

Tourism, Culture and Creativity

Preparing Hastings for economic regeneration through education and workforce development in the creative and cultural sectors of the local economy

FINAL REPORT

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1 Introduction

1.1 Project aims

This report presents the findings of a research project commissioned by Sea Space on behalf of the Hastings and Bexhill Economic Alliance and undertaken by University of Brighton. The project aims were:

- To contribute to developing research capacity in Hastings and Bexhill with a specific focus on workforce development in the creative, cultural and tourism sectors;
- To advise on the development of appropriate initiatives to enhance the role of education and training for the creative, cultural and tourism sector in Hastings and Bexhill.

1.2 The local regeneration context

Hastings is the most deprived town in the region of South East England (according to the Index of Deprivation) and the population is, in general, younger than other parts of East Sussex, and considerably less economically active (Hastings' rate of unemployment is about twice the rate for East Sussex and for South East England). It also has a considerably higher proportion of residents without qualifications than either East Sussex or the South East region¹. By contrast Bexhill, like Rother in general, has a high proportion of retirement age households leading to low levels of economic activity. The unemployment rate is also below the national average. Deprivation and low educational achievement in Bexhill tends to be concentrated in particular wards.

To address this population and workforce structure, the Hastings and Bexhill Economic Alliance has set out four key aims: economic inclusion; learning and skills; jobs and business growth; and physical regeneration². These have contributed to the five point regeneration plan developed by the Hastings and Bexhill Task Force. At the core of these plans is a desire to develop a knowledge-driven economy in which the emergent cultural and creative offer will play a key role in stimulating economic regeneration more generally. The University Centre Hastings (UCH) plays a significant part in this vision, as a driver of the innovation required to catalyse the creative and cultural sectors in the emergent local economy.

Currently, however, the creative, cultural and tourism sectors account for just under 5% of Hastings and Bexhill's local labour force (Annual Business Index, 2005) which is the lowest percentage for any local authority district in Sussex and under half the figure for Brighton and Hove. The structure of the creative and cultural labour force is changing, from a relatively low-skilled service sector, to an increasingly sophisticated workforce skilled in cultural and creative production and supported by higher quality hospitality and catering services. However, the development of this focus in Hastings and Bexhill is hampered by a lack of suitable creative infrastructure (including a

¹ Skills Insight Regional and Sub-Regional Census Analysis, 2001 (ONS)

² AIF Annual Performance Plan 2006/7-2008/9

sufficiently and appropriately skilled pool of local labour), while the towns' tourism potential – and the regenerative potential that this would bring – has yet to be fully developed in a manner that addresses the changing nature of tourist demand. This amounts to four principal challenges that must be addressed if the full potential of the creative, cultural and tourism sectors in Hastings and Bexhill is going to be realised:

- Meeting sector training needs, particularly by developing a sustained dialogue between employers, educators and trainers;
- Fostering employers' commitment to training, by creating and supporting an education and knowledge driven economic environment in which employer-driven life long learning is a core part of workforce development;
- Maintaining (and developing) Sussex' position as a leading national centre for the creative and cultural industries. It is here that Hastings has a major opportunity to exploit its proximity to Brighton, London and the location of the 2012 Olympics;
- Improving the effectiveness of learning delivery, particularly in developing vocational excellence through strong progression routes from basic to advanced skills in the cultural, creative and tourism sectors.

Similar goals are contained in SEEDA's draft framework for a coastal strategy³ which stresses the need to raise educational attainment and aspiration through improving access to further and higher education and also emphasises that expanding the cultural offer is linked to releasing the enterprise potential of the tourism and creative sectors.

1.3 The Role of Higher Education and UCH in the regeneration process

The development of UCH is a potentially important factor in the drive to develop a knowledge based economy and to stimulate the creative, cultural and tourism sectors. Arguments about the role of universities in this regeneration process have been developed in the USA by Richard Florida who suggests that they can act as a powerful creative hub in regional development, through promoting a tolerant local economy that is able to capture and absorb increasingly globalised flows of technology and talent.⁴ Accepting the critique that Florida's work has promoted standardised creativity-led regeneration policies that have contributed to social exclusion, the downplaying of non-commercial cultural production and steeply rising property prices, his writing does provide useful insights to the potential positive and negative effects of higher education and knowledge led regeneration more generally. Two particularly important points emerge that are significant for UCH, Hastings and Bexhill:

- Local governments and environments can both stimulate and suppress the creative and cultural sector. Affordable working and living spaces combined

³ South East England Development Agency, *South East Coastal Strategy, Draft Framework for a Coastal Strategy*, 2006

⁴ Florida, R. (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class* (New York: Basic Books); Florida, R., Gates, G., Knudsen, B. and Stolarick, K. (2006) *The University and the Creative Economy*. Available from www.creativeclass.org

with urban landscapes that have a particular architectural heritage appear key to developing a supportive and networked creative workforce.⁵

- There is a symbiosis required between the university and the local creative economy, where the university can generate and catalyse cutting edge knowledge and technologies and the local economy can absorb and apply them to underpin local and regional development.

1.4 Research Methods

Both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were used in this research. Quantitative analysis of the demand and supply side of the labour market was undertaken using a variety of secondary databases. The Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) was used to analyse the changing nature of the creative, cultural and tourism sector. The ABI is a well known dataset and is regularly used for local labour market studies. In this report it is used not only to analyse the situation in Hastings but to place it in a comparable Sussex context. An analysis was also undertaken of the Independent Learner Record (ILR) for 2004 of FE and work-based learning courses undertaken by residents in Hastings and the surrounding area. The ILR is a complex dataset that is not readily available online and is not well used for labour market analysis.

The qualitative analysis aimed to provide a detailed analysis of the creative and cultural workforce. The tourism sector was also studied using qualitative methods, especially the changing nature of training provision and the way tourism interacts with the creative and cultural industries. Certain methods however, such as the career biographies outlined below were particularly focussed on the creative and cultural sector. One reason for this was that the tourism workforce has recently been the subject of several pieces of research, including projects led by Tourism South East. Three main qualitative methods were used:

- Stakeholder interviews with local training and education providers and local and regional stakeholders and policymakers within the creative and cultural industries. These examined a range of issues including the changing nature of training provision, how needs are identified, engagement with employers, future strategies for identifying workforce needs and the changing nature of the creative, cultural and tourism sector (see appendix).
- Focus groups with hard to reach groups and groups marginalised in the labour market, seeking to address attitudes to education and training and perceptions about the opportunities available in the local labour market and the constraints faced in taking up these opportunities;
- In-depth career biography interviews with members of the creative and cultural workforce, to establish detailed work histories and the process of skill development.

⁵ Rantisi, N.M., Leslie, D. and Christopherson, S.M. (2006) 'Placing the Creative Economy: Scale, Politics and the Material', *Environment & Planning A*, 38 (10), pp. 1789-1797.

1.5 Structure of the report

The remainder of this report is composed of four major sections and the structure of these sections reflects the nature of local cultural, creative and tourism labour markets and also the nature of the data collected. The next section considers the demand side of the labour market focussing on employment trends and skills gaps. This is followed by section three on the supply side of the labour market that examines broad workforce characteristics and uses secondary data along with the views of providers, stakeholders and focus group participants to consider the changing nature of the workforce and education and training provision. This section ends by considering the implications of the connections between the demand and supply side of the labour market for workforce development. Section four focuses on the findings of the career biography interviews which provides in depth analysis of how both the demand and supply side of the labour market are experienced by those involved in the creative, cultural and tourism industry. Section five, six and seven present the key findings in terms of the project objectives, and a series of conclusions and recommendations flowing from the project.

2 The local creative, cultural and tourism sectors labour market

2.1 The Size and Significance of the Cultural Sector in Sussex

According to the Annual Business Inquiry, there are 19,226 data units in the cultural industries⁶ in Sussex, employing around 140,000 workers, which represents approximately 23% of the Sussex workforce. Of these employees, approximately 40% work in tourism and over 20% in each of visual art and audio-visual. In most of the sectors, employment is fairly equally divided between full and part time workers, although most evidently in tourism and sport. The sector is growing rapidly, from approximately 90,000 people in 2001.⁷

In addition to the 140,000 employees, claims have been made by a number of cultural agencies that the data under-represent the importance of the sector since not all those engaged in it are likely to be counted by the ABI. Examples of this include self employed cultural workers who are not VAT or otherwise registered (including many artists, musicians and other performers) and volunteers (Sussex Sports Partnership claims that up to 170,000 adults in Sussex may be sports volunteers according to the Sport England categorisation). There are no data that allow the size of this additional workforce to be estimated.

2.2 The Size and Significance of the Cultural Sector in Hastings and Bexhill

Hastings currently has the lowest proportion of cultural workers of any district in Sussex (followed by Rother, at equal second lowest). This is highly significant in terms of the projected drivers for regeneration in Hastings. The analysis below focuses on the cultural sector for Hastings Borough due to the confidentiality difficulties that arise when analysing ABI data for Bexhill as a sub-area of Rother district.

⁶ The cultural sector, as defined by DCMS, consists of 7 cultural domains or areas: visual arts; audio-visual; sport; performance; books and press; heritage; and tourism.

⁷ David Powell Associates (2001) *Creative and Cultural Industries – An Economic Impact Study for South East England*. Guildford: SEEDA/ SEECC.

Table 2.1 District Level Key Statistics to show percentage by district /local /unitary area

	Population	Cultural Sector Employees in VAT Registered Businesses	% of Population working in Cultural Sector by Area
Adur	59,627	3,394	5.7%
Arun	140,759	7,634	5.4%
Brighton & Hove	247,817	25,443	10.3%
Chichester	106,450	8,706	8.2%
Crawley	99,744	16,246	16.3%
Eastbourne	89,667	7,431	8.2%
Hastings	85,029	4,021	4.7%
Horsham	122,088	8,877	7.3%
Lewes	92,177	4,571	5.0%
Mid Sussex	127,378	11,101	8.7%
Rother	85,428	4,288	5.0%
Wealdon	140,023	8,431	6.0%
Worthing	97,568	5,582	5.7%

Source: Annual Business Inquiry

Table 2.1 gives the employment distribution of the cultural workforce in Hastings, as at December 2005. What this indicates is that the vast majority of the 4,021 cultural workers are employed in the tourism sector (39%) or in sales or other work that cannot be attributed to one of the established cultural sectors (31%). Of these 70% of cultural employees, the majority are low skilled service workers in hotels, bars, restaurants, gambling establishments and shops. The picture is little different when the other sectors (and 30% of cultural workers) are considered. For example, the majority of those working in the sport and the performance sector are facility operators, who mainly comprise semi-skilled labour. Thus, of the 4,021 cultural employees in Hastings working in VAT registered businesses, perhaps fewer than 400 have higher level skills or are working in parts of the sector where higher skills are required. In addition to these 400, there are likely to be cultural workers who are not recorded by the ABI because they are self-employed and/or not registered for VAT.

2.3 Sector Trends in Hastings and Bexhill

Visual Art

Brighton & Hove has the established reputation in the field of visual art in Sussex, having some excellent exhibition facilities as well as an established school of art. This, along with the ‘culture oriented lifestyle’, draws people to the city from across the country to enjoy what is seen as its contemporary, bohemian image. However, a number of commentators have noted that an eastwards shift is taking place, with growing numbers of visual artists relocating to Bexhill and Hastings. This is being supported by existing and proposed FE/HE provision, and is – to some extent - driven largely by the lower cost of housing and workspace in Hastings and Bexhill. The Hastings Arts Forum is growing in strength as a result of the incomers, and new flagship exhibition projects (e.g. re-opening of the De La Warr Pavilion) and investment in the arts (e.g. the Creative Media Centre) are seen as important. However, it is clear that the infrastructure to support visual arts has yet to catch up, which is a concern for achieving the full cultural and economic potential of the visual arts in Hastings. The De La Warr Pavilion, and even the soon to open Cultural Centre

in Eastbourne, are statements about the strength of the arts in this part of Sussex. However, these signature venues cannot be sustained without the development of high-quality infrastructure and arts leadership.

Audio-Visual

Digital media is a rapidly expanding area of work in which Brighton & Hove is an acknowledged leader. The city's e-learning and game development industries have international status, while it is also a nationally recognised centre for documentary film making and print and graphic communications. There is some eastward movement of workers in this sector, largely for similar reasons to visual artists (although here it is often associated with downsizing later in life). This has led to a growing community of broadcast media professionals gathering in Hastings, who are now being supported by the development of the Broadcast Media Centre at UCH. The significance of this centre cannot be over-estimated, since one of the principal barriers to cultural production in this area is the cost of equipment and studio space.

Sport

The sports sector is relatively well established and there has been little recent relative change in the size of the sector in Hastings and Bexhill. The football club is part of the Brighton & Hove Albion study centre initiative, which gives it some connectivity to FE. However, the sector is not well served by professional clubs or a reputation for sports provision. There is some scope to develop the sports offer ahead of the 2012 Olympics.⁸

Performance

The re-opening of the De La Warr Pavilion gives the area a major signature performance space that has attracted national and international performances and exhibitions. However, this needs to be offset with the current closure of Hastings Pier and the lease of St Mary's-in-the-Castle to an evangelical church, both of which are seen to impact on the ability of the area to stage performances and attract performers. Local street performances and festivals continue to be a major attraction of the area, particularly in Hastings, although their economic impact and contribution to social policy agendas is not fully established.

Books and Press

Compared to Brighton and Eastbourne, this sector has little presence in Hastings and Bexhill.

Heritage

There has been little change in this sector. Of note is the £2.3m investment by English Heritage in a new state-of-the-art visitor centre and restaurant at Battle Abbey; a venue which attracts tourists from around the region. However, in terms of wider

⁸ Locum Consulting (2005) *Review of the impacts of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games on the South East region* (SEEDA).

heritage employment, many of the current employees reach retirement age in the next decade and will need to be replaced. In a sector where staff turnover is small, this demographic shift could have far-reaching consequences, particularly if it is linked to the development of a more cultural basis for the tourism offer.

Tourism

The traditional tourism offer has been declining in Hastings and Bexhill for some time. There is a general need to overhaul the sector, bring in new investment and establish new service expectations. The poor skill levels of the Hastings labour force could be a barrier to achieving this level of regeneration, while the mobility of regional labour could deny local people the chance of new employment opportunities in this sector. The evidence of the recent performance of the tourism sector is mixed. The hotel sector has seen a decline in hotel supply and low achieved room rates. Despite recent investments in the Zanzibar and White Rock Hotel, the hotel sector is now unable to meet the demands of contemporary consumers⁹. By contrast, the visitor numbers to the De la Warr Pavilion since it reopened have been very encouraging and the Hastings Museum has been refurbished. The Smugglers Adventure, Fishermen's Museum and Underwater World are the main attractions in Hastings and Bexhill that are covered by the Visit Britain (2006) visitor attraction survey¹⁰ and have all experienced growth in visitor numbers in recent years to just over 150,000 visitors per year. The recent growth rate, however, is typical for attractions of this type in South East England. Locum Destination in their 2005 destination management study also noted that visitors from younger more affluent age groups were growing. These optimistic trends have to be set against the closure of the pier and the closure of two private owned art galleries in 2006. A number of interviewees noted that the retail mix was still limited for tourists as the major chains in the town centre (Marks & Spencer, Debenhams) have small outlets that are no match for the better retail offer from the originator towns of most visitors (Tunbridge Wells, Guildford, London, etc). In addition, the town has only a small number the boutique/bohemian shops of the type found in Brighton and, increasingly, other weekend destinations. The Sussex Arts Marketing Cultural mapping of Hastings and Bexhill¹¹ also argues for a more diverse retail offer. Studies of Bexhill have also noted the problematic nature of the mix of hotels and the retail/catering offer¹². A number of stakeholders put forward strong arguments for Sea Space to take a lead by developing rows of shops with a specified tenant mix that could provide a core for a new retail attraction and area in the town.¹³ Others noted that the alternative of trying to attract a major regional flagship store was unlikely to succeed given the 180 degree catchment and the other sub-regional locations that are more likely to interest retail investors.

