

# The Arts Council and England's rural communities

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**Rural Services Network,  
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Part of *FLOW* outdoor visual arts programme,  
Northamptonshire. Lead artist: Jo Fairfax  
Image: Andrew Randall



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# The Arts Council and communities in rural England

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## 1. The Arts Council's engagement with rural communities and policy

- Our strategy
- The state of arts and culture in rural areas
- Arts Council England and communities living in rural England – a position statement

## 2. How the Arts Council will engage with rural stakeholders

- Who we engage with/who we should engage with
- Our policy making

## 3. Our work 2014-18

- Review of data and evidence relating to arts and culture and rural communities
- Helping cultural organisations make a difference in rural communities
- How can the Arts Council support cultural in rural areas

## 4. Your feedback, ideas and comments

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## Arts Council England – our vision and strategy

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- We have a ten year vision for arts and culture, delivered through our strategy for 2010-20 *Achieving great art and culture for everyone*
  - Five goals define our work:
    - Excellence
    - For everyone
    - Resilience and sustainability
    - Diversity and skills
    - Children and young people
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“We must take account of the differing needs of differing places. We will do this in partnership with local government, the largest investor in arts and culture in England. We will also take account of the respective needs of rural and urban communities, so that people are not disadvantaged by where they live”

*Great art and culture for everyone, Arts Council England (2014)*

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## Arts Council England and communities living in rural England a position statement

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- We refreshed our strategy in 2013 and then revisited our approach to rural communities
  - Working with Defra, we held a rural proofing workshop in summer 2013
  - We considered the outcomes of this and then issued a position statement on our approach
  - This is a living document, setting out an approach which can be amended as circumstances change or on the advice of stakeholders
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## Arts and culture in rural areas

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- Engagement with arts and culture is higher in rural than urban areas – rather than saying this is not a problem, we see this as a strength that rural communities can build on
  - Local government support for culture is under severe pressure
  - There are concerns about the informal networks that sustain the cultural sector in rural areas
  - Issues of broadband and transport access pose barriers to engagement and sector growth
  - The economic value of culture is not always appreciated by some decision makers in rural areas
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## Our position statement

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- We set out how we will work to take account of the needs of rural communities to realise our goals
  - We will work to understand the particular needs and aspirations of rural communities
  - We will work in partnership with local government, the arts and cultural sector and others who work in and represent rural communities
  - We will ensure that our investment and support is appropriate for all areas of the country – including rural – and change our approach as appropriate
  - We will refresh our approach to rural proofing once Lord Cameron has reported
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## How we engage with rural stakeholders

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- We meet twice a year with a rural stakeholders group, including rural arts organisations, NRTF, RSN, the LGA, SCL, ACRE, WiRE, Defra, and others
  - We have joined the RSN
  - We see our engagement with local government as key – there are a number of places on our Area Councils reserved for local government members
  - We are talking to LEPs about the priorities for growth in rural areas and how culture can contribute
  - Professional bodies – AD:uk, National Rural Touring Forum, SCL, Museums Association, Association of Independent Museums
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## Action 2014 - 18

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- Review, with Defra, data and evidence on culture and rural communities to better inform policy development
  - Help the cultural sector in rural areas to support economic growth and stronger community through better working with LAGs
  - Consider how best to support the cultural sector in rural areas through an era of declining public investment
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## Background to the data and evidence review

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<b>Dates in 2014</b>	<b>Activity</b>
April - May	Formulate review group, agree draft terms of reference, consult with advisers on terms of reference, carry out mapping exercise of existing data and research about the sector in rural areas
5th June	Initial presentation to Arts Council's rural stakeholder group, inclusive of recommendations on priorities for additional analysis of the sector in rural areas
June - Sept	Undertake additional analysis and research
September	Final consultation with advisers
October	Final presentation to Arts Council's rural stakeholder group
October	Final amendments to review report, agreement by Arts Council and Defra and start of implementation of recommendations.

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## Stage 1 of the review: Mapping currently available and ongoing data and research about the sector in rural areas

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1. Organisational infrastructure and resilience
2. The arts and cultural workforce
3. Income and funding flows
4. Artistic and cultural participation (active participation in making or doing artistic activity)
5. Artistic and cultural audiences (attending artistic performances and events as an audience member)
6. The social and economic benefits of arts and culture
7. Socio-economic and demographic data and evidence relating to rural areas in England that are of relevance to the arts and cultural sector.

**Data and research available from:**

- ACE
- DCMS
- NCVO
- DfE
- HESA
- DCLG
- CIPFA
- CC Skills
- ONS
- DEFRA
- Audience Agency

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## **ACE conclusions about key evidence gaps and priorities for rural analysis**

