire designed to measure place identity and place dependence⁹ and shortened it to just 4 questions. The reason for this was to avoid survey fatigue and respondent drop-off, given that we would be including a set of dimensions questions (also in Likert scale format) and other questions relating to demographics and feedback which may overwhelm survey respondents.

The questions which were included in all the surveys used in this research project are below. In each evaluation, the [place] placeholder was replaced with a specific place which the work was intended to be relating to:

- Place Identity
 - [place] is very special to me
 - I identify strongly with [place]
- Place Dependence
 - [place] is the best place
 - I would not substitute any other place for [place]

Clearly, place attachment, particularly the place identity component, can take a long time to build. In the context of evaluating place-based work, including measures of place attachment in such surveys is a vital control factor which can help us to understand the impact of place-based work on people who have a strong attachment; we can then compare this to people who do not have that same level of attachment.

The participating organisations in the pilot immediately understood the importance of including place attachment measures in their surveys evaluating their place-based work, and our analysis of the aggregate data resulting from the pilot is very interesting for anyone committed to evaluating place-based work across the arts and cultural sector.

⁸https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233712735_The_Measurement_of_Place_Attachment_Validity_and_Generalizability_of_a_Psychometric_Approach

⁹https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349631395_Measuring_Place_Attachment_with_The_Abbreviated_Place_Attachment_Scale_APAS

4.2.3.2 Survey Structure

The final part of the place-based work evaluation jigsaw was putting the various outcome measurements into a survey questionnaire which the participating organisations felt would provide them with useful information. As the CWC team are the experts in this area, we decided the best approach would be to present our proposed survey structure to the participants for their review, rather than bootstrap a new structure from the ground up.

The structure we presented has three sections:

1. A selection of questions measuring the relevant outcomes areas identified by the organisations.
2. A set of questions measuring place attachment to support our analysis and to develop useful benchmarks for the level of place attachment of audiences.
3. Open-ended questions which offer the respondent the opportunity to provide feedback which isn't constrained by the standardised questions.

We kept the survey relatively short as this offered the participants the opportunity to include some additional questions which tailor the survey to their specific needs. An example of the templated survey is shown in Figure 9 below.

Figure 9: Example survey structure presented in workshop 3

#	Section	Question	Measuring
1	Outcomes	It made me feel like this place matters	Place Recognition
2		I could see the place where I live in this work	
3		I formed new connections with this place	Place Connection
4		I feel more attached to this place	
5		I felt welcome in the venue	Welcome
6		I felt like this was a safe space	
7		The language used was easy to understand	Accessibility
8		I understood the themes of the work	
9	Place Attachment	I am very attached to [place]	Place Identity
10		[place] is special to me	
11		I identify strongly with [place]	
12		[place] is the best place	Place Dependence
13		No other place can compare to [place]	
14		I would not substitute any other area for [place]	
15	Open Feedback	Please write three words to describe your experience	Three Words
16		How could your experience have been improved?	Feedback

5 PHASE 2: DATA COLLECTION

Whilst outcome statements might look good in theory, they sometimes don't work as well in practice. This can be because: other similar statements are always selected in favour of them; the people creating surveys like the idea of measuring something but are reluctant to ask the question in real surveys; the question is not understood well by the recipient.

The aim of this phase of the project was to test the newly created statements and survey structure by using them in real evaluations.

5.1 CWC guidance

The CWC research team supported the participating organisations in designing the surveys that they would use and in setting up the evaluations in the Culture Counts platform, ready for data collection.

The organisations were free to include any outcome measures they wished in their evaluations - either newly created statements or existing dimensions. However, there was some guidance provided to help organisations make their outcome selection. This guidance involved keeping the organisations updated about which statements the other participating organisations had included in their evaluations. This was done for two reasons:

1. To allow organisations to take inspiration from their peers about what to measure.
2. To concentrate the data collected into a smaller number of statements such that the aggregated dataset has insight value.

5.2 Data size and shape

Data collection took place over a 7-month period between August 2022 and February 2023. During this time, participating organisations used a combination of new and existing dimensions statements in their surveys to evaluate their work, based on the survey structure we proposed in the third workshop.