⁹ 1066 Country Hotel Futures, final report, Hotel Solutions

¹⁰ Visit Britain (2006) *Visitor attraction trends England 2005*

¹¹ Sussex Arts Marketing and Colin Mercer (2006) *Hastings and Bexhill Cultural Mapping*

¹² Locum Destination Consulting Bexhill-on-Sea Community Enquiry Workshop

¹³ The planned developments at Priory Quarter and Station Plaza, which will have mixed-used office and retail space, go some way to addressing these concerns

3 Education and Training for the creative, cultural and tourism sectors

3.1 Introduction

This section examines the education and training issues relevant to the cultural sector through a consideration of primary and secondary data on the skills and qualifications of local residents, the nature of training provision and the role played by training, business advice and educational institutions in supporting the creative, cultural and tourism sectors.

Some of the primary data used for this analysis were drawn from the 2001 Census of Population and the Independent Learner Record (ILR). Unlike the ABI used in the previous section, both these data sets allow analysis at below the local authority district scale. Consequently for some of the analysis it was possible to produce data for a single geographical area that included Hastings and Bexhill combined. It is based on all the Census output areas for Hastings and the seven census output areas for the district of Rother that contain the majority of the urban areas of Bexhill.

3.2 Skills and qualifications in Hastings and Bexhill

The relatively low educational qualifications of residents in Hastings and Bexhill are well documented. The data from the 2001 Census of Population indicating the broad occupations of Hastings and Bexhill residents are shown in Table 3.1. These suggest that higher level skills maybe lacking locally since only 5.8% of residents described their occupation as higher managerial and professional (compared to 9.6% nationally). The rest of Table 3.1, however, indicates that the occupational profile of Hastings and Bexhill is not that different to the remainder of England and the proportion of small employers and own account workers (10.3%) is above the figure for England (7.6%).

Table 3.1 Numbers of residents by socio-economic group, Hastings and Bexhill, with England as a comparator

	Hastings and Bexhill		England	
	N	%	N	%
All economically active residents aged 16-64	66,674	100	31,429,248	100
Higher managerial and professional occupations	3,853	5.8	3,021,507	9.6
Lower managerial and professional occupations	13,592	20.4	6,590,246	21.0
Intermediate occupations	7,352	11.0	3,336,444	10.6
Small employers and own account workers	6,874	10.3	2,390,408	7.6
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	5,254	7.9	2,505,150	8.0
Semi-routine occupations	9,671	14.5	4,089,849	13.0
Routine occupations	6,395	9.6	3,150,760	10.0
Never worked or long-term unemployed	3,132	4.7	1,312,929	4.2
Not Classified	10,551	15.8	5,031,955	16.0

Source: 2001 Census of Population.

The 2001 Census of Population indicated that 14.5% of the 16-74 population of Hastings and Bexhill were graduates, compared to 20% in England as a whole. Table 3.2 indicates the industries of employment (current or recent) amongst graduates living in Hastings compared to England as a whole. Graduates in England are concentrated in particular industries, especially those with high a level of public sector employment. Nationally, 41.2% of graduates in 2001 worked in education, health or public administration, the figure for Brighton and Hove is 46%. . In Hastings and Bexhill two thirds (66.3%) of graduates worked in these sectors where the public sector is the main employer compared to only 35.1% of the total workforce in the town.

Table 3.2 Industries of all residents and graduates, Hastings, with England as comparator

	Hastings				England			
	All people 16-74		Graduates		All people 16-74		Graduates	
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
A, B. Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing	313	1.0	19	0.3	330,561	1.5	33,698	0.6
C, D, E. Mining and quarrying, manufacturing, and electricity, gas and water supply	3,890	12.1	599	9.5	3,523,165	15.7	619,359	11.4
F. Construction	2,553	8.0	132	2.1	1,512,655	6.8	133,030	2.4
G. Wholesale and retail trade, repairs	5,479	17.1	350	5.6	3,779,209	16.9	386,633	7.1
H. Hotels and restaurants	1,532	4.8	83	1.3	1,058,825	4.7	97,065	1.8
I. Transport, storage and communications	1,672	5.2	108	1.7	1,579,814	7.1	232,315	4.3
J. Financial intermediation	910	2.8	82	1.3	1,077,941	4.8	294,436	5.4
K. Real estate, renting and business activities	2,917	9.1	680	10.8	2,957,014	13.2	1,119,091	20.6
L. Public administration and defence, social security	2,577	8.0	470	7.5	1,261,325	5.6	340,837	6.3
M. Education	2,658	8.3	1,337	21.2	1,733,917	7.7	974,048	17.9
N. Health and social work	6,017	18.8	2,165	34.3	2,399,327	10.7	921,565	16.9
O, P, Q. Other	1,515	4.7	279	4.4	1,162,367	5.2	286,357	5.3
Total	32,033	100	6,304	100	22,376,120	100	5,438,434	100

Source: 2001 Census of Population (this analysis could only be undertaken at local authority level so is presented for Hastings only).

In all industries in Hastings the proportion of graduates is below that for England. This is particularly the case in key sectors where private sector employment is common. Of the Hastings residents working in real estate, business and renting activities only 23.3 per cent are graduates compared to 37.8% nationally and 40% in Brighton and Hove. Similarly, the proportions for financial intermediation are 9% in Hastings and Bexhill, 24% in Brighton and Hove and 27.3% nationally, so the workforce in Hastings in this industry has well below the national proportion of graduates. Overall, it is clear that not only are graduate skills lacking in Hastings but also that those residents who have graduate qualifications are very heavily concentrated in the public sector with low proportions of such residents working in the private sector.

3.3 FE provision in Hastings and Bexhill

There are two main providers of further education (FE) in the Hastings and Bexhill area:

- Bexhill College, a sixth form college with a relatively well-developed adult education provision
- Hastings College of Arts and Technology (HCAAT), a general further education college with courses in a wide number of areas. Like most general FE colleges it has a focus on vocational courses. Its higher-level courses (NVQ Levels 4 and 5 and equivalents) are increasingly offered in partnership with UCH.

Some local residents who are learners also travel out of Hastings and Bexhill to other institutions but there is much more travel into Hastings & Bexhill than travel out. This is consistent with the towns' position as an urban area in a rural setting.

Table 3.3 Travel into and out of Hastings & Bexhill for study

Area	Hastings & Bexhill residents	Non-residents	All students
HCAAT	3,743	1,218	4,961
Bexhill	1,149	421	1,570
Other provision delivered locally	260	403	663
Providers outside Hastings/Bexhill	603	0	603
Total	5,755	2,042	7,797

Note: students present on 1st October

The data for 2004 showed that 2,042 people travel into the area, and 603 travel out. This is a net gain of 1,439 learners, 25 per cent of resident learners, a large net gain. This data is based on the Independent Learner Record for 2004 and excludes learners in school sixth forms, private schools and some private training providers.

260 resident learners and 403 non-residents are enrolled with institutions other than HCAAT and Bexhill College that have provision in located in Hastings and Bexhill. These are: Sussex Downs College, the WEA and Plumpton College. The locations that Sussex Downs College uses inside the area are mainly in central Hastings.

The institutions that Hastings & Bexhill residents travel out to, where delivery is outside the area, are Sussex Downs College, Plumpton College, Claverham College,

South Kent, West Kent, Croydon and Westminster Kingsway. Some of this may be for franchised or distance learning provision.

Table 3.4 Areas of origin of students not resident in Hastings & Bexhill

	HCAT	Bexhill	Other provision delivered locally	Total non-residents
Brighton and Hove	23	1	70	94
Eastbourne	55	16	122	193
Kent and Medway	133	12	15	160
Lewes	7	0	38	45
Rother	760	323	39	1,122
Wealden	106	34	89	229
Rest of South East	25	3	3	31

Note: students present on 1st October

Bexhill College takes many students from Rother (outside Bexhill itself), but does not take many from further afield. HCAT has a wider catchment area, also with many students from Rother and recruiting in Kent and Medway, Wealden District, Eastbourne and even in Brighton & Hove.

The travel patterns of young people, who are mainly on full-time courses are somewhat different.

Table 3.5 Young people: Travel into and out of Hastings & Bexhill for study

Area	Hastings & Bexhill residents	Non-residents	All students
HCAT	1,037	386	1,423
Bexhill	824	363	1,187
Other provision delivered locally	4	6	10
Providers outside Hastings/Bexhill	137	0	137
Total	2,002	755	2,757

Note: students present on 1st October

Among young learners aged 16-18, 755 travel in from outside the area. They are fairly evenly split between Bexhill College and HCAT. Only 137 local young people travel out to colleges outside the area, of which 82 go to Sussex Downs College and 25 to Plumpton College.

Colleges other than HCAT and Bexhill delivering inside the area only account for 10 learners in this age group, of which only 4 live in the area.

Table 3.6 Young people: areas of origin of students not resident in Hastings & Bexhill

	HCAT	Bexhill	Other provision delivered locally	Total non-residents
Brighton and Hove	1	0	2	3
Eastbourne	7	8	1	16
Kent and Medway	46	11	0	57
Lewes	2	0	2	4
Rother	263	296	1	560
Wealden	38	19	0	57
Rest of South East	5	3	0	8

Note: students present on 1st October

Therefore most students travelling into Hastings and Bexhill come from Rother District (other than Bexhill itself). They go to both HCAT and Bexhill.

There is no great problem of a loss of students to outside the area, in fact both colleges are importers of students. Some inflows and outflows are inevitable given the variety of provision in different institutions. However, there is a net imbalance with Eastbourne, since most of the Sussex Downs provision that Hastings & Bexhill resident learners travel out to is based at Eastbourne. In the case of adult learners, Sussex Downs has students following courses delivered in Hastings. There are also adult learners with the WEA and some other providers, where delivery is in the area.

3.4 Enrolments on Arts and Hospitality courses

According to Individual Learner Record (ILR) data, courses in the arts “area of learning” are those in fine art, art and design, performing arts, music, new media and other creative subjects, while the hospitality subjects are those in travel and tourism, sports and leisure studies, hotel management and catering. The numbers of enrolments in these subjects are shown in Tables 3.7 and 3.8. They are divided by age groups because the take-up of courses is quite different among young students and among adults. It should be noted that the enrolments include a net inflow of learners from outside Hastings and Bexhill, indicating that the quality of provision of programmes in arts and hospitality in the towns is considered to be high by both locals and outsiders.

Table 3.7 Arts enrolments in Hastings and Bexhill, England as a comparator

Age groups	England		Hastings and Bexhill resident students (any colleges)		Bexhill College students (wherever resident)		HCAT students (wherever resident)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under 16	9,590	8	24	16	4	-	25	9
16-18	246,150	8	933	11	782	14	253	6
19-20	29,380	7	62	6	13	11	45	5
21-24	30,211	5	53	3	5	6	37	2
25-59	224,740	5	470	5	5	5	486	7
60 and over	102,498	17	346	25	0	0	230	30
Missing age	26,55	9	11	12	0	-	4	8
All age groups	645,224	7	1,899	9	809	12	1,080	7

Note: percentages are percentages of enrolments in all subjects. Percentages have been suppressed when base is less than 25.

As can be seen, Hastings and Bexhill have a higher than average enrolment in both arts and hospitality programmes. This suggests that more learners in Hastings and Bexhill than in England as a whole view arts and hospitality as a good or acceptable career (and – from above - that this is a view shared by learners from outside the area).

Table 3.8 Hospitality enrolments in Hastings and Bexhill, England as a comparator

Age groups	England		Hastings and Bexhill resident students (all colleges)		Bexhill College students (wherever resident)		HCAT students (wherever resident)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under 16	14,210	11%	16	11%	3	-	16	6%
16-18	188,645	6%	702	8%	401	7%	417	10%
19-20	33,142	7%	94	8%	9	8%	87	9%
21-24	49,237	8%	131	8%	14	17%	96	6%
25-59	313,824	8%	636	7%	100	15%	434	6%
60 AND over	36,966	6%	19	1%	4	9%	18	2%
Missing age	2,259	8%	5	6%	0	-	7	15%
All age groups	638,283	7%	1,603	7%	531	8%	1,075	7%

Note: percentages are percentages of enrolments in all subjects. Percentages have been suppressed when base is less than 25.

3.5 Arts and Hospitality courses taken in FE

There are few level 4 and 5 enrolments in FE in Hastings and Bexhill, largely due to HE provision in the towns at these levels. The principal level for FE courses in the towns is Level 3, which includes the GCE A Levels, Advanced VCE and the BTEC National Certificates and Diplomas.

Table 3.9 Courses in Arts subjects at Level 3

Course type	Awarding bodies	Subjects	Providers/ Numbers
AS Level	AQA Edexcel OCR WJEC	Art and Design, Dance, Drama/Theatre Studies, Film Studies, Music, Music Technology Media Studies Performance Studies	Bexhill College 504 HCAT 0 Other colleges 37
A2 Level	AQA Edexcel OCR WJEF	Art and Design, Dance, Drama/Theatre Studies, Film Studies, Media Studies, Music, Performance Studies	Bexhill College 226 HCAT 9 Other colleges 21
AVCE Double Award	Edexcel	Art and Design, Media: Communication and Production, Performing Arts	Other colleges 5
National Award	Edexcel	Music Technology, Performing Arts	Other colleges 14
National Certificate	Edexcel	Music Practice, Performing Arts, Photography	HCAT 13 Other colleges 14
National Diploma	Edexcel	Design Crafts, Fashion and Clothing, Fine Art, Graphic Design, Media Production (Audio), Media with Endorsements in (Audio), (Moving Image), (Publishing), Multimedia, Music Practice, Music Technology, Performing Arts, Photography, Textiles	Bexhill College 31 HCAT 135 Other colleges 35
Diploma in Foundation	Edexcel	Art and Design	HCAT 99 Other colleges 6

Studies			
Open College credits	NOCN	Creative arts	HCAT 35 Other colleges 6

In Hospitality there are many fewer enrolments at this level and a wider range of course types. It should be noted that leisure, sport and exercise studies are included in the Hospitality category, as are courses in travel and tourism. The AS Level offer is nearly all in physical education, with only one student in home economics. Hotel and catering skills are mainly developed as NVQs or as courses with minor awarding bodies. The National Certificate for Licensees, usually delivered as a short course, is the largest single course taken in the Hospitality subject area.