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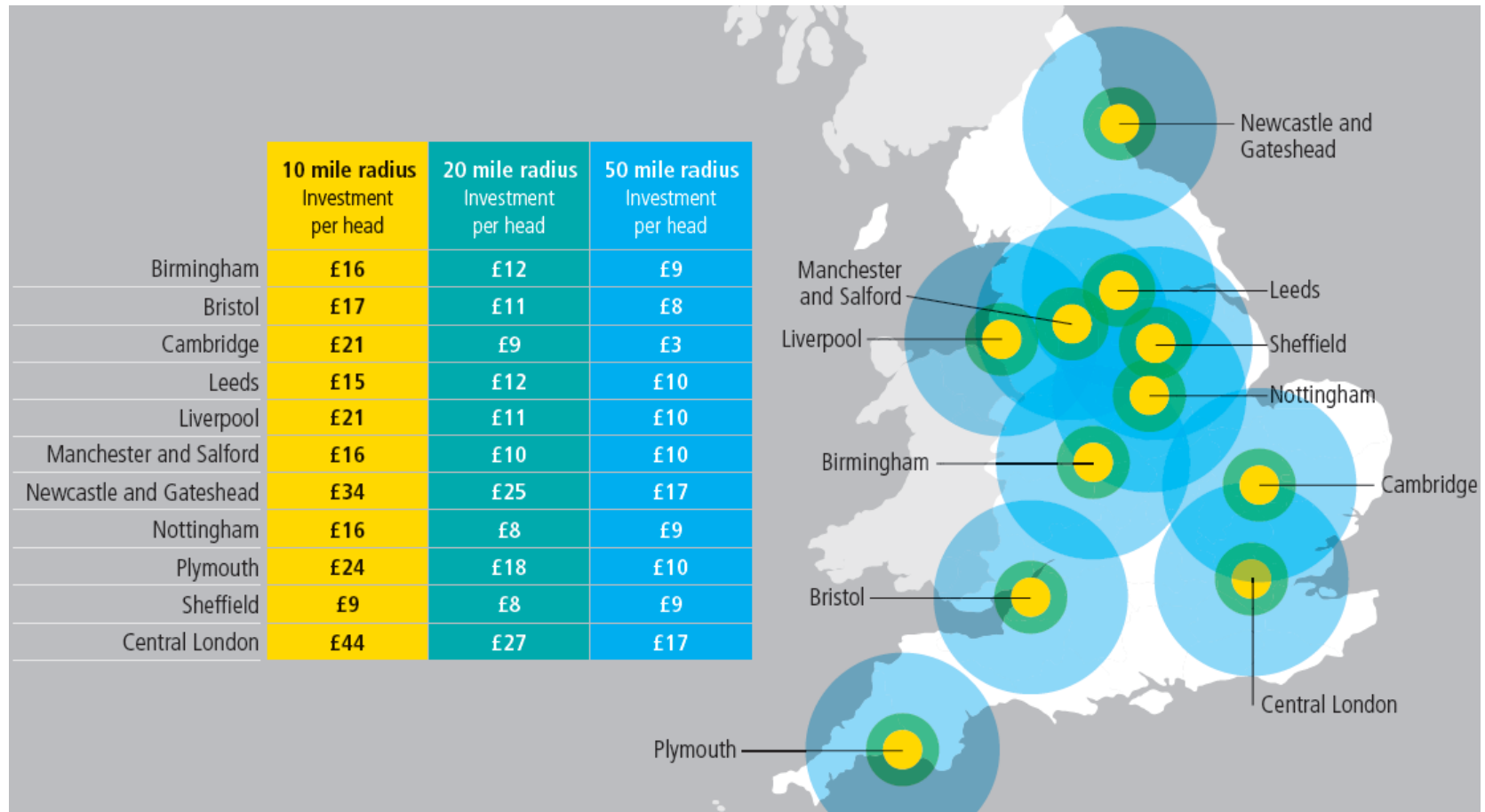
ACE cannot analyse every topic and every dataset available about the sector in rural areas: we'd encourage other researchers and organisations to conduct their own localised research.

Three key gaps in the knowledge and evidence-base we think could be prioritised for further analysis by ACE over 2014:

- 1. Area of benefit of ACE investment on rural areas**
- 2. Rural audience behaviour and cultural participation in rural communities**
- 3. The contribution of arts and culture to rural economies.**

# Proposed priority 1: Area of benefit calculations for rural areas in relation to ACE investment

## Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation Investment in major population centres and surrounding areas



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## Proposed priority 2: Rural audiences and cultural participation in rural areas

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Additional analysis of the Taking Part Survey could analyse data across the rolling dataset of c.139,000 respondents, which could be analysed by the small-area ONS/DEFRA classification:

- Rural V urban arts audience **attendance**
- Rural V urban arts and cultural **participation** (actively making or doing artistic activity)
- Rural V urban **key drivers of engagement** with arts and culture
- Rural V urban **attitudes towards arts and culture**
- Rural V urban **digital engagement** with arts and culture

All of these topics could be explored by **art form, geography** (e.g. rural Yorkshire V rural South West), and **demographics/socio-economic within rural areas** (e.g. people living in deprived rural neighbourhoods compared to people living in affluent rural neighbourhoods)

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## Proposed priority 3: The contribution of arts and culture to rural economies

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- Much of the **evidence-base about the role of arts and culture in local economies, local regeneration and place-shaping** is based on urban locations and urban investments
- Though there are **data and toolkits available** for organisations based in rural areas (e.g. BOP Consulting guidance available on ACEs website about measuring the economic benefits of arts and culture)
- The **Local Culture and Heritage Profile Tool** available on the DCMS website contains detailed data about the sector and the broader creative and cultural industries in each LA and LEP area
- However, a research study that explored the role of arts and culture or a specific investment on a local rural economy would be a useful addition to the evidence-base.



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## Supporting culture's social and economic contribution to rural communities

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- Making the case for culture's value – advocating to LEPs and LAGs
- Making our investment eligible as match for EU Structural and Investment Funds
- Explaining to LEPs and LAGs how our investment can help deliver local economic and community priorities
- Disseminating best practice

We can't do this alone – how can we work with the RSN and other partners?

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