A summary of the data collected is as follows:

- 12 unique evaluations undertaken by 7 organisations.
- 767 people responded to surveys containing the new statements in total.
- 39 different statements were used:
 - 4 were the place attachment statements.
 - 13 were existing dimensions from the Culture Counts platform.
 - 22 were new statements created through this project.
 - 26 were place agnostic statements.
 - 13 were place specific statements.

5.3 Use of new statements

There were dozens of either completely new statements or variants of existing statements created through the first phase of the research project. However, only a smaller set were used in evaluations and only some yielded enough data to make meaningful inferences.

The use of place specific, place agnostic, new and existing dimensions within the same evaluations allowed us to see how the data generated by the new statements compared to data from existing statements.

The statements used in the project are shown in Figure 10 below. A full list of all the statements created in the project can be found in the appendix.

Figure 10: Dimension usage

Outcome	Statement	New?	n (evaluations)
Pride in Place	It made me proud of [place]		7
Access	It gave me the opportunity to access cultural activities		6
Place Connection	It strengthened my connection to [place]	New	5
Place Value	It made me feel like [place] matters	New	5
Enthusiasm	I would come to something like this again		4
Place Celebration	It felt like a celebration of [place]	New	4
Distinctiveness	It was different from things I have experienced before		3
Local Understanding	It helped me to better understand the place and people where I live		2
Repeat Participation	I would take part in something like this again		2
Community Connection	It strengthened my connection to my community	New	2
Community Recognition v3	It was important that this was made with members of the community	New	2
Place Reflection	I discovered something new about [place]	New	2
Personal Relationships	It gave me the opportunity to spend quality time with my friends and family	New	2
Welcome	I felt welcome in the [venue / project / space]	New	2
Accessibility v2	The [space/venue] was easy to access	New	1
Confidence	I felt confident taking part	New	1
Welcome v2	I felt included	New	1
Collaboration v4	I was treated as an equal		1
Content	It reflected a broad and inclusive range of voices		1
Personal Relationships v2	It made me feel connected to other people		1
Skills v4	I developed my artistic skills		1
Community Connection v2	It strengthened our connection to [our/the] local community	New	1
Place Representation v5	My community was represented in this project	New	1

6 PHASE 3: DATA ANALYSIS

In the data analysis phase, we analysed data from organisations independently to provide them with a personalised report about the results of their evaluation activity; we also analysed the aggregated data from all organisations to see what it can tell us about the newly created statements and place attachment.

The individual organisation reports were shared with their respective participants as they include information which is private to their organisation. As such, this won't be discussed in this report.

The findings from the aggregated data are outlined and discussed below.

6.1 Response distributions and statement review

When looking at response distributions for the existing dimensions, we find that some of them tend to have high mean averages and low variability, whereas others tend to have a higher variability and, as such, lower averages.

In general, we consider dimensions with higher variability and lower means as being more powerful measurement instruments due to their ability to distinguish between works which really delivered the desired outcome or quality. Respondents tend to answer these dimensions in a way that is more independent from their overall experience of the work.

An example of a dimension with low variability is 'Presentation: It was well presented'. An example of a dimension with high variability is 'Currency: It made me reflect on the world we live in today'.

For the statements created as part of this project and for which there is sufficient data, we can look at the distribution of survey responses to get a sense for how people responded to the questions and in turn which are the more powerful measurement instruments.

Figure 11 below shows the mean average and interquartile range (IQR) of the new statements and place attachment questions plotted against the same stats for the existing dimension questions. We find that there is quite a wide spread, with some of them falling into both sides i.e. high and low variability.