Table 3.10 Courses in Hospitality subjects at Level 3

Course type	Awarding bodies	Subjects	Providers/ Numbers
AS Level	AQA OCR	Home Economics, Physical Education	Bexhill College 59 Other colleges 9
A2 Level	OCR	Physical Education	Bexhill College 22 Other colleges 4
AVCE Double Award	Edexcel	Leisure and Recreation, Travel and Tourism	Bexhill College 27 Other colleges 1
AVCE Single Award	Edexcel	Leisure and Recreation,	Other colleges 3
NVQ	CG HAB	Food and Drink Manufacturing Operations, Sport, Recreation and Allied Occupations: Coaching, Teaching and Instructing, Food Preparation and Cooking (General), Food Service Advanced Craft	HCAT 16 Other colleges 3
National Award	Edexcel	Sport	Other colleges 1
National Certificate	Edexcel	Sport	Other colleges 1
National Diploma	Edexcel	Hospitality Supervision, Sport, Sport and Exercise Sciences	Bexhill College 31 Other colleges 11
City and Guilds certificates	CG	Travel (Travel Agency), Travel Destinations	HCAT 34
Coaching awards	FA YMCA	Licence in Football Coaching, Certificate in Personal Training	Other colleges 3
Innkeepers certificate	BII	National Certificate for Licensees	HCAT 248 Other colleges 23
Open College credits	NOCN	Hospitality	Other colleges 10

There is much less provision in Arts and Hospitality subjects at Level 2, with many of the courses being non-certificated. Substantial vocational or academic courses like City and Guilds and GCSE are in a minority, as are courses that bridge the academic and practical, like First Diploma and GNVQ. Here there would seem to be more scope for expanding provision through the introduction of the new Diplomas for 14-19 year olds. At Level 1 and Entry Level, non-certificated provision and Open College Network units predominate, and are offered mainly at HCAT. There are also courses with no level equivalence. These are of a similar type to the Open College Network and non-certificated courses. Little or no information is available about the subjects of study. There are good rates of retention in arts and hospitality subjects for most age groups.

3.6 Business support and advice services

Hastings, Bexhill and the surrounding areas are well supplied with business advice and support services. These are provided through a range of funding and delivery mechanisms including local and regional grant aid, self-help, voluntarism and commercial charging. The principal services are shown below in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11 Business Support and Advisory Services

Service	Function
Enterprise Hub	Part of the local regeneration strategy. Free mentoring, training and advice for high-growth firms, plus networking and training for companies in the creative, manufacturing and technology sectors.
eBiz Centre	Aims to support new and existing businesses through the use of the Internet, enabling them to reduce administration costs and develop new business opportunities using the Internet as a channel to market.
ProfitNet	A self-help learning network designed to help firms increase profitability and productivity, and to increase the competitive advantage of local businesses. ProfitNet hosts groups in culture and creativity and in hospitality and tourism.
1066 Enterprise	This is the enterprise agency for Hastings and Rother and the Chamber of Commerce for Hastings and St Leonards. It offers advice and guidance for business start-ups and on-going support for established businesses. It also has a role in town centre management and can offer small capital grants to local business.
University Centre Hastings	Provides skills and education for the local workforce and professional training for local businesses. The University of Brighton's Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP) has recently commenced operating at UCH, and offers research support and guidance to the voluntary sector and community groups.
Product Development Centre	Based at the Innovation Centre, with a focus on design and rapid prototyping in mechanical and electrical engineering.
Business Link	A local advisory is based in Hastings, who can provide support for local businesses as part of the national Business link scheme.
Locate East Sussex	Helps businesses find suitable premises in the county. It also offers free and confidential market intelligence on locating and operating in East Sussex

4 Workforce (and prospective workforce) perspectives on the creative, cultural and tourism sectors

4.1 Entry to Employment

Many young people with no connections to the creative, cultural and tourism sectors find it hard to gain entry to employment. There is a mix of contributing conditions to the social reproduction of exclusion from employment. Primarily this revolves around the lack of social capital, exhibited through a reliance upon friends and families for employment. For most of those caught in this situation this has led to a reproduction of short-term, casual and poor experiences of work, which has social consequences and impacts on motivation, self-esteem and future employment prospects. In many cases there are long-term histories of marginalisation at school and under-qualification, often linked to poor diagnosis and treatment of learning difficulties and mental health issues.

Despite this, many young people understand a need for flexibility in the local labour market, in terms of training, work experience and employment practice, rather than specialisation at an early age. They believe that their options should be kept open and CVs built from short course accredited learning and casual labour experiences. For some, this internalisation of 'flexibility', they felt, was exploited by careers advisors who used it as *carte blanche* for enrolments into short-course training in manual skills (e.g. tree surgery, construction, decorating) rather than following broader and more challenging career aspirations in the creative, cultural and tourism sectors. Perceptions of the negative effects of 'flexibility' were reinforced by perceptions of the short-termism built into the benefit system. The young people were all too aware that if they find non-standard work of 16 hours a week or more then they will lose their entitlement to benefits, a risk they are often not willing to take for 'soft skills' and 'flexible' work practices.

The experience of exclusion from the labour market fed into a general perception of poor life prospects for those residing in the Hastings area. A number of interviewees made links between the lack of jobs and experience of violence in the town. They were aware of multiple and mutually-supporting dynamics that lead to the reproduction of life chances and exclusion.

4.2 Distinctions between 'culturals', 'creatives' and 'tourism enterprise'

For those who have found employment, there are two distinct classes of creative practitioner ('cultural' and 'creative') and a further class of tourism enterprise workers who all contribute to the local cultural economy, but differ according to their modes of career progression, attitudes to the development of the local economy (and consequently the part they play in it) and conception of the relationship between cultural work, property and space.

'Culturals'

'Culturals' tend to predominantly work alone (as freelancers, sole traders or 'independents') or in small networks and associations (micro-businesses) within an

informal cultural economy. Informal networks and mutual support systems (i.e. art groups, shared workshops, patronising galleries, buying networks) are features of the social and working practices of ‘culturals’, which are characterised by fluidity and sociability. Commercial or economically-derived contractual arrangements tend to be seen in opposition to an ethos and politics of cultural autonomy, a feature which shapes their demands regarding local regeneration initiatives, the relationship between creative practice and space, and the management and governance of the cultural industries.

‘Creatives’

‘Creatives’ tend to comprise a mix of locals and incomers. All are attracted by the mix of cheap property and good visual architecture, while their work tends to be sourced locally and elsewhere. Many of the creative producers are well educated and have gone into the creative sector as a rational business decision. They tend to seek to expand their businesses (through employing others) and many are now becoming established as successful medium sized employers in the town. Both the entrepreneurs and the employed in this sector tend to be rational profit maximisers who have good business reasons for being in the town and seek to develop their markets both in the town and elsewhere.

‘Tourism enterprise’

Many of the tourism entrepreneurs are incomers attracted by cheap hotels and guest houses. They are often on their second or third careers, and many see this as their last career prior to retirement (perhaps combined with some continued work in the sector, through guest house or B&B provision). While the property is cheap, maintenance, renovation and marketing costs are high and average achieved room rates are low, meaning that returns to the sector tend to be poor at the moment. This limits the ability of the tourism sector to expand or to employ many local people. Tourism entrepreneurs have identifiable higher-level needs to do with support for career transition and business development and have found support from local networks and associations. They tend to be concerned with spatial and environmental factors and are keen to be involved in regeneration activities, some of which have led to calls for better marketing of the town and innovation of its assets.

4.3 Career progression: cultural and creative workers

This study has mapped progression routes for culturals and creatives. It has identified four stages in this progression: emergence; establishment; independence; and professionalism (see Table 4.1). Different attributes are required at different stages in the career lifestyle in order to be successful and to sustain employment in the sector. Our findings for tourism enterprise workers suggests that a more conventional vertical career development model is appropriate (see Section 4.6 below).

Emergence

Emergence is typified by an exploration of an artistic identity, through a range of roles, experiences and expressions. Typically, this occurs in school or college-based

environments but can continue through apprenticeships and into freelance work, and is about finding and constructing an authentic career identity. The individual takes control over all aspects of the production process; an important stage in terms of foundational knowledge and in establishing interests in more specialised areas of cultural production or creativity. As such, they are resource-dependent, and often finance their work through their own money (but this is rare, especially for younger students), family support and part-time employment, often in an unrelated area and in parts of the service sector economy. Family and peer-group support are dominant features, shaping the level of support given to career choice. This can be in terms of positive affirmations of career choice, to financial help in buying materials and equipment, to the provision of a space to work and experiment (e.g. a converted garage, garden shed, or room). The status of the emerging cultural producer remains at this level, an early source of pride, and limited vocational experiences are often gained as a result of family or peer-group connections, although structured work placements are given by schools and colleges in most instances. Social, economic and cultural capital are key features in determining career choice and future success; the lack of which can result in movements away from career aspirations in culture and creativity into forms of employment that reproduce the occupations, experiences and prospects of parents and wider family groups.

Table 4.1 Career progression in the cultural and creative industries

	Emergence	Establishment	Independence	Professionalism
Skills, education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimentation with different artistic forms • Some limited vocational experience • Some limited craft-based knowledge • Apprenticeship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of artistic role and identity • Furthering technical knowledge, often through postgraduate qualification • Development of skills in managing production process, commercial awareness and marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honing and development of skills • Wider production expertise • Management and leadership skills • Acquiring of skills to support subsidiary activity (e.g. in education) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mastery of skills in one or two areas • Mentoring others
Cultural production and commercialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little use of technical specialists in final production • Exploration of different forms of cultural production • Friendship networks involved in production • No collaboration with other cultural producers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural production primary • Development of authorial voice/style • Increased ability and confidence to claim resources (e.g. grants, commissions) • Tensions with clients and financiers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and delivery of authorial voice/style and audience recognition of it • Greater control over production process • Ability to manipulate clients' needs to fulfil own creative agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration of novel and personal themes • Further attention to quality of product (aesthetics, craft, identity) • Control over cultural production • Divesting of some production, distribution and marketing roles
Finance and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource dependent • Part-time work (often in unrelated area) • Computer use (website) to establish and affirm career choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition from part-time working to full-time cultural producer • Some employment in related fields (art education, community arts) • Acquiring of modest resources for production (sales, small grants, first commissions) • Tentative e-commerce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financing and funding applications • Use of externals to win funding applications • More fully-developed commercial exploitation of cultural production (e.g. through agents, galleries) • e-commerce as significant funding stream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully-developed team to win funding and grants and realise economic capital of cultural production • Ability to generate revenue based on reputation
Spatial requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home-working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquiring of small studio space (sometimes shared space) • Small clusters of creative practitioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to larger premises with supporting staff (apprentices, administrators, marketing professionals) • Cultural quarters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial requirements satisfied for range of cultural production and commercial activity • Spatially-ambivalent toward local area as national and international work takes on importance
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status within family and friendship networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underground success and recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial success and some national and international recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National and/or international recognition and audience

Establishment

This stage is about the consolidation of career choice and identity. More focus is given to further technical knowledge, often through a postgraduate qualification, and fully establishing a signature style. This has been defined by Leonard-Barton as ‘an ability by which a person prefers to identify himself or herself professionally. Signature evokes the idiosyncratic nature of the skill – a personally defining characteristic, as much a part of someone’s identity as the way the individual signs his or her name’.¹⁴ This suggests the development of distinctiveness, which is a source of ‘authenticity’ and marketability. Of the latter, skills in commercial awareness and business knowledge will be developed, alongside a deeper understanding of the requirement to manage the production process. The consolidation of identity and skills leads to an increased ability (perhaps legitimacy) and confidence to claim resources, especially through grants and commissions, but also business loans for materials, equipment and space. It further contributes to tensions with commercial imperatives and others involved in the production process, particularly for those that place a high premium on artistic autonomy. An established career marks a transition away from part-time working in unrelated areas to a life as a full-time cultural producer, although some part-time employment may be gained in subsidiary activities (e.g. arts education, community arts, arts administration).

Independence

Independence is marked by a quest for autonomy, materialised through greater financial and creative control. Skills will be enhanced, typically through professional development schemes rather than accredited learning with large-scale training providers, and increasing awareness and exposure of the need for management and leadership skills will be realised. Skills may be acquired in order to support subsidiary activity (e.g. in education), which for some, is marked more out of a commitment to work in those areas than a failure to secure financial independence. The thrust of independence across all spectrums, however, is autonomy. This is demarcated against others who inhibit autonomy, creativity and freedom, as new identities and defences of working patterns are forwarded to enlarge professional control. Enhanced control over cultural production is witnessed through an ability to manipulate clients’ need to fulfil personal creative agendas, but also through further development of the commercial aspects of creativity. This can mean, for instance, that e-commerce becomes a significant funding stream, that agents and gallery patrons are enlisted, and sometimes ‘externals’ are hired to support project-based work and to secure successful funding applications. Autonomy is further witnessed through moves to larger premises, sometimes with an elementary (often part-time or casual) supporting staff of apprentices, administrators and marketing professionals, and a growth in status through commercial success and some national and international recognition.

Professionalism

Professionalism is characterised by a mastery of skills and competencies in cultural production and creative practice. The individual is able to communicate their vision with wider audiences and realise significant financial returns from their practice. In the creative

¹⁴ Leonard-Barton, D. (1995) *Wellsprings of Knowledge: Building and Sustaining the Sources of Innovation* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press), p.62.

industries this translates into the development of a continuous and coherent body of work, which is understood as a source for continuity.¹⁵ The professional often explores novel and personal themes, pays further attention to the quality of their product (through a concern with aesthetics, craft and identity), and has total control over cultural production. This status, recognised at national and perhaps international levels, means they can exact financial returns for their work without interference by commercial interests or intermediaries, and have an ability to generate revenue based on reputation. The professional often divests aspects of their practice to others, hiring teams to perform specific roles and functions under their guidance, especially in areas of monotonous creative production, administration, distribution and marketing. Commercial success may lead to a view to realising capital through the sale of their enterprise (particularly for ‘creatives’) or taking on new partners. At this level, success and fame may mean distortions in terms of their engagement with the local community, or, if strong local attachments are retained, they often give their services for the good of others, particularly through mentoring schemes. A major challenge at this stage is to enhance experimentation and reinvention, and signature training and research facilities, as well as a critical mass of active creative practitioners can aid this.

4.4 Constraints to career progression

There are a number of constraints to career progression, which are particularly acute in the Hastings area and have implications in terms of local policy and strategy for the development of the creative and cultural industries. These constraints have been aligned to the career progression model (see table 4.2 below), which takes account of individual and socio-economic aspects that determine career trajectories. Whilst this model has been developed for the creative and cultural industries from our grounded approach to research, general applications of its principles can be made to other types of career.

¹⁵ Svejenova, S. (2005) ‘The path with the heart’: creating the authentic career’, *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(5), pp. 947-974.