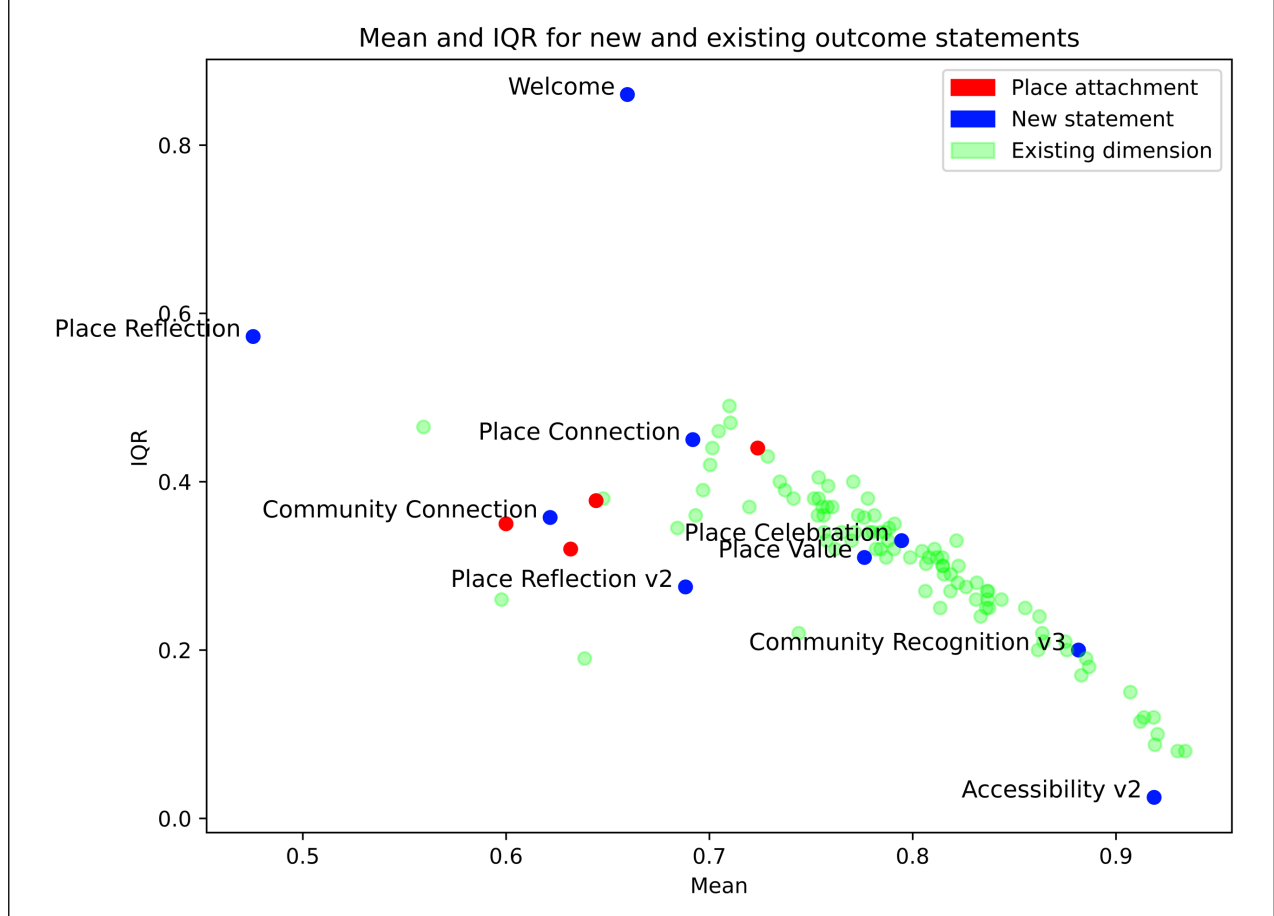
Place Reflection: I discovered something new about [place] (n=144)

The data from this statement has high variance and low mean. Coupling this with an intuitive understanding of what the question is asking, indicates that a respondent would be able to give high or low levels of agreement without being influenced by their overall experience. This seems to be an excellent quality metric question based on the initial findings from this project.

Accessibility v2: The [space/venue] was easy to access (n=95)

The data from this statement has extremely low variability and high mean. This is likely a reflection of the fact that, for most people, this will naturally be the case. However, for people with additional access needs, this is something which can make a huge difference to their experience and yet their survey response would be hidden in the mean. We would recommend that, for this question, a different type of survey question is used to capture access challenges.

Figure 11: Mean and IQR plotted for new statements and existing dimensions



Place Connection: It strengthened my connection to [place] (n=514)

Community Connection: It strengthened my connection to my community (n=24)

Place Celebration: It felt like a celebration of [place] (n=279)

Place Reflection v2: It made me see [place] differently (n=140)

These statements all occupy a similar space in the centre of the chart. Whilst not quite as high variability as Place Reflection, they are more variable than most of the existing dimension statements and the statements themselves are intuitively distinct from enjoyment or overall experience. Again, the evidence here suggests that these are good survey questions.

Welcome: I felt welcome in the [venue/project/space] (n=253)

The data from this statement has an extremely high IQR which, given the simplicity of the question, we consider to be an outlier resulting from specifics of the project being evaluated or from errors in the data collection process rather than a fair representation of that statement.

Community Recognition v3: It was important that this was made with members of the community (n=36)

This statement has higher mean average and IQR than most of the new statements and the existing statements. Intuitively, this statement is difficult to interpret and therefore likely suffers from acquiescence bias, evidenced by the higher average results. Whilst this is something that the participating organisations think is important to measure, this statement may not be the best at capturing it.

6.2 Place Attachment

We have sufficient data to explore at the effect of place attachment, consisting of place identity and place dependence, on place specific and place agnostic statements.

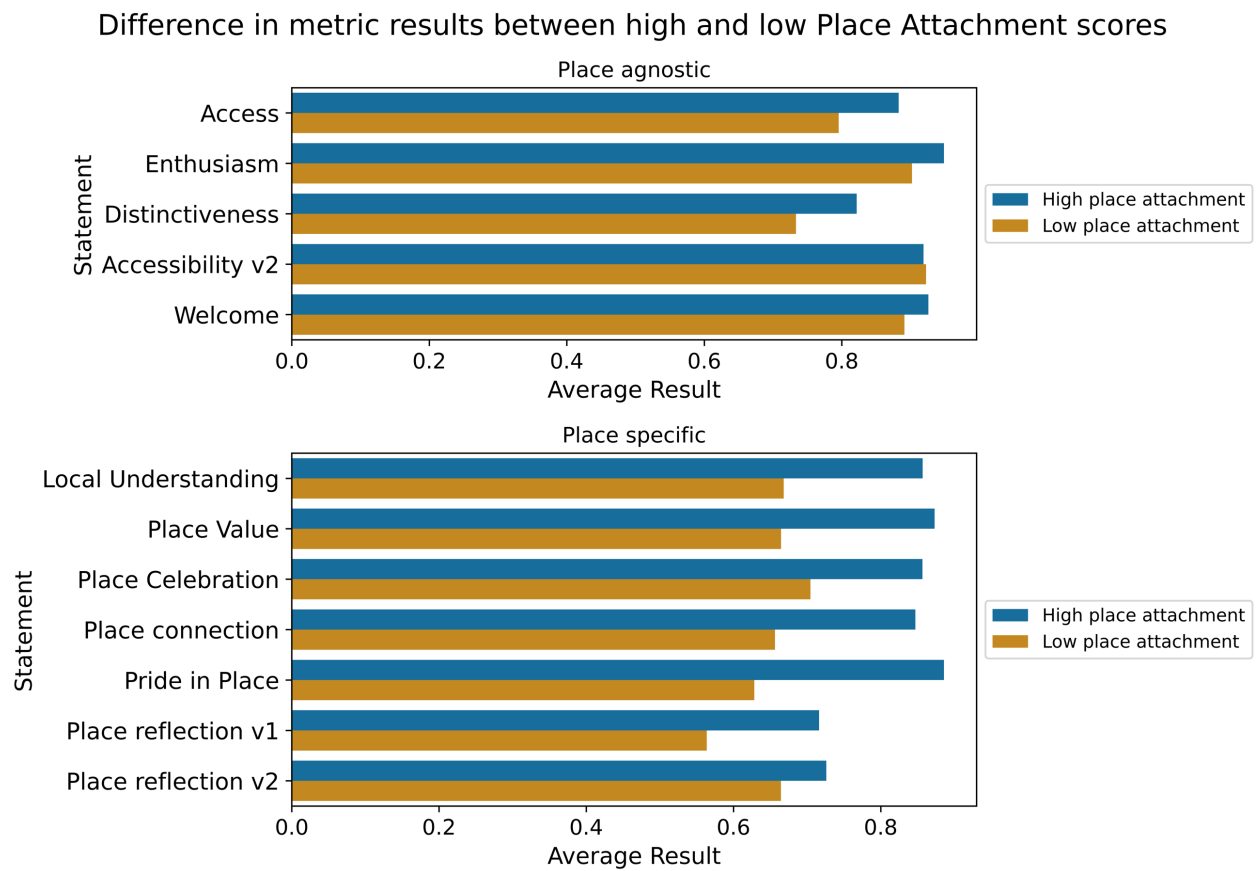
Figure 12 below shows how Place Attachment impacts upon the other quality and outcome metrics included in the surveys. Specifically, it shows the difference between the average metric results for high and low levels of Place Attachment. It also groups the statements by whether they were place specific or place agnostic.