Table 4.2 Constraints to career progression

	Emergence	Establishment	Independence	Professionalism
Skills, education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of teaching and apprenticeship experience Lack of exposure to career role models Critical mass of willing mentors to take apprentices and/or work experience students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of postgraduate training Availability of short-course technical training Availability of commercial-awareness and business training schemes Skills gaps in dealing with producers, distributors and intermediaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of management and leadership training Availability of flexible professional development training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to critical mass of creative practitioners in order to revitalise their practice (exposure to new ideas and peer-to-peer learning opportunities)
Cultural production and commercialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family, peer and educational commitment and support to creative practitioner lifestyles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of peer-to-peer criticism to hone creative style and/or authorial voice Availability of financial resources Access to clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed local and national audiences (taste communities) Lack of skills in client handling and business management Availability of business support schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure to contemporary and cutting-edge creativity for further development of cultural production Availability of suitably qualified staff to support commercial exploitation of creative practice (i.e. administrators, marketing professionals, sales assistants) Markets to buy or commission work
Finance and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of personal resource and financial support from family Availability of part-time work Time to practice their work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of business start-up loans Access to and awareness of grant-awarding bodies Access to clients Access to subsidiary working opportunities (e.g. arts education, arts administration) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financing and funding applications Use of externals to win funding applications Access to national markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to international markets Competitive economic environment (for cheap wages for support staff)
Spatial requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of space at home to convert into studio Internet access Immersion and experimentation in spaces where creative production not intensively valued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of affordable studio space Ability to obtain start-up grants Proximity to other creative practitioners Availability of local exhibition space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of larger premises Access to cosmopolitan and tolerant creative environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to an inspiring urban and rural environment Transport links to other metropolitan areas and transport gateways (airports, ports, international rail terminals)
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of peers and family that positively support career aspirations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of prizes, competitions and reputable peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure of work to national markets Self-promotion skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure of work to national/international markets Self-promotion skills

Emergence

The key constraints facing emerging creative practitioners are to do with social barriers that affect their exposure and deepening interest to their craft. This includes the presence of peer and family groups to positively support career aspirations, but is also linked to the availability both at a school/college and local level of career role models. Many former graduates of local FE colleges spoke, for instance of the lack of availability of good quality visiting lecturing staff, people at the top of their professions, who could inspire and energise their decisions to work in creative fields. Good links between training providers and role models, business mentors, creative design agencies, were also felt to be underdeveloped and therefore constraining to the career progression and prospects of local students. Many interviewees also felt that employer engagement was lacking. In part, a constraint here is the perceived lack of a critical mass of businesses and willing participants to engage with college students, or recent graduates, who can act as mentors and offer good-quality work experience opportunities. Furthermore, the lack of availability of part-time work is perceived to be a major constraint to those seeking to emerge as creative practitioners. Larger provincial towns and cities can provide a range of part-time and casual jobs in the service sector sufficient to allow the flexible working of creative practitioners. However, this was perceived to be significantly under-developed in the Hastings area, potentially inhibiting the growth of a new generation of native creative practitioners and hence the reproduction of the creative and cultural industries workforce. Other constraints of note are around spatial requirements, for example the availability of space to practice and experiment, a particularly acute problem for creative practitioners from working class backgrounds, and the availability of internet access for research, production and distribution purposes.

Establishment

The predominant constraints facing established creative practitioners involve an increased awareness of the operation of more commercial aspects of their trade, involving skills and management issues, both in terms of financial training, but also client-handling and compromise. A majority of interview participants became established as creative practitioners elsewhere, but common aspects of their career progression at this stage included postgraduate training, some short-course technical training and flexible schemes that would allow them to acquire business skills in a language they could understand. All of these features, if unavailable locally, can act as constraints to career progression. Further to this, establishing creative practitioners may be constrained by a lack of part-time work in subsidiary forms of employment (arts education, arts administration, community arts programming), or face barriers posed by the inaccessibility of business start-up and development loans. Proximity to a critical mass of clients is important for some, although accessing clients further afield is also common, requiring high-speed internet links, a reliable transport infrastructure and e-commerce skills to realise some funding stream via web-based sales and commissions. Spatial aspects are particularly acute at this stage, as many sought to make a transition from home-working to a separate studio space in close proximity to other creative people. Thus the availability of affordable space is an issue, together with an ability to acquire grants and loans for premises improvement and start-up costs. A number of participants also spoke of the need for local exhibition space, a particularly felt issue considering recent local developments at Hastings Pier

and St. Mary's-in-the-Castle, and perceptions of the exclusionary nature of the De La Warr Pavilion to amateur or less well advanced creative practitioners. Access to prizes, competitions and peer reference groups, for issues of status and recognition, were also discussed.

Independent

The stage of independence is linked to business growth, particularly for 'creatives', and for 'culturals' is about developing a commercial element to their practice, and reaching audiences, clients and markets beyond their immediate locale. This stage is therefore outward-looking but intensive in terms of the range of skills and support structures needed at this level. In terms of skills, flexible professional development training courses are required in order to hone skills, acquire new skills (particularly in marketing activities) and in understanding audiences and clients. The availability of management and leadership training, particularly for those who manage others or manage larger enterprises is required. Interviewees discussed a range of courses and programmes they had been involved in, many of which are examples of national best practice, so constraints were not felt in terms of supply. However, nearly all raised concerns about the quality, relevance, and application of professional development programmes. For mid-career 'creatives', similarly accessing relevant and high-quality management and leadership training was an issue. A number of constraints involve macro-economic issues. For example, the supply of suitably qualified administrative, sales and marketing professionals, and the area's position in terms of its accessibility to production and supply chains. This was especially the case for 'creatives', many of whom felt constrained by their office location in the Hastings area, which had led them to seek clients and markets in other locations, due to the perceived lack of certain business opportunities locally. Constraints to the commercial operation of creative practice also included lack of skills in client handling and business management, access to business support schemes, the availability of freelancers to work on short-term projects, and larger space to expand business/creative operations. Many of these factors thus address commercial aspects and the broader business and economic environment.

Professional

Professionals experience a number of similar constraints to independents. However, the scale of their creative practice is often wider, reaching diverse clients and national/international audiences, calling for a slightly different set of conditions to fully realise career ambitions. This level tends to be locally ambivalent, as suggested above, although constraints include elements that can help their creative practice reach higher levels. Exposure to contemporary and cutting-edge creativity has been cited, for the further development of creative and cultural development activities, including proximity to a critical mass of creative practitioners to exchange new ideas. There is a similar concern with accessing markets, both physically and virtually. However, spatial aspects are important to their being in the Hastings area and, as such, an inspiring urban and rural environment is looked for, and where this does not exist or is under threat, it is seen as a barrier to their craft and lifestyle.

4.5 Career progression: key issues

The general and cross-cutting theme throughout these key issues relates to perceived weaknesses in the service sector economy which leads to a number of effects – pricing of community arts, seeking markets in London and elsewhere, pessimism over prospects for growth and development, realisation of stultified career ladders if residing in Hastings. Maintaining vibrancy of the local economy and its contribution to property, space, skills, career development, employment, cultural offer, is key to sustaining the creative process and employment. However, some problems/constraints are at the individual level, to do with the skills possessed by cultural and creatives – elements that can be addressed through local level interventions by a range of organisations.

Clients, markets and the local economy

This was a recurring issue for creative practitioners across the career range. Most of the problems are to do with a sufficient local client base, particularly for start-up businesses, but also for cultural and creatives lower down the career ladder. They commonly recognise a lack of a sizeable market to sustain work in the area, which for some means an over-reliance on work for public agencies and/or a reliance upon part-time work in an associated or non-associated sector. Many recognise the need to develop their work and gain clients from elsewhere in the county (Brighton, Eastbourne, Crawley) and further afield (Tunbridge Wells, Canterbury, Ashford, and London).

“I’m trying to retain a local client base, but the problem down here is that there is not enough large business, so you have to hit other things, like public agencies, which have marketing and advertising needs.”

“Unless you target the large companies locally, you can’t survive, there aren’t enough large companies down here, in terms of who you can target for business. There aren’t enough companies down here who are prepared to spend money. I think local companies down here really struggle. The only way you can survive is to take on work from Tunbridge Wells, Ashford, Brighton and London. They need to increase the industrial bits down here and attract bigger companies...”

Some have remained in Hastings for competitive advantages and have adopted a rational business decision for the location of their workforce. Being in the Hastings area means employers can take advantage of lower wages, and a growing talent pool of creative industries graduates eager to gain experience, either on a project by project basis or through full-time (though short-contract) employment. However, it was also noted that lifestyle decisions are important to their business remaining in the area, foremostly the attraction of the coast and its leisure amenities (golf courses, yacht clubs, countryside, good restaurants, heritage).

“For little start-up companies its great and I think they’re thinking [referring to the Creative Media Centre] is that if we nurture these little start-up companies they become medium or small SMEs or something and then suddenly they’ll want to build an office block in Hastings....In the creative industry you either have lots of small companies and then a small amount of very large companies. The very large companies work for very large companies and Plcs, where they have the wherewithal to do international campaigns and pan-European campaigns. And the big blue chip companies will only work with companies like that. And then it’s very difficult for the medium-sized design agency to fit in because you can’t quite offer what the big boys want and you’re too expensive for most other people. You’re caught in a bit of a, you start to cut prices in the market basically.”

“Being in Hastings is a double-edged sword. Because it is difficult to get quality people. Maybe not now because it’s moved on a bit, but in the early days it was a bit of a desert and it was difficult to get quality people. But on the other hand, we could always be competitive in our salaries. We didn’t have to pay the inflated salaries that you had to pay if you were in London or Sevenoaks or Tunbridge Wells. So we could always play the competitive card when talking to clients because we were based in Hastings.”

“Here, there’s nothing. No jobs. Nothing nothing nothing nothing. I went to the Job Centre and did take a job doing demonstrating in Tescos for a while, which was soul-destroying, and that was the only work available. I was choosy to the extent where I didn’t want to work for less than £5 an hour. But that was pretty much all that was on offer. The situation hasn’t changed. And I’m in a situation at the moment where I need part-time work and I’ve run up very large credit card debts that I’m going to have to pay off. In the past I’ve been able to do it. I’ve had phone calls telling me that it’s alright, as I’ve sold £3000 worth of paintings. That would go a long way towards it. But being here I can’t see where that little lucky break is going to come from. I’ve had [art]work in a café for about a year. I’ve sold two pieces from it. One of which was sold but the person saw it somewhere else anyway. There isn’t a buying public here.”

The lack of a mature local economy is seen as a constraint to the development of employment opportunities, career progression and the local cultural offer. Few cultural producers, particularly those lower down the career spectrum, are able to live on commissions or other voluntarily-related income. For many this is not an immediate problem because they have access to funds that are not dependent upon their commercial success. Whilst the availability of public subsidies, grants for community work and occasional educational tuition exists, they see no need to change

the situation. However, because of the lack of part-time work opportunities to support their practice, particularly for emergent artists, and a sufficient and sizeable cohort of cultural consumers, work in the subsidised sector becomes highly prized for its contribution to their annual income, no matter how small. However, this limits entry to those with the economic capital to support themselves (and their lack of economic imperative may in part undermine the development of a sufficiently big and strong market for cultural products in the local area). This also serves to create a stronger separation between incomers (in the main, well-established creative practitioners with high levels of social and economic capital) and locals who cannot find regular paid employment in any sector.

“I came here thinking, ‘ooh, I’ve done art tuition in the past, these are the things I normally do’, and expected to get things. But it’s a) very very competitive here because there’s a lot of other people who are equally and better qualified than me and I just haven’t bothered with it...I did a mentoring scheme, which was to learn how to mentor people...and I talked about all the silly stuff I do. The problem is I’m not a beginner, I’m not starting out. But at the same time I am having to start over again and you feel very vulnerable in one sense and also stupid because you don’t know this stuff. I’ve got a huge amount of skills and it just annoys me that I’m sitting here doing nothing.”

“There’s huge amounts of things going on down here all the time. Literally five things every day you could do and probably you find out about them a week later...there’s so much on. And everything’s free or very cheap. No one is making any money. And partly it’s because people don’t want anybody to know about it because they don’t want it to become like Brighton. And I think that’s why you have to keep going out of the parish, to see the real world. I wish I had more contacts in London. I think the more successful people, who all do really well down here, all have contacts in London. They do part-time teaching in London, or they have people they sell to in London, or they have galleries that sell their work. And they’ll tell you ‘it’s great living down here’. Yes, it is great, if you have an income coming from somewhere else. It’s very difficult making a living here.”

Individualisation

Individualisation is a sociological term that refers to the disciplining of the individual, their skills and working patterns, to the needs of the market. The common attributes required are for flexibility and entrepreneurship. Not surprisingly, these qualities are highly valued across most creative industries and for some are part of its intrinsic appeal. The independent and professional creative practitioner often has to accept limits imposed on their craft, adopting rational economic decision-making as a means to secure a wage from their creative activity. As alluded to at the beginning, there is a tendency for what we have termed ‘creatives’ to accept and positively work through

this situation more than ‘culturals’. There are good reasons for this. Many ‘culturals’ cited defences of their autonomy and artistic ethos against commercialism, often for political reasons. There is a fear that commercial ambition will overturn intrinsic motivations to work in arts and culture, which are of a higher value.

Arguments are made for the public subsidisation of artists because of their wider contribution to the welfare of the area. For many ‘culturals’ interviewed, the arts bring an extra dimension to life, an intangible quality that nevertheless provides positive externalities and a sense of communal well-being. But most accept that there is an economic relationship to their practice, which has to be finely managed.

“It’s completely hand to mouth. I’ve just managed to pay my rent today, which is three months overdue...I’m getting to the point where I’m fed up of being so broke. I don’t mind being broke because I’ve made my bed and I’ll lie in it, but it just is frustrating. I do a lot of stuff for nothing. And now it’s getting to the point where I do have to start earning money. I’m thousands of pounds in debt and the bank will just squash me like a grape. If anything comes along and jumps on me, I’d be wiped out like that. I’ve got no anchor hold.”

“I’m not in this game for money, but I am in this game for the rest of my life. I don’t intend to do anything else...I owe money to a lot of friends and they trust me, trust my integrity to pay it back. But it’s a bloody nightmare. Because you have the responsibility of someone else’s money on your shoulder. And it’s all very well them trusting me but at the end of the day I can only do as much work as I can do and produce as much as I can do. I’ve got enough tools here to do anything I want. But if I don’t do any work it stops. It doesn’t work itself at all. I’ve got nothing that makes money for me. I don’t have a regular wage. It’s either all or nothing.”

For many, the core problem is a lack of entrepreneurial skill and business acumen, particularly with respect to financial management, business planning and marketing, and project-management. However, even for those who had received some training in these areas, the quality of the education was in doubt, and could be enhanced, they felt, through a curriculum that focused more on vocational skills and business acclimatisation.

“I think what would have been beneficial for the course would be to have people running their own companies coming in and going ‘this is what the real world is like’. Because these students, they just had no idea what people were looking for. I remember one student looking for days on the internet for jobs after the course and he couldn’t correlate his skills set, what he had learned, to what was actually out there...they needed some idea of where to go with the courses afterwards.”