For all statements, except for Accessibility v2, the average results were higher when the respondent had higher levels of place attachment.

The most interesting finding is when we compare the effects of place attachment on place specific statements compared to place agnostic statements. For place specific statements, respondents with high levels of place attachment have significantly higher results on average. The statement with the biggest effect is Pride in Place (It made me proud of [place]), where the average result for low place attachment was 0.63, and the average result for high place attachment was 0.89.

This confirms that place attachment, as measured by the questions we included in the surveys in this project, plays a significant factor in the way that respondents experienced the work. If organisations are aiming to evaluate place-based work, they should also measure the place attachment levels of their survey respondents. This will allow them to understand if they were reaching the correct demographics and control for this factor in their analysis.

Figure 12: Effect of Place Attachment



7 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The research project has generated significant insights in relation to our original research questions and aims, producing models and mental maps that we think will be very helpful to the arts and cultural sector in evaluating their place-based work.

We would highlight the following key insights gained through the research project:

- We have teased out the differences between place-based work and socially engaged arts practice.
- We have generated a useful model to distinguish three distinct types of place-based work.
- We have revealed that for this cohort of cultural organisations, ‘placemaking’ motivations are not prevalent or important in framing their work (and they see ‘working in place’ as a very different thing from ‘place making’).

We are particularly pleased that the process of identifying place-based outcome areas, and developing new dimension statements, has been a successful one.

We have generated dimensions that are successfully measuring specific place-based outcomes of interest to the cultural organisations in the pilot. This means that they can now be released for use by all Toolkit users, and we hope that they will be widely used so we can further track the shape of the resulting data and feedback our findings to Impact & Insight Toolkit users.

The notion of place attachment has been identified and established as an integral methodological consideration in the successful evaluation of place-based work, allowing us to offer users of the Toolkit very clear methodological and practical guidance on how to carry out their place-based work evaluations in the future.

Our findings will be of interest to ACE, Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), and other cultural funders. They should be used to inform the evaluation of large cultural events, including future City of Culture initiatives, and significant cultural programming initiatives related to major moments or sporting events in specific places.

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9 APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix 1 – Full list of developed statements

9.1.1 Place Agnostic Statements

Outcome Label	Outcome Statement	Existing Dimension
Accessibility	I felt my access needs were met	
Accessibility v2	The [space/venue] was easy to access	
Accessibility v3	I felt my individual needs were taken into account	
Capability	I feel more able to express myself creatively	
Capability v2	I feel confident to seek out new opportunities	Confidence
Capability v3	I feel more confident about collaborating with others	
Capability v4	I did something I didn't know I was capable of	Stretch
Capability v5	I feel more capable of working with our local community	
Collaboration	I felt I played a part in shaping the [activity / project]	
Collaboration v2	I felt able to creatively contribute to the project	
Collaboration v3	I felt my ideas about the project were taken seriously	Voice
Collaboration v4	I was treated as an equal	Equality
Collaboration v5	We treated each other as equals	
Collaboration v6	We worked well together as a team	
Collaboration v7	I learned something about how to work with others	
Collaboration v8	We learned something about collaboration	
Confidence	I felt confident to take part	
Confidence v2	I felt confident to try new things	Confidence
Confidence v3	I felt confident to challenge myself	
Confidence v4	I felt confident in my role	
Confidence v5	I felt confident leading the project	
Interpretation	I was able to form my own opinions about the work	Independent Interpretation
Interpretation v2	The interpretation of the work felt relevant	
Interpretation v3	The explanation of the work felt relevant	
Maker recognition	I felt like my contribution mattered	
Maker recognition v2	I felt like my contribution was valued	
Motivation	I feel motivated to do creative things in the future	Motivation
Motivation v2	I now have creative ambitions I didn't have before	
Motivation v3	I would take part in something like this in the future	Repeat Participation
Motivation v4	I would take part in something like this again	Repeat Participation
Networks	It gave me the opportunity to meet new people	
Networks v2	It gave me the opportunity to meet people I wouldn't ordinarily meet	
Networks v3	It gave me the opportunity to expand my network of contacts	
Networks v4	I got to know people who are different from me	