“A lot of people they go through university and then they get out of university and they’ve learnt all these skills, they amazing skills. But they have no comprehension of just how much money it takes to set up a workshop to carry on their skills and it just screws people right over.”

Collaboration and ‘ecologies of interdependence’

“There are people whose creativeness comes from crazy genius, a selfish internalised thing. And that’s not the way I work. My interest comes from communication and communicating messages...I look out a lot more, where others look in a lot more I suppose...I believe you build from sharing, whereas others think you build from keeping ideas and not letting them out.”

The research has enabled us to discern strategic knowledge about the functioning of networks and relationships that sustain the both creative process and employment in the knowledge economy. These relationships enable diverse contributors to move towards the achievement of successful outcomes (whether realised in terms of performances or products). These relationships are sustained in diverse communities of activity, from project-based teams, virtual collaborative arrangements, to less formalised, but nonetheless important, systems of mutual support and independence for freelance and self-employed workers. Clearly, these diverse relationships and networks are managed differently and contribute to the dynamics and development of the creative and cultural industries.

What have been termed ‘ecologies of interdependence’ refers to informal networks and mutual support systems which allow for creative inputs into projects through close knit and often (though not necessarily) geographically ‘clustered’ creative practitioners, who are brought together by a history of collaboration, shared experience and know how. Interpersonal qualities are highly important, particularly trust, friendship and co-operation, which helps to formalise these fluid working dynamics and ensures successful relationships and outcomes. However, from the ‘culturals’ interviewed, and exacerbating the problems mentioned above, there seems to be a reliance upon the entrepreneurial flair and project management skills of a few, leading to a specialisation in roles, functions and working practices.

This suggests that a separate cadre of cultural employment exists: for cultural entrepreneurs who obtain commissions for projects, sub-contractors who manage larger project teams, and consultative or lobbying intermediaries who oil local and regional economic activity and contribute to the ‘cultural ecology’ in their own right. For McRobbie, the presence and centrality of these operators is a new constitutive feature of work in the creative economy.¹⁶ However, constraints to this ecology are felt in terms of an over-reliance, perhaps dependency, on a small number of cultural entrepreneurs, rather than a sharing of such skills among the wider population. This

¹⁶ McRobbie, A. (2002) ‘Clubs to companies: notes on the decline of political culture in speeded up creative worlds’, *Cultural Studies*, 16(4), pp.516-531.

places ‘culturals’ in a dangerous situation, highly reliant upon the continued presence (or replenishment) of such entrepreneurs, and personal relationships remaining strong.

For ‘creatives’ Hastings is attractive in terms of its high-tech connections and proximity to larger areas, where clients and employees can be sourced. They benefit from local connections and good local support and services (e.g. the E-Biz Centre, 1066 Enterprise and ProfitNet) that help ensure they remain competitive. Creative design businesses tend to be a close-knit and tightly connected community of enterprise, which allows for the cross-fertilisation of work, sharing of ideas, peer recognition and joint project-working. The Creative Media Centre fulfils some of these functions, but it does not spread to all, and certainly larger, more well-established, companies feel poorly supported.

“They’re being over backwards to help start-ups and new companies. But if you are an existing company who’ve been struggling to carve out a niche in the creative industries, and based in Hastings for ten years, then you’re totally ignored.”

When pressed on what could be done to help more mature creative design businesses, the participants responded that they would like to see fruitful synergies emerging from the Creative Media Centre, whereby the companies specialise further in terms of their functions and services. This is a strategy for segmentation of the market, differentialisation of function, which, they argue, would alleviate the local market being swamped by businesses offering the same service. Important to this is the development of light industry and other enterprise within the town to support the emergence of different specialisations (e.g. advertising for local retailers, branding and marketing for hospitality, sales literature for light industry). This would allow for greater diversity, both in business and creative terms, and future project working and collaborations with much added value.

Space and regeneration

For many creative and cultural workers, trade-offs are made between lifestyle and rational economic decision-making. For many, particularly ‘professionals’, it would be preferable to live in large metropolitan areas ‘where the action is at’, that possess more in terms of diversity, client base, peer networks and high quality retail. However, whilst these features are present in the Hastings area, in certain locations and at certain times, other factors are important to their continued presence – other like-minded individuals, cultural heritage, visual architecture, lower costs of living (compared to London), recreational and environmental amenities, and international galleries (De La Warr Pavilion). Furthermore, there is access to local art schools, affordable work/live studio space, and other training providers for further development needs. These elements are important to the ability of the area to attract and retain a core of creative industries professionals, and were mentioned as significant reasons for their continued presence in the area.

The presence of culturals and creatives is perceived to contribute to regeneration, in terms of property renovation, conversion of light industrial space, and inviting other incomers to the area. However, there is some scepticism, if not hostility, to the

decisions made by property developers and the regeneration company (Sea Space), particularly where arts and culture are concerned.

“I get a feeling the Council have quite low aspirations for Hastings. They don't really see stuff is changing anyway and the trick is not to have artificial regeneration overnight that creates lots of jobs for chambermaids but not just to fuck up the place so that it's so ugly that no other new artists wish to move here. We need cheap studio space so if you knock down cheap industrial studio space and replace it with flats no new artists are gonna move to the town.”

“It's the centre of an area considered needing regeneration and what they're going to do is get a public artist in from somewhere else, really bad taste public art, and stick something up. It's pointless spending money on that. It almost becomes an emblem of a downtrodden area. 'At least they've got their artwork I see'. And then you go away and leave the artwork to get dusty. None of the problems are solved at their heart.” (a comment on the King's Road area in St Leonards)

“The jargon that Sea Space come out with, it's all about outcomes. You create jobs and you save jobs and you attract X number of businesses and spend X amount in Hastings. I'm not interested...it's so non-understanding about anything that's going on here and it's typical of Sea Space. They can't make a connection between running a studio and this town being regenerated. They don't understand that people who take an interest in visual arts at a fairly sophisticated level are the kind of people who will make a difference in Hastings....Arty people are attracted to a place like Hastings because it's relatively underdeveloped, its cheap enough to buy a nice place, and there are some interesting arty things going on here and interesting artists down here and that creates a buzz. And these people bring people down here. That's how it works. It's a fundamental fact....You can't really put that into figures....It's a bit like explaining the theory of relativity to a dog.”

Governance issues

Following the criticisms made about space and regeneration, and the interventions of the local authority and regeneration agency in the development of the town and its creative and cultural industries, a number of concerns were raised about the leadership of these bodies and how much they listen to their core constituency. For others, there is a problem of the level of competency and ambition of key stakeholders and agents who have a responsibility and interest in the development of the creative and cultural industries.

“I think that the Council is a dead duck. If you don’t have backing from the main body then you’re bashing your head against a brick wall. And always it’s ‘oh, they only do art’, ‘it’s just to pass the time’, that sort of scenario. Whereas they could make it into quite a centre. And there is a lot of talent down here. And it’s just this thing about people coming and telling you to do professional development. But where do you take it? It’s like putting you in a boat. You’re going across the water to the other island. And just before you get there it’s too deep to walk. And really it needs to have somebody to coordinate all the groups down here and make this a centre for things like fairs, renting a wall for a week, so you have that continual turnover.”

“I think there’s a general mentality...If you’ve got a really gifted child, just naturally gifted, because I think Hastings has all of the elements to be an absolutely really excitingly fantastically culturally rich place. It’s got those elements there. You’ve got this child that’s got all the gifts it needs to be the most successful person on the planet but it lacks just a little bit of ambition, actually quite a lot of ambition, and a little bit of courage. And they’ve got parents that want to protect it, that just want to see that it’s safe, so they have no real ambition for it either. And they just don’t make use of the talents that they’ve got because they do the minimum they have to do to make sure that they’re happy and they succeed. And they end up, once they’ve grown up, they end up in an OK job, earning just enough to pay for a mortgage on an OK house that’s just big enough to accommodate for the family and just feed a family but they’re OK and they’re happy and they’re a perfectly nice person, but when you think what that person could have been...and how do you change that? Because I don’t think the ambition is really there....You’ll get people who’ll recognise those attributes in the place and get excited about it and after a while their enthusiasm will wane, it will maybe come back again, but they’re just pockets of enthusiasm, and at the moment it’s how do you make it more than a pocket of enthusiasm. And you can only do that by installing it into the community as whole, the way of thinking of parents, which actually is the council, people who have the power to implement things – policy – but the community is the wayward child who is only doing the minimum that they have to do. To get along. It’s got these gifts that make things easy enough so it doesn’t have to excel any further than that. But it’s just a waste.”

The second main governance issue surrounds levels of support and intervention to aid the autonomous practices and workings of culturalists. Some academics, commentators and politicians have argued for macro-level initiatives to support a fully creative

society through state intervention. Reduced working time and provision of a substantial basic income, independent of waged work, have been mooted. However, whilst these are policies that can only be made on a nation-wide basis, there are specific interventions that can be made locally, which were suggested by interview participants. Foremost among these is to develop a strong 'third sector' of autonomous, multi-skilled activities and services. This is already occurring. Organisations like Creative Partnerships, Project Art Works and UCH are responding to a local need for community-based interventions that encourage creativity amongst all members of society. Plans for further activity and initiatives to increase the capacity of the 'third sector' to provide this agenda are being made, for example through the provision of specialist, postgraduate level qualifications and the recently established presence of the University of Brighton's Community University Partnership Project in Hastings and Bexhill. UCH, CUPP and other partners have a clear role to play here in improving the efficacy of projects and community-level 'micro-experiments' by improving and maintaining the level of research and evaluation involved with such projects, sharing expertise and disseminating best practice.

Overall, the data on FE provision suggest that the education and training offer in relation to the cultural sector is now quite well developed. Many young people see courses in this area as attractive. The problems affecting training and education in relation to the creative and cultural sector relate more to the lack of dynamism in the local economy. As is shown elsewhere placement opportunities are seen as limited and many new entrants to the cultural sector (in particular) feel that after their training they have to migrate or commute away from Hastings and Bexhill.

4.6 Career progression in tourism

Many of the tourism entrepreneurs are incomers attracted by cheap hotels and guest houses. They are often on their second or third careers, and many see this as their last career prior to retirement. Investment decisions are made as much on the basis of lifestyle choice as commercial opportunism, with relatively cheap properties available in the Hastings area. However, career progression aspirations, certainly in terms of business development and expansion (and thus the ability to take on labour and replenish and grow the workforce) is hampered by low average achieved room rates and the lack of a vibrant local economy, capable of attracting and retaining a variety of tourists and consumers. As such, a proportion of their time is taken up with lobbying local stakeholders to recognise the need for significant additional investment in Hastings and Bexhill, which is crucial to the ability of the area to attract large numbers of tourists. There is a divide locally, however, between those who feel new investment should focus on supporting 'family' attractions aimed at holidaying visitors and those who feel the emphasis should be on expanding the Hastings offer for short stay more culturally oriented visitors.

Decisions for career change

The decision to undertake a career change was, for the majority, motivated by frustrations with their previous jobs and the desire to seek new challenges. The majority of those interviewed were from professional jobs (trading standards officer,

local authority officer, librarian, military, museum curator) or long-term vocations (railway driver, journalist), all of which had established career structures and pathways. Thus the change was posited in terms of bravery of breaking out of a convention, but also a desire to escape routines that no longer provided satisfaction. These career change decisions were also affirmed by wider lifestyle decisions, many of which came out of distinctions made between the pace of life in coastal Sussex and other metropolitan areas. As the following quotes testify:

“Maybe it’s a time of life thing. I’m just over 40 and thought ‘hmm, do I want to be doing this 9 to 5?’ I was taking lots of work home as well and never really doing it either and there was always this thing of work hanging over me. I was never conscious that I was doing enough or doing it right or having to think about what’s coming into the office and not being particularly enthused by what I was doing.”

“We came down a lot of weekends and I just didn’t like going back on a Sunday night or Monday morning; Hastings had a grip on us, very quickly actually. We just liked the relaxed atmosphere down here. I was manageable, friendly and easy for London.”

As such, the decision to become involved in tourism enterprise as a vocation must be seen in terms of horizontal progression, at least for the majority of incomers to this sector in the town. The decision to relocate career is not done without recourse to previous learned capacities. Skills and experiences accumulated during pre-tourism careers are considered as significant transferable resources, deployed to enable a range of business functions to be fulfilled. This might include ‘soft’ skills such as self-discipline, teamwork and sociability, or ‘harder’ skills such as marketing, knowledge of grant application procedures and basic finance. However, whilst tourism enterprise workers tend to be highly skilled, both in terms of their formal academic qualifications and level of experience in previous jobs, particular skills gaps remain, primarily around business functions, e.g. financial management, managing change, working with others. The transition to new careers was not painless. Expectations of levels of service often did not match new found realities and the quality of staff encountered was often poor. This latter experience was seen as a feature of the tourism and hospitality industry generally compared to originator careers and levels of social skill for service industry workers in Hastings and Bexhill in particular.

“...we learnt how not to run a hotel...I mean it was dire, extremely reluctant to change. I mean they sort of accepted things we did, like we went no smoking and they accepted that they had to go outside and smoke, but they thought we were Quakers or something because of this; we got rid of the fruit machines as well, the first thing we did was to get rid of the fruit machine and cigarette machine, because we’ve got kids, we wanted to be family friendly. So they thought we were Quakers.”

“...the trainer from Tourism South East was horrified by our staff. I think she trained six or seven. Two of them are fine, but she was horrified by the rest. They were uncommunicative and didn't engage with the training...they had no sort of ambition or understanding of other things.”

Given understandings that the market for tourism and hospitality in the Hastings area is changing, a fact that often contributed to decisions to invest in the area, tourism enterprise owners were keen to possess highly skilled and social staff, and businesses that made use of unique selling points, a number of which focused upon improved customer care standards (e.g. by offering gourmet breakfasts, free telephone calls, broadband internet access, quality bath towels, large bath sheets, tea and coffee on arrival). These business decisions were supported through access to a range of business support services and peer groups, whose expertise was used and was highly regarded (e.g. E-Biz Centre, ProfitNet, 1066 Enterprise, local authority officers, Hastings and St Leonards Tourism and Hotels Association). These networks and services helped to bring positive benefits, in terms of raising awareness of the daily routine of running a tourism enterprise before an investment decision was made (e.g. taking bookings, servicing rooms, preparing and ordering food, dealing with complaints); in the range of maintenance activities that would be required (e.g. odd jobs, laundry) and business improvements that could be made to help improve facilities and service standards (e.g. website, internet access, upgrade rooms to en suite, marketing and promotion). Furthermore, the networks and services helped with access to and the securing of grants and loans for business improvement; many of the interviewees had taken advantage of this.

Consuming and marketing Hastings

Most tourist enterprises recognised that the local holiday market has changed, and with it people's expectations of the area in terms of its tourist, hospitality and cultural offer. However, there are differences of opinion as to who is attracted to the short break market, which leads to different views on the utility of current assets and the development of new ones. The views are split between three of the four markets identified in the Sussex Arts Marketing Cultural Mapping report which identified distinct markets for tourists: *heritage tourism* (Old Town, heritage fishing fleet, museums, and established festivals), *cultural tourism* (performance and visual arts, sport and recreation, shopping and eating), and *traditional seaside visitors* (amusement daytrippers, weekenders).¹⁷

“What is it about Hastings that makes it special? It's its culture, it's the fact that it's a place which has got hundreds of artists living in it that makes it dynamic, funky, bohemian. It's its architecture, which I think is quite extraordinary. It's its seaside cultural history, festivals and events, and the stuff we take for granted, like its beautiful scenery, parks and open spaces.”

¹⁷ Sussex Arts Marketing and Colin Mercer (2006) *Hastings and Bexhill Cultural Mapping*

“Why do people come to Hastings? They say to me, ‘they come to see this or that, see the fishing boats’, but I say ‘no they don’t’. They don’t come to see the fishing boats, that’s just twenty minutes walk around. When you look at these programmes on television, like Coastguard Watch or whatever, they’re always filmed in Torquay or Newquay, where there are lovely sandy beaches. If we had a lovely sandy beach, why can’t we build a part of the beach to be sandy? A kind of horseshoe shape for the beach, with parasols, sand, and a small charge to keep out the winos and dog walkers. You’d get a lot more people come down, perhaps if it’s only for 6 weeks a year.”

“...we’re selling expensive or fairly expensive rooms to people for short breaks, two or three nights. We don’t imagine for a second that we’re gonna get families coming here for two weeks. Some of the other hoteliers still think Hastings needs a big tourist attraction. Well, families don’t go to Hastings, they go to Spain because it’s cheaper. We’re never gonna be as cheap as Spain, never gonna be as sunny as Spain. It’s just not gonna happen. They can’t let go of the fact that what they need to do is go much more upmarket and invest in their properties and change their names and make themselves much more a boutique bed and breakfast, or boutique hotels, because that’s where the market is.”

As a result, most tourism entrepreneurs thought it important for Hastings, St Leonards and Bexhill to commit to a high-quality and mixed level consumption offer. This can be divided into recommendations about catering businesses and retail. Of the former, whilst some understand the appeal of “grungy” catering businesses, recommendations have been made to improve the quality of these establishments. The quality of pubs, cafes and restaurants tends to be low, the interviewees argued, which reflects the failure of the town to attract visitors willing to pay better prices for better food. A couple of guest house owners argued for a revised approach to the retail offer which needs to be matched by a similarly revised offer from caterers, to ensure that there is a greater variety and quality of choice for those attracted by boutique shopping and emerging cultural production in the town. Above all, this demand was also motivated by the understanding that visitors need to spend money in order for the local economy to grow.

“It’s fine somebody coming down and putting money in slot machines and having chips but actually we want them to go to the nice restaurants and spend money in the shops.”

Where retail is concerned, claims were made that there is currently a dearth of appropriate retail outlets in Hastings and Bexhill. The major chains in the town centre (Marks & Spencer, Debenhams) have small outlets that are no match for the better retail offer from the originator towns of most visitors (Tunbridge Wells, Guildford, London, etc.), while there are few boutique/bohemian shops of the type found in Brighton and, increasingly, other weekend destinations. Similarly, some felt the town

to lack retail in certain areas (e.g. men's clothes shops, shoe shops, small hardware shops, decorators merchants) and is blighted by charity shops, junk shops and bric-a-brac shops, which leads to a shabby down-at-heal appearance and does not contribute to spend in the area.

“...people like shopping, we haven't quite got enough nice shops yet...we've got loads of shops but they haven't got anything in them...the Old Town does, but there's not enough of it...we need more independent, more boutiquey, more gifty shops, lifestyle type shops which appeal to different markets of people.”

“...Whitstable's got far less than Hastings. Its' got a much more shee shee image with all these little sort of gifty shops and that kind of seasidey sort of yachting stuff, which appeals to that kind of person. Pleasure shopping. Wandering around looking and browsing type of shopping, rather than going into DH Evans or Debenhams.”

One hotel owner suggested that a more directive approach be taken by public agencies. It was suggested that there is little point in trying to compete for regional flagship shopping (which can be done elsewhere). Rather, there is a need to promote new small craft and arts shops that, collectively, attract visitors while also providing a better outlet for local cultural producers. The owner suggested Sea Space and other partners should put further efforts into acquiring retail space and prescribing the tenant mix. Furthermore, marketing and publicity gains could be made if a retail area is opened as a whole rather than independent businesses opening when ready.

However, although tourism enterprise business owners realised that their businesses will prosper from a strong local consumption offer that has a mixture of outlets for different markets, this did not necessarily translate into a demand for more of an arts and cultural offer per se. One hotel owner questioned whether the arts are particularly visible, especially in the context of recent gallery and performance space closures. Furthermore, most felt as though existing assets, particularly around cultural heritage, were more marketable.

Aspects for improvement – tolerance and tackling prejudice

The marketability of the area however is offset in the minds of tourism enterprise owners by longstanding perceptions and experience of social problems. Hastings is currently a largely closed society and economy in which prejudice can flourish and a number of new tourism enterprise owners have experienced problems in these terms.

“The pink pound hasn't hit Hastings as much as it could do. I don't think there's a gay venue in Hastings itself. There's the naturist beach, which is really popular with gay people, in Fairlight. That got a mention as best UK naturist beach...This is where Hastings is different. I don't think we've caught up with the rest of the country on the gay, homophobia thing. There's kids in town who shout

‘gayboys!’, but you don’t expect that anymore. Not as much. And when it happens it’s shocking. I feel for the language school students and anyone who’s not got a white face. It’s still pretty prevalent down here, still prejudiced.”

“...we’ve found a lot of Hastings residents, locals, our staff or other regulars, were coming in and saying ‘ooh, drugs’. And they’ve got no idea because they’ve never lived anywhere else, they’ve got no idea of what anyone else is like. They have an over-negative view of the town. But rather than just keep quiet about it, they go on and on about it.”

Any development of the local economy therefore needs to be accompanied by sustained work by the local authority and others to overcome this prejudice and allow a more tolerant society to develop. UCH can support this in a number of ways, not least by researching the issues at the micro-local level and ensuring that there are adequate and appropriate training and education programmes to develop and sustain the support services that will be required to effect this transformation. Greater tolerance is also likely to result from creating a more meritocratic economy in which there is education and training available to local people that is appropriate to the local labour market. It is clear from the views above that a lot of work needs to be done with local business leaders, residents and education providers to stamp out prejudice and intolerance and to foster greater cultural understanding.

5 Key Findings and Issues

The project aims set out at the start of this report were:

- To contribute to developing research capacity in Hastings and Bexhill with a specific focus on workforce development in the creative, cultural and tourism sectors;
- To advise on the development of appropriate initiatives to enhance the role education and training for the creative, cultural and tourism sector in Hastings and Bexhill.

5.1 Area 1: Research Capacity

Richard Florida argues that universities can act as a powerful creative hub in regional development, through promoting a tolerant local economy that is able to capture and absorb increasingly globalised flows of technology and talent.¹⁸ There is thus a symbiosis required between the university and the local economy, where the university can generate and catalyse cutting edge knowledge and technologies and the local economy can absorb and apply them to underpin local and regional development. On the university's part this requires a vibrant research and development culture, as well as a strong presence in the cultural fabric of the community. For the community and the local economy this means generating a ready supply of highly skilled labour and business able to capitalise on the work of the university.

This project has demonstrated that capacity exists to apply new and complex approaches to data collection that can generate the type of cutting edge knowledge envisaged by Florida. This knowledge indicates that, while the broad picture of workforce development in the creative, cultural and tourism economy of Hastings and Bexhill may be understood, there are areas in which a lack of full comprehension may be leading to inappropriate or ineffective policies and policy implementation. There are, equally, many beneficial aspects of Florida's vision that have yet to be achieved, particularly in terms of building strong links to the cultural fabric of the community.

Sector Structure

The sector in Hastings and Bexhill can be divided into three sub-sectors: creatives; cultural; and tourism; in addition, there are other sectors that are important to the cultural economy, especially agents and intermediaries; and retail and catering businesses:

- Creatives: largely the new digital media businesses in the town; these are small to medium enterprises, highly entrepreneurial and well linked into local, regional and national/transnational markets. They have strong links with the

¹⁸ Florida, R., Gates, G., Knudsen, B. and Stolarick, K. (2006) *The University and the Creative Economy*. Available from www.creativeclass.org

Innovation Centre and are becoming graduate employers and thus wanting to have closer links with UCH (some of these entrepreneurs are locals themselves). They do not really see themselves as part of the creative sector, but instead see themselves as part of a new high-speed knowledge-driven economy in which Hastings and Bexhill is attractive as a cheap place to live in a marketplace that is largely virtual. However, they do benefit from local connections and good local support and services (the E-Biz Centre, 1066 and ProfitNet, for example) that help ensure that they remain competitive. There is a role for HCAT and UCH in this area, particularly through research and consultancy services, as well as support for the innovation centre, the rapid copyright facility.

- **Culturals:** visual and performing arts, film making, etc; these tend to be highly conservative, with a focus on winning public grant funding for their work. Many of those in the sector are on second or retirement jobs, where lifestyle dominates. Few expect to live from their work, instead using family money, capital released from house downsizing, and grants. The culturals are strongly represented on local forums and interest groups and hold a lot of sway with the Council. Their main requirements appear to be for appropriate (and cheap) studio and exhibition/performance spaces, although it is already apparent that they cannot use all the spaces that currently exist. The culturals are not really employers, although there may be spin-off work servicing their needs (art materials, technicians, etc). The culturals see Hastings (but not necessarily Bexhill) as a nice place to live, and believe that they can be part of the regeneration of the town, by attracting cultural tourism. While this aspiration is shared by the Council and the tourism sector, there is little yet to suggest that Hastings is widely recognised as a cultural destination, although the De Le Warr Pavilion has started to change this situation;
- **Tourism businesses:** mainly hotels/guest houses and some restaurants /pubs/ bars. They are grimly holding on for the cultural tourism boom to begin while, in the meantime, facing very low occupancy rates and a highly price-sensitive market. Like the culturals, the tourism trade is involved in local improvement efforts, through belonging to forums and panels, although this is largely for networking purposes as they do not share any business information and there is limited incentive to collectivise activities such as marketing (because of the internet). Many of the tourism entrepreneurs are incomers, often attracted by the cheap prices and potential for development. They know, however, that without significant additional investment in tourist infrastructure, there is little to tempt large numbers of tourists to Hastings. There is a divide locally, however, between those who feel new investment should focus on supporting 'family' attractions aimed at holidaying visitors and those who feel the emphasis should be on expanding the Hastings and Bexhill offer for short stay more culturally oriented visitors. This means that, despite recent investments in the Zanzibar and White Rock Hotel, there are not yet major employers in tourism, particularly of graduate or skilled staff, although they do offer limited low-paid service employment (which is sometimes taken up by those struggling to find a way into the cultural sector).

- Agents and intermediaries: it is apparent that Hastings and Bexhill are poorly serviced in terms of the entrepreneurial services typically provided by agents and other intermediaries such as gallery and exhibition space owners. There is a common concern expressed by the cultural producers that there is a lack of sales opportunities and an under-developed consumption culture in the towns, which means that they have to look elsewhere if they are to sell their work. This is in contrast to gallery and exhibition space owners, who find that it is often hard to fill their spaces, especially in winter. Indeed two galleries in the old town have recently closed. Some of the tourism traders also suggest that the lack of intermediaries is an issue, with exhibitions and other events hard to put on if there are few direct links to the producers.
- Retail businesses: there are claims that there is currently a dearth of appropriate retail in Hastings and Bexhill. The major chains in the town centre (Marks & Spencer, Debenhams) have small outlets that are no match for the better retail offer from the originator towns of most visitors (Tunbridge Wells, Guildford, London, etc), while there are few boutique/bohemian shops of the type found in Brighton and, increasingly, other weekend destinations. The tourism businesses, in particular, feel that this needs to change: there is little point in trying to compete for regional flagship shopping (which can be done elsewhere), they argue; rather, there is a need to promote new small craft/arts shops that, collectively, attract visitors while also providing a better outlet for local cultural producers. It has been suggested that Sea Space and other partners should continue to work together to provide a better consumer experience, for improvements to the public realm to be made, and marketing initiatives to reflect this offer.
- Catering businesses: the (generally low) quality of current pubs, cafes and restaurants reflects the failure of the town to attract visitors willing to pay better prices for better food. However, a revised approach to the retail offer needs to be matched by a similarly revised offer from caterers, to ensure that there is a greater variety and quality of choice for those attracted by boutique shopping and emerging cultural production in the town.

There is some evidence of cross-sector working developing in Hastings and Bexhill. Typically this involves utilising cultural and creative skills with those of business. Examples include: web designers and graphic artists collaborating; fashion designers working with photographers; digital artists working with craftspeople. However, such ‘transaction-rich’ associations are rare although ProfitNet may be changing this situation by promoting networking that is seen as generating economically valuable outputs.

Career Progression

Career progression tends to follow the sectoral lines set out above:

- Creatives: tend to comprise a mix of locals and incomers. All are attracted by the mix of cheap property and good visual architecture, while their work tends to be sourced locally and elsewhere. Many of the creative producers are well educated and have gone into the creative sector as a rational business decision.

They tend to seek to expand their businesses (through employing others) and many are now becoming established as successful medium sized enterprises in the town. Both the entrepreneurs and the employed in this sector tend to be rational profit maximisers who have good business reasons for being in the town and seek to develop their markets both in the town and elsewhere.

- **Culturals:** this is a much less commercial sector, with family influence and inherited money being more important than business success as determinants of career choice. Again, the move to Hastings (outsiders being the dominant group in this sector) has often been catalysed by the visual architecture and cheap property, although some cultural workers have also benefited from setting up shared work/living and exhibition spaces. For many, shared studio space is part of the 'authentic' artistic lifestyle that they are seeking. However, few cultural producers earn much from their work, and no producer that we found can live entirely from sales and commissions alone. For most, cultural production is supported by work in other sectors (typically education, retail, tourism), underpinning the need for all sectors of the local economy to develop if cultural production in the town is to continue to grow and flourish. This makes entry to the sector particularly difficult for new entrants, where the lack of income from within the sector is not currently compensated by the opportunities for work in the other sectors of the local economy.
- **Tourism:** many of the tourism entrepreneurs are incomers attracted by cheap hotels and guest houses. They are often on their second or third careers, and many see this as their last career prior to retirement (perhaps combined with some continued work in the sector, through guest house or B&B provision). While the property is cheap, maintenance, renovation and marketing costs are high and RevPar/rooms yield is low, meaning that returns to the sector tend to be poor at the moment. This limits the ability of the tourism sector to expand or to employ many local people.

Entry to Employment

Progression and entry to employment is currently poor for many of those who live in Hastings and Bexhill. While revision to the 16+ education offer in the town has sought to address poor progression, it remains the case that, in some parts of the town, four generations of the same family have now failed to gain regular paid employment. This was a point made forcibly by the Casino Advisory Panel in its report on Hastings' application for a casino licence: that there is little apparent sustained attempt to bring the hardest to reach sections of the population into employment.¹⁹ There are some examples of good practice such as the Bridge and Horizons but the problems of deprivation and poor educational achievement remain at a level well above that found in the South East region.