Opportunities	It gave me the opportunity to access new experiences	Access
Opportunities v2	It inspired me to find other [cultural experiences/places to visit]	
Opportunities v3	It opened up new opportunities for me	Opportunity
Personal reflection	I discovered something new about myself	
Personal reflection v2	It helped me see myself differently	
Personal reflection v3	I learned something new about [my/our] practice	
Personal relationships	It gave me the opportunity to spend quality time with my friends and family	
Personal relationships v2	It made me feel connected to other people	Connection
Skills	I gained new skills	
Skills v2	I developed my skills	
Skills v3	I gained new artistic skills	
Skills v4	I developed my artistic skills	Artistic Skills
Skills v5	I gained new skills to help in my career	
Skills v6	I developed skills to help in my career	
Skills v7	I gained new skills to help in my community	
Skills v8	I developed skills to help in my community	
Support	I felt supported by the [organisers / artists]	Organiser Support
Support v2	We supported each other	
Support v3	People in the group supported each other	Peer Support
Voice	I felt like I was listened to	Voice
Voice v2	It included multiple voices	Content
Voice v3	It included the voices of others	Content
Welcome	I felt welcome in the [venue / project / space]	
Welcome v2	I felt included	Inclusion
Welcome v3	I felt respected	Respect

9.1.2 Place Specific Statements

Outcome Label	Outcome Statement	Existing Dimension	Notes
Community agency	I better know how to make change in my community	Leadership, Decision-Making	
Community agency v2	I am more aware of how to get involved in my community	Leadership, Decision-Making	
Community agency v3	I felt like we had a positive impact on our community		Preferred statement
Community agency v4	I am more aware of how to get involved in volunteering activities	Leadership, Decision-Making	
Community agency v5	I am more aware of how to get involved in community activity	Leadership, Decision-Making	
Community connection	It strengthened my connection to my community	Connection	Preferred statement
Community connection v2	It strengthened our connection to our local community	Connection	Organisation only
Community networks	I was able to build new relationships with others in my community		
Community networks v2	We were able to build new relationships with members of the community		Organisation only

Community networks v3	I was able to strengthen relationships with others in my community		Preferred statement
Community networks v4	We were able to strengthen relationships with others in the local community		Organisation only
Community recognition	It was clear that this was made with members of the community		
Community recognition v2	It was clear that this was made by members of the community		
Community recognition v3	It was important that this was made by members of the community		
Community recognition v4	It was important that this was made with members of the community		
Local Pride	I was proud of how [place] was represented		
Local Pride v2	I was proud of how [my community] was represented		
Local Pride v3	It made me proud of [place]	Pride in Place	
Local Pride v4	It made me proud of my community	Community Pride	
Organisation community capability	I feel more capable of working with our local community		Organisation only
Organisation community capability v2	This project changed how we engage with our local community		Organisation only
Place celebration	It felt like a celebration of [place]		Preferred statement
Place celebration v2	It celebrated my culture	Celebration	
Place celebration v3	It celebrated my heritage	Celebration	
Place connection	It strengthened my connection to [place]		
Place connection v2	I was able to strengthen my connection to [place]		
Place connection v3	It strengthened our connection to [place]		Organisation only
Place reflection	I discovered something new about [place]		
Place reflection v2	It helped me to better understand the place and people where I live	Local Understanding	
Place reflection v3	I discovered something new about my community		
Place reflection v4	I discovered something new about the community we were working with		Organisation only
Place reflection v5	It made me see [place] differently		
Place relevance	It felt relevant to [place]		
Place representation	I could recognise [place] in this work		
Place representation v2	[Place] was represented in this work		

Place representation v3	[Place] was represented in this project		
Place representation v4	My community was represented in this work		
Place representation v5	My community was represented in this project		
Place value v2	It made [place] feel valued		
Place value	It made me feel like [place] matters		Preferred statement
Place visibility	It made other people think about [place]		
Place visibility v2	It made other people more aware of [place]		
Place visibility v3	It made [peer organisations/ cultural sector] more aware of [place]		Organisation only
Place visibility v4	It made other people more aware of the cultural heritage of [place]		
Place visibility v5	It made the cultural sector more aware of the cultural heritage of [place]		Organisation only

9.2 Appendix 2 - Example statement brainstorm whiteboard