The evidence suggests that the post 16 education and training offer in the arts and hospitality study areas is now quite well developed. Some employers, however, question if young learners in arts and hospitality are receiving training in the enterprise skills required to compete in this sector. Indeed, even for those who have

¹⁹ DCMS. *Full Report of the Casino Advisory Panel*, 2007

progressed through the education system, opportunities are limited. There are claims that work experience and work placements rarely lead to job contracts, even on a temporary basis. This tends to undermine the value that students place on the local education offer, and leads them to look elsewhere – Brighton and London are mentioned most - for work experience and permanent work contracts. It is noted, in this context, that both Brighton and London offer new entrants the opportunity for low paid part-time cultural and creative work supported by the plentiful supply of service sector jobs (especially retail and hospitality) available locally. This is contrasted with Hastings and Bexhill, where such jobs are in relatively short supply.

Skills Shortages

It is widely noted that many cultural producers lack digital skills, particularly related to creative practice. This limits their ability to exploit new forms of marketing and communication, while also hampering their ability to develop sound business skills and practices. This is often allied to a lack of entrepreneurial skill, particularly with respect to marketing and communication. The impacts of these skills shortages are further exacerbated by the lack of an effective intermediary stratum in Hastings and Bexhill, with cultural producers forced to turn to the voluntary sector (largely amateur self-help groups, societies and associations), where the advice and practice is not necessarily consistent with good commercial practice.

Public, Educational and Voluntary Sector Administration

Rightly or wrongly, there are many concerns that the local community is poorly served, in relation to the cultural industries, by its principal administrative institutions. There is a widely held view that Hastings Borough Council (HBC) does not understand – and does not appear to value - social and cultural regeneration. In part this is related to a new (Conservative) administration and fears that the social aspects of cultural regeneration (how it feeds into education, housing, inclusion, consumption) are not fully understood in the new political agenda. The evidence on FE take-up, however, suggests that despite this situation young people view arts and hospitality training as useful to their futures and enrolments locally in these subject areas are above the national average.

In addition, concerns were expressed that the administrative organisation of HBC, which had – prior to summer 2007 - split responsibility for arts and culture between various departments (e.g. arts vs. regeneration), led the Council to be ineffective in terms of its understanding of the sector and connection to local, regional and national contexts. This issue was, in effect, cited by the Casino Advisory Panel as the prime reason why Hastings was not considered suitable as the site for a small casino:

The approach of the Borough Council to training is commendable, but we see in their proposal little that impresses us as to real understanding of social problems, nor in bringing hard to reach groups into employment.
(Casino Advisory Panel, 2007: para 308).

Despite the reorganisation, there is still a widespread concern that the council is inward-looking and misses the broader impacts and opportunities of being at a European frontier, despite the FE college offering an International Baccalaureate.

Indeed, many in Hastings and Bexhill suggest that it is not the bohemian tolerant society that it seems, but instead is avowedly intolerant of difference (especially race and ethnicity).

A similar concern is expressed about the key FE and HE provision in the town: that it is too remote from local society and the local and regional economy. In part, this certainly reflects the mistrust that people feel over the LSC decision to reform 6th form and FE provision in Hastings and Bexhill. However, it goes deeper, with a sense that there is a lack of communication between the local authority and the education providers, such that the real needs of local people are not taken sufficiently into account when the provision is determined. An example of this is a widely held claim that HCAT does not do enough to link study at the college with post-college work opportunities (it is also apparent that the college does little to maintain links with its alumni, although they could be a good source of first jobs, apprenticeships and the like).

There is some concern about the role of UCH in the regeneration of Hastings and Bexhill. Few creative businesses appear to see the value of engaging with UCH for anything other than networking opportunities. Of particular concern is that few businesses or entrepreneurs associate UCH with innovation, ideas incubation or brokerage. Indeed, when asked about cutting edge technologies and talent, most businesses identified the Innovation Centre, where appropriate spaces and support are available to new businesses as the hub of activity in the area. Other groups of residents that meet regularly for education related reasons also stressed that UCH had yet to fulfil and publicise the potential use of its facilities for community education purposes.

Against this background, there is a strong voluntary and educational sector that has a nascent cultural vision for the town and how it should develop. Typical of this is the Hastings and St Leonards Excellence Cluster, which is a well developed brokerage network working with schools and colleges, in which creative and cultural programmes are sometimes used for developing confidence, team building and the like. However, this has resulted in a lot of pressure being placed on local employers, who are inundated with requests for work experience, suggesting that the business community does not yet have the capacity to service a growing teaching and learning community.

5.2 Area 2: Appropriate Education and Training Provision for Hastings

Provision of education in the creative, cultural and tourism sectors

The level of education provision, particularly in the FE sector, is reasonable and improving. Both Bexhill College and HCAT enjoy a good reputation and offer a broad range of programmes and qualifications in the creative, cultural and tourism sectors. There is also expanding HE provision, with UCH due to commence an M level programme for the creative sector. It is also apparent that many learners in Hastings and Bexhill and the surrounding areas feel that the creative, cultural and tourism sectors offer good or acceptable career opportunities. Indeed, it is important to note that Hastings and Bexhill's FE provision in these sectors draws a significant number of learners from outside the towns.

However, there is at present a lack of employment and work opportunities in the sectors, particularly for the less skilled and experienced graduates of both FE and HE provision. Apart from questions about the capacity of the local economy to absorb large numbers of workers, there is concern amongst employers (and some students) in Hastings and Bexhill that the current FE and, to some extent, HE offer is not quite what is required. There are two aspects to this:

- applicability of the education programmes to the job opportunities that are available;
- the work-readiness of those who have been through the education programmes.

Applicability of Educational Programmes

For the foreseeable future, first employment opportunities for creative and cultural work are largely in the commercial creative sector. Many of these opportunities involve advertising, marketing, public relations, web design and other forms of visual and creative communication. While such programmes are offered, particularly at the FE level, there is a concern expressed by students and employers that the programmes are too narrow and specific, and lack the types of transferable skill currently required for entry to employment. It should be noted that this does not prevent these courses being proportionately more popular in Hastings and Bexhill than nationally. Many employers comment that they have not been involved in advising on programme development, and feel that the current offer does not meet their requirements. Some interviewees in the education and business advice sector feel this situation will change in the light of improved employer engagement arrangements. Nevertheless, the same accusations have been levelled at UCH, particularly in terms of a lack of engagement locally, as well as a failure to undertake thorough market research. It is noted that this is being addressed, and that the new U/G and P/G offer in digital media is much more related to the requirements of the local market.

More broadly, there is a concern that few creative educational programmes yet teach students enough about entrepreneurship and the dynamics of self-employment and business start-ups. Yet there are relatively few opportunities in the sector for long-term secure and rewarding employment. Indeed, it is the expectation in many parts of the creative and cultural industries that self-employment, even within co-operative environments, is the norm for established producers (often within a very few years of entering the sector).

Work-Readiness of Students

There is general employer concern about the work-readiness of students on vocational programmes, at FE and HE levels. This reflects widespread experience that many of the skills that are taught are not sufficiently transferable to be genuinely useful in the workplace (students being experienced in one version of Photoshop, for example, but without the skills to use other versions of this software, or other types of image manipulation software). There is also a concern that few students on vocational

programmes are actually ready for the workplace. This is often associated with their lack of preparation for dealing with the stresses of work life. It is also a reflection that many programmes are out of touch, as the commercial market moves a lot quicker than education can respond. This suggests that there is a greater need for communication and co-ordination between employers, HCAT and UCH, to ensure that the material being taught is appropriate and that it is being taught in ways that prepare students for the workplace.

Provision of training in the creative, cultural and tourism sectors

In common with the education offer in Hastings and Bexhill, the business training and support services are in place, are widely well regarded and are considered to be effective. Organisations such as ProfitNet, Sussex Enterprise, 1066 Enterprise and (when it was operational) CIBAS are all felt by small businesses to be an important resource in the towns, while voluntary sector groups such as the Hastings Arts Forum also provide valuable support to the cultural sector.

Despite this, there are issues to be addressed. These include better support being made available for the step from education and training into work. Entry to employment is not helped in Hastings and Bexhill by the lack of attention paid to providing students with careers information advice, skills, and insight into the career fields they are considering. The key institutions in the training and careers advice field may feel they have made considerable advances recently but there is a perception amongst many that much more needs to be done, for example, by working with alumni and employers. Alumni can be asked to come back and talk to current students, arrange visits to their work places, map out study and career routes that they and other graduates have taken. These kinds of activities are essential to encourage students to stay in the creative and cultural sectors, and to understand how others have created career paths for themselves in the local area, and elsewhere.

There is also a need for better labour force intelligence, to improve the identification of skills gaps and shortages. Some of the issues relate to strategies and priorities for the local area, not all of which are the same across the different organizations (the pressures for some organizations to conform to national priorities are such that they do not have much choice or leeway at the local level). Each training provider appears to have their own approach to identifying gaps and needs; this work is certainly not co-ordinated across providers. A number of training providers are simultaneously employers (for example, Zap Art, White Rock Theatre, Creative Partnerships). This, of course, makes identifying gaps and needs easier, particularly from the employers' perspective.

Among CPD providers the main approach to the identification of gaps and needs seems to be by requesting and receiving feedback from their creative and cultural clients. This really amounts to working without hard evidence. There are clearly problems with consulting only those clients who come to an organisation for CPD provision or business support, with a common concern being expressed that it is the same small group of creative and cultural producers who receive the lion's share of the support services. This approach does not address the needs of those who are not accessing the services on offer, nor does it necessarily address the needs of those who

cease making use of the services after their first visit, due to the offer not meeting their needs.

Many in the cultural sector (who are often in mid to late career) wish to make the leap from amateur to professional, and make their artistic work the centre of their work focus. Once again support and guidance is needed here, particularly from cultural mentors, so that each cultural worker can learn from the mistakes of others. An employer, when asked about skills and gaps said, “There is not so much a skills gap as a skills hole”. This was referring to the lack of skills by local cultural workers to engage with employers, to be part of a project, work in a team, come across as professional.

Higher Education and the Local Economy

There is clearly a range of cultural and creative production happening in Hastings and Bexhill, but much of it happens in isolation, from other cultural production and, critically, from the education and training provision that is available. There are very few opportunities for new entrants to get started in most fields of cultural production, with few explicit links between education and work and the few employers who do offer work experience being swamped with requests for work. Indeed, few cultural producers are able to live on commissions or other vocationally-related income. For some, this is not an immediate problem because they have access to funds that are not dependent upon their commercial success. However, this again limits entry to those with the economic capital to support themselves (and their lack of economic imperative may in part undermine the development of a sufficiently big and strong market for cultural products in the local area). This also serves to create a stronger separation between the middle class incomers and the locals who cannot find regular paid employment in any sector.

There are also tensions between different parts of the cultural and creative sector in Hastings and Bexhill. These tensions exist despite strong commonalities in language and vision between the local authority, the education providers and the voluntary sector. The result is that Hastings and Bexhill continue to under-perform because, certainly according to Richard Florida’s work, they are currently unable to absorb and apply the knowledge drivers brought by the creative and cultural producers and educators in the town. No one agency is to blame for this situation but it still needs to be collectively addresses. This situation results in few young people finding work (and work based learning), causing them to remain under-skilled and under-employed, or to move away to somewhere with better prospects (often London or Brighton). It equally results in cultural and creative producers failing to find a local society with sufficient cultural and economic capital to support and grow cultural production.

There is very clearly a place for UCH in the development of a strong and robust creative and cultural economy in the Hastings and Bexhill area. In the main this is by tailoring its educational offer to the core local constituents and by ensuring that all educational provision is well informed by and close to the local job market. In addition, and following Florida, Landry and others, there is a need to develop the research capacity of UCH to ensure that it can address more fully the three ‘Ts’ of university-inspired social and economic development:

- Technology: cutting edge innovation with direct links to the local economy;
- Talent: provide a base in Hastings and Bexhill for talented academics, as well as a forum for local entrepreneurs to deploy their talents through UCH;
- Tolerance: perhaps most important of all, to lead the social development of Hastings and Bexhill away from the prejudices and violence that currently are perceived as characterising parts of the area towards a more tolerant and outward looking and meritocratic society.

Technology

It is the creatives that are driving technological development in Hastings, and they currently look towards the Innovation Centre rather than UCH for technological innovation and development. Given the current UCH focus on foundation and first degree programmes, this is hardly surprising. However, if UCH is to take its place as a major HE player in the town, it has got to develop a research and development capacity that speaks directly to the needs of local business. This does not mean challenging the Innovation Centre, but working with it, to create synergies between technological development and innovation.

A core part of this approach, and one that remains under-developed in Hastings and Bexhill, is management and leadership training. It is well recognised that many businesses are hindered by the lack of appropriate management and leadership skills in their senior managers, meaning that they cannot develop as fast and as effectively than would otherwise be the case. Interestingly, much management and leadership training involves the use of performing and creative arts, suggesting that UCH is well placed to develop an offer that is highly attractive to local business. Indeed, with Culture South East currently examining the case for creating a number of sub-regional leadership centres, Hastings' long established creative economy could form the basis for UCH to become a specialist leadership centre for the creative industries.

Talent

Developing a leadership centre for the creative industries would also contribute towards encouraging more talented people to live and work in Hastings. It would also begin to draw academics and entrepreneurs into closer working relationships, particularly as the synergies between education and business become more apparent. Just as Hastings has been an attractive location for cultural producers, so it could be equally attractive to academic and intellectual talent, if the opportunities are created for them to further their work in conjunction with UCH, the Innovation Centre and local creative businesses.

Tolerance

It is apparent that Hastings is currently a largely closed society and economy in which prejudice can flourish. Any development of the local economy therefore needs to be accompanied by sustained work by the local authority and others to overcome this prejudice and allow a more tolerant society to develop. UCH can support this in a number of ways, not least by researching the issues at the micro-local level and ensuring that there are adequate and appropriate training and education programmes to develop and sustain the support services that will be required to effect this

transformation. Greater tolerance is also likely to result from creating a more meritocratic economy in which there is education and training available to local people that is appropriate to the local labour market.

Regenerating and Reinvigorating the Local Economy

What is increasingly clear is that the problems facing the Hastings and Bexhill economy may now have less to do with the level of business advice and post 16 education and training, and much more to do with the lack of local economic dynamism in the tourism, creative and cultural sectors. This means that new entrants to the sector often feel there is a lack of local opportunities and migrate away from the area. It also means that there is a lack of opportunity for the type of part time and casual service employment that typically supports creative and cultural producers early (and even throughout) their careers. In many cases, migration is as much about finding a source of income generation to support creative and cultural endeavour as it is about finding a suitable environment in which to develop creative and cultural skills (although it is very much the case that the lack of dynamism in the local economy means that Hastings and Bexhill are not fertile grounds for selling creative and cultural works).

More optimistically, however, it is possible to conclude that the business advice and education infrastructure to support regeneration through the tourism, creative and cultural sectors is now well developed in Hastings and Bexhill. In urban regeneration areas in the 1980s and 1990s a common criticism was that property led regeneration (of the sort witnessed in Hastings and Bexhill) was not underpinned by a sufficient educational and small business advice infrastructure, which lead to a lack of benefits for local communities. If the economy of Hastings and Bexhill can be sufficiently revived then the education and business support infrastructure is broadly in place to enable local residents to benefit more fully from the regeneration process.

6 Conclusions

Hastings and Bexhill have an improving fabric of cultural assets and activities, a developing tourism sector and emergent creative industries. These are sources of education and employment opportunity which carry social and economic value which should be maximised. The level of education and training provision in these sectors is reasonable and improving, with a net inflow of students wishing to study these subjects at Bexhill College and HCAT. The HE offer is also developing, particularly as UCH moves into postgraduate education provision. There are good business advice services in the towns, some of which are felt by local entrepreneurs to be highly effective in supporting emerging business and creative and cultural producers. The refurbishment of the De La Warr Pavilion provides the area with a cultural 'flagship' venue. Parts of the built environment such as Hastings Old Town provide locations attractive to cultural and creative sector workers. And there are an increasing number of small creative (in particular), cultural and tourism businesses and producers becoming established in the local area, with clear progression routes identified from entry to employment to creative independence and professional status.

More can, of course, be done to aid and support this process. This includes developing the work-readiness of those on vocational programmes, including making better and

more sustainable links with local business. It also includes helping business advisors and trainers get better and more reliable market intelligence to help them better target their advice and support. Many businesses in the sectors can also improve the quality of their provision, to make it more attractive to locals and incomers, as well reflecting more favourably on the image of the town.

However, the underlying problem for Hastings and Bexhill is a broad lack of local enterprise: the local economy is largely stagnant and overly reliant on public enterprise and funding rather than commercial dynamism. This is witnessed in the large proportion of graduates who work in the public sector, by the low levels of commercial investment in the towns (counterbalanced by the continuing presence of Government initiative funding), by the dominance of voluntary representative and support groups and by the continuing levels of social deprivation experienced by many of those who live in Hastings. Superficially, this gives Hastings and Bexhill a poor reputation as a place to visit or live in. This minimises service investment, particularly in the retail and hospitality areas, meaning that there is little money and few service jobs available locally. As a result, all businesses struggle to find sufficient local custom, making Hastings and Bexhill most attractive for those who can profit from the cheap house prices while doing their business in other, more vibrant, economies. It also creates a series of barriers to the expansion of the creative, cultural and tourism sectors of the economy, by failing to provide an economic environment in which new entrants and small businesses can thrive.

While this analysis is broadly understood by the lead authorities and agencies in the towns, it is evident that few have yet grasped the full extent of the economic blight. Indeed, in its report, the Casino Advisory Panel suggested that Hastings Borough Council had yet to develop robust policies to socially and economically re-engage hard-to-reach communities, while it is also apparent that there remains a lack of evidence upon which to base policies and actions to reinvigorate the local economy.

This is not to say that progress is not being made: there has been a concerted effort to encourage the growth of creative businesses, which has resulted in a steady increase in commercial activity in this area, increasingly supported by the regeneration work of Sea Space and the growing influence of and support provided by UCH and the FE sector. Furthermore, strategies for town centre management and the development of the evening economy in Hastings strongly recognise the part to be played by a vibrant and mixed consumption offer that would appeal to different visitors and constituencies throughout the day.²⁰ However, away from these initiatives, too little is changing too slowly. Many of the local creative, cultural and tourism entrepreneurs suggest that there needs to be a revised investment and regeneration strategy in the towns, aimed at stimulating the service economy through a better retail, catering and hospitality offer. The evening economy strategy is designed to contribute to this transformation. It has identified actions that can be taken to make the town centre more attractive for families and older people in the early evening, by providing better transport links, free parking, later shopping, street entertainment, and encouraging new hospitality businesses to the town. However, there are greater synergies to be made between the creative, cultural and tourism sectors and the broader service

²⁰ *Hastings and St Leonards Town Centre Management Business Strategy 2006-2011*, available <http://www.hastings-guide.com/NewStrategy.asp>; *Hastings Evening Economy Strategy, 2005* (HBC)

sector, such that culture (in particular) can attract visitors who will, if the offer is right, spend money on retail, catering and hospitality services, and may even be sufficiently impressed to consider return visits or even a residential relocation to the towns. If the presence of this synergy is accepted, the question becomes how to encourage people to make the initial visit, and how to ensure that they leave impressed and wish to return. While this certainly involves an appropriate marketing strategy, it is more deeply connected with the quality and originality of the cultural offer, the quality of service provision and the vibrancy of the local economy.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Networks and Space

With creative and cultural production underway, there is a pressing need for appropriate spaces to be created to support this enterprise. Opportunities for networking are highly valued, particularly in spaces that have a cultural resonance, such as galleries, joint studios, colleges/universities and bars. There is also a need for small exhibition, performance and sales spaces. This demand has been identified in a recent CIBAS evaluation. Likewise, plans for Station Plaza and Priory Quarter indicate the regeneration company and other partners and agencies are working towards the provision of mixed-used areas where education, production and consumption will feature strongly. However, these developments need to be offset with the recent loss of cultural spaces in Hastings which has undermined confidence in the local authority in particular to provide for and defend spaces which are key and iconic features of the town's cultural fabric. Similarly, for Bexhill, our research revealed that a more active relationship between the De La Warr Pavilion and the area's creative and cultural industries could be developed.

7.2 Economic and Social Impact Study

This study has clearly set out the nature of the cultural and creative sector workforce. Although economic impact studies are carried out on a regular basis for both Hastings Borough Council and 1066 Country, there appears to be no explicit measure of the worth of tourism, culture and creativity to the local economy and its contribution to economic geographies, property prices, social inclusion, etc. Parameters need to be set and methodologies developed in order to accurately gauge the nature and development of these sectors; to provide accurate and baseline evidence with which to assess the impact of individual events (e.g. festivals and exhibitions) or potential new attractions or business offers. A full economic impact study would address this, and would allow all stakeholders to base their claims, particularly for grants and loans, on solid evidence. The De La Warr Pavilion has recently commissioned a study of its economic value but a more wide ranging study is also required so as to identify priorities and opportunities for new regeneration linked investment.

7.3 Service Economy Development

There is evidence that Hastings, in particular, has reached a critical mass of creative and cultural businesses and producers, and that suitable education and training are available to support them. They still claim that they require better and more appropriate spaces in which to operate; however, what they really require are better local market conditions. The key requirement is for a larger and more dynamic local economy in which more money is circulating, more service level jobs are available and more potential consumers are attracted to the area, as either day visitors, short stay visitors, or permanent residents. The evening economy strategy and emergent town centre management strategy for Hastings are designed to contribute to this transformation. Actions have been identified to make the town centre more attractive for businesses, residents and visitors. Similarly, the planned developments at Station

Plaza and Priory Quarter aim to transform the town through providing new spaces in which to live, learn, work and consume. There are a number of other strategies that could achieve this transformation. But a common denominator is the promotion of a vibrant service sector, covering retail, catering and hospitality, which can provide flexible employment opportunities for creative and cultural industries workers as well as being important employment destinations for tourism and hospitality workers in their own right. In town centre management terms, therefore, there is a need for partners to continue to work together to attract the type of business identified above and to continue to seek improvements to the public realm.

7.4 Sympathetic and Astute Business Advice

Many small scale entrepreneurs state that the advice that they used to get from CIBAS was both sympathetic to their businesses and astute in helping them develop their careers. With the demise of CIBAS there is a gap in the availability of advisory services, with both 1066 Enterprise and ProfitNet perceived as valuable but falling short. Creative and cultural entrepreneurs want and need a similar type of service to be set up and maintained, with business advice from creative practitioners who know what they are talking about and who can communicate easily with others.

7.5 Showcasing Opportunities

There is a feeling amongst many creative and cultural producers and tourism entrepreneurs that Hastings and Bexhill do not adequately publicise their success. This has been felt more keenly since the recent closure of galleries and exhibition spaces. There is thus a need to build up a local infrastructure of peer recognition and esteem, from awards to kitemarked quality accredited programmes. This needs to be tied into tourism marketing and the overall management strategy for the towns.

7.6 Quality Cultural Programming

There are growing concerns that the programming of events and shows in the towns is missing the needs of local cultural and creative producers. It is felt by some that the De La Warr Pavilion has not got its strategy right, with programming that is either highly elitist for local talent, or too amateur to be of interest to career culturalists and creatives. The White Rock Theatre is seen as too populist, the Stables too amateur and St Mary's in the Castle has now been converted to an evangelical church. While there is a chance to make more of new and different spaces, including street arts and festivals, it remains a growing feeling that the towns are failing to provide the type of cultural programming that will best showcase the talents of those who live and work locally.

7.7 Developing Better Education/Employment Links

It is apparent that one of the barriers to entry to employment in the creative, cultural and tourism sectors is the lack of engagement between FE and HE and local employers and entrepreneurs. At one level this means that few prospective students have a good understanding of the work opportunities available to them, while it also means that few students are as work-ready as their employers believe they should be. The current situation is, to some extent, a result of an immature employment sector

that has yet to gain full recognition in education. Yet it is also a result of rather insular thinking on the part of educators and employers. There is also an opportunity here for local employers to develop a better work placement scheme to ensure that good and committed people are encouraged to seek work experience. There is also a need to manage the placements to ensure that there is a possibility of progression from placements into paid work.

7.8 Actions for Mid-Career/Established Professionals

There is currently a major gap in education, training and support services in Hastings and Bexhill. This is the provision of high level services for mid-career and established professionals. This could be addressed through the provision of advanced cultural management and leadership training at UCH and HCAT. There is a growing trend in HE to develop bespoke MBA degrees in arts and cultural management, or to develop modules on established MBAs in subjects such as 'culturepreneurship'. While there is little market evidence to support local demand for a full MBA programme, whether or not linked to culture, there is an opportunity to provide individual M level modules that address the key concerns and interests of senior people in the sector.

7.9 Sharing Good Practice

There is also a need to develop a forum for the exchange of business information and experience, especially examples of good practice. This could be built into a professional development programme such as that outlined in 7.7, or it could be a more informal series of guest speakers organised through UCH, HCAT or some other forum. Some stakeholders see this as an opportunity to build a new critical presence in the town, through the development of a 'friends of UCH' society or something similar.

7.10 Diversity and Tolerance

It has already been noted that Hastings is not seen as a tolerant society. Yet there is already significant ethnic and social diversity in the town, with a number of BME groups involved successfully in cultural programming. There is a need for greater in-depth research on the needs of and provision for BME groups, particularly with the arrival of new migrant communities with their own career aspirations.

7.11 Co-ordination of Cultural Activities

There is currently a lot of replication of activity in the cultural sector, as a result of which much energy and originality is dissipated. There is an urgent need for more co-operation in running local networks, particularly in ensuring that information flows effectively to those who need it. There is certainly a role here for FE and HE, although it may be an appropriate place for Hastings Borough Council, once it is reorganised, to build new and richer associations with the voluntary sector.

7.12 Support for the development of a sector-specific research facility in association with UCH

It is clear that UCH is beginning to make an impact on Hastings (and to a lesser extent, Bexhill). Phase 1 of its development has been solid in attracting students into further and higher education through specially-designed and locally responsive curricula. Similarly, new courses have been created which are well-resourced and which will be central to local economic development in the creative industries (e.g. FdA Broadcast Media). However, other multiversity facilities (e.g. University Campus Suffolk and University Centre Folkestone) are now starting to develop research infrastructures, which are designed to feed into higher education teaching and contribute to local economic development. In this context, and as part of its continuing development and ambitions, there is a need for UCH to develop a stronger, and more permanent, research facility in the town. Several models are available and remain to be explored in terms of their feasibility and applicability. For example, through a mix of on-going data collection and publication (local business and economic monitors), postgraduate research, and the facility for bespoke commissioned research for individuals or groups of businesses or entrepreneurs. Yet, as the multiversities above have identified, it is clear that high-quality research has a key role to play in the development of the intellectual and physical capital required to sustain the development of the local economy. The location of CUPP (the University of Brighton's Community University Partnership Project) to UCH is an indication of a commitment to community development initiatives and knowledge exchange between academic and practitioner communities, which has been successful elsewhere. Likewise, ProfitNet has been successful its local business development activity. However, if Hastings is to retain its regional and national profile as a leading model of multiversity education it needs to publicise its activities to broader constituencies and export its intellectual capital through high-level academic research, dissemination activity and collaborative international projects. We suggest that immediate gains can be made through focusing a research agenda that continues to develop and enrich our understanding of the dynamics identified in this report, in the broader context of economic regeneration, cultural health and sustainability.

Appendix Consultees

Our thanks are given to the career biography interviewees and members of the focus groups and to the following groups and individuals who were consulted during the research.

Amal Abass-Saal	Celebrating Cultural Diversity Network
Kate Adams	Project Artworks
Monica Adams-Acton	Hastings Borough Council
Andrew Aloof	HCAT
John Appleyard	Hastings and St Leonards' Seniors Group
Kary Backhouse	ProfitNet
Tim Barton	HCAT
Joanna Biggs	Above and Beyond Ltd
Michael Blake	Arts and Business
Juliet Brain	Artswork
Kuldip Chahal	Pestalozzi International Village
Jim Christy	Hastings and Bexhill Enterprise Hub
Peter Cox	Hastings and Rother University of the Third Age
Silvia Eade	Bexhill Senior Citizens Club
Janet Edrich	HCAT
Alastair Fairley	Hastings Arts Forum/Community Strategic Partnership
Polly Gifford	De La Warr Pavilion
Christine Goldsmidt	Hastings Trust
Lisa Grando	White Rock Theatre
Jeremy Green	1066 Enterprise
Phil Halstead	Hastings and St Leonards Excellence Cluster
Rob Hill	Bexhill College
Rose Kigwana	Arts Council England
John Knowles	36-Hours
Veronica Loveless	Creative Industries Business Advisory Service
Emily Mansbridge	Arts Council England
Graham Marley	1066 Enterprise
Sophie Mason	Artswatch
Kevin Nicholson	Sea Space
Jim Norris	Hastings and St Leonards Tourism and Hotels Association
Catherine Orbach	Creative Partnerships
Sarah Palmer	Palmer Hamilton
Sonia Plato	Horizons
Melanie Powell	Rother District Council
Penny Precious	Hastings Borough Council (Arts Development)
Dr Tariq Rajbee	Islamic Information Centre
Helen Rand	Heritage Lottery Fund (South East)
Dave Reeves	Zap Art
Stevie Rice	DaDa-South
Alan Riddick	Hastings and St Leonards Tourism and Hotels Association
Lorraine Roberts	UCH
Lisa Rodgers	Connexions (Hastings)
Linda Seddon	Rother Race Action Forum
Lesley Shareif	Pestalozzi International Village
Tom Sherred	Sussex Learning Network (Creative Arts and New Media)
Dr Janet Summerton	All Ways Learning
Jocelyn Tilbrook	Hastings Borough Council
Margaret Wallis	University Centre Hastings