FRAMEWORK
2020 - 2025

CREATIVE WAKEFIELD

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1. INTRODUCTION

Wakefield district has a proud history of creativity. The birthplace of Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore, John Harrison, George Gissing, Helen Fielding, David Storey and The Cribs, to name just a few. Our asset base is increasingly diverse and dynamic, reflecting our changing world. We have two world-class cultural destinations, in the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and The Hepworth Wakefield, and a range of other rich cultural assets.

This is combined with vibrant growth in the district's creative sector, including Production Park, Europe's largest live events company; the emerging Rutland Mills regeneration and IP rich gaming and digital companies.

As well as influencing our history and identity, culture and creativity are integral to how we collectively meet many of the challenges facing our district and the wider world and how we take advantage of the many opportunities of the future. We know that culture and creativity can and do play a key role in supporting a range of social benefits, from health and wellbeing to skills and learning and community development.

They also contribute significantly to the local economy, driving growth and opportunity for skilled employment.

This document provides an initial framework to guide the work of Wakefield's new Creative Compact including a wider emerging Creative Network through an initial 'development' phase and towards future iterations.

The document has been developed through extensive consultation with the cultural and creative sector and wider stakeholders, with strong support for a jointly owned plan with a single vision for the district. Whilst it is envisaged that it will be adapted and evolved by the Compact Chair, Board and wider Network as Creative Wakefield takes shape, the core aims and objectives established from the extensive consultation will prove a firm foundation for Creative Wakefield's activities.

It should be noted that all references to Wakefield include the whole district unless otherwise specified - for example, Wakefield City Centre.

2. WIDER CONTEXT

The Arts Councils of England and Wales, Creative Scotland, Core Cities and Key Cities - supported by BOP Consulting - recently conducted the UK Cultural Cities Enquiry to explore how culture can be more effectively resourced and how the benefits can be shared by all in society.

The Enquiry recommended that cities and districts form Cultural Compacts to bring together a broad spectrum of stakeholders with a shared interest in the role of culture in creating happy, prosperous, inclusive places. Cultural Compacts are defined by their ambition not for culture alone, but for culture in collaboration with other sectors, including business, health and education, working together to deliver a step change in the sustainability and impact of culture in the differing contexts of diverse places and communities. The report emphasised the importance and urgency for councils and cultural organisations to diversify their funding base, attracting a greater share of their revenue and investment from private sector and philanthropic sources and reducing dependency on public funding.

This vision for Compacts aligns with Wakefield's existing ambitions:

- To use culture and creativity as a key driver of economic and social development
- To leverage more funding and support for inclusive cultural and creative activity
- To broaden and increase the range of private sector and philanthropic funders, reducing dependency on public funding
- To align existing strategy and ambition through an inclusive network of creativity stakeholders to increase overall impact.

Wakefield has now been awarded Arts Council England support to establish its emerging Compact as Creative Wakefield.

This document also reflects the key outcomes and principals set out in the Arts Council's newly published strategy for 2020-2030: Let's Create. It also reflects the focus of Wakefield's Economic Strategy, which identified the development and harnessing of the district's cultural and creative sector as a vital component of developing and future proofing the local economy.

Culture and creativity are a central component of Wakefield's newly developed Place Brand and this framework provides alignment with the newly established Place Board.

3. CREATIVE WAKEFIELD

Creative Wakefield is a coming together from across Wakefield's cultural and creative sector. It provides a focal point for better collaboration and connectivity, for being much more than the sum of our considerable parts.

The Creative Wakefield Network is an inclusive network of individuals, organisations and businesses which work within, contribute to or connect from our cultural and creative sector, acting as a conduit for better communication, collaboration, learning and shared ambition. For the purpose of this framework and the membership of the wider Network, the terms 'culture' and 'creativity' are used in their broadest sense to ensure it is inclusive to everyone linked to the sector.

The Creative Wakefield Board not only provides leadership and governance for the wider Creative Wakefield Network but also ensures that it connects with and influences and contributes to wider sectors and agendas. As such, it fulfils the role as Wakefield's Cultural Compact.

The Board will develop and direct a range of working groups, with membership from across the Network, to support the delivery of Creative Wakefield's aims and objectives, with an emphasis on ensuring the full sector is engaged.

On this basis, it should be noted that the development of Creative Wakefield will build on the strength of existing successful collaborations and partnerships within the district, ensuring connectivity and accountability against the jointly developed aims and objectives.

The focus of this document is to provide strategic direction for Creative Wakefield. One of the key priorities for the newly established Board will be to finalise and communicate an appropriate governance model and performance management framework for Creative Wakefield.

4. VISION

Wakefield is a proud district with big ambitions. It has always thrived on its independent, unique and creative streak, and now boasts some world-class creative, cultural and heritage assets.

Creative Wakefield will bring together the arts, businesses, community, health, education and planning with a shared vision to drive forward an outstanding quality of life for everyone. Creativity is at the heart of this vision.

We will nurture connected creative spaces that enable enterprise to thrive, grow our independent arts scene and celebrate our world-class cultural offer.

We will ensure that local people, whatever their background, have the opportunity to explore their creativity and benefit from high quality cultural experiences.

We will help build a welcoming and engaging environment for residents, businesses and visitors.

We will work to connect our talent with opportunities and our communities with amazing cultural experiences.

We will ensure our district gives everyone a chance to develop creative skills, through our flagship creative education offer, training and careers programmes or lifelong learning.

Our vision is to drive forward an outstanding quality of life for everyone.
A happy, prosperous, welcoming, and inclusive place where culture and creativity is everywhere and for everyone.

Welcome to Creative Wakefield.

5. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In line with its Vision and Purpose, consultation evolved five overarching aims for Creative Wakefield, to drive its ambition and delivery across the next 3 - 5 years.

Each of these aims is supported by several objectives - deliverable actions which will support the achievement of the aim, again evolved through consultation. Whilst this list of objectives is incomplete, it covers the priority starting points identified by consultees to enable significant progress towards achieving on these ambitious goals.

Indicative actions identified during the consultation process for each objective are included to illustrate the type of work that Creative Wakefield will undertake. It is important to note that these actions are indicative only: a more extensive, prioritised list of actions will be evolved by Creative Wakefield's board and delivery groups.

Clearly these aims are interconnected and will work together to deliver the vision. Some objectives will contribute to more than one aim. The following sections however seek to provide a clear outline of the ideas and priorities developed via the consultation process.

5.1 CROSS CUTTING PRIORITIES

Running throughout this framework and the wider approach for Creative Wakefield are four cross cutting priorities. These priorities are integral in how we collectively achieve the key aims and objectives set out within this framework and are focused on building an inclusive, ambitious and sustainable cultural and creative sector which contributes to the wider development of Wakefield.

These cross cutting priorities are:

5.1.1 Diversity of participation

Culture and creativity are for everyone and it is important that our approach is inclusive and recognises and addresses where there is inequality of access and opportunity, whether this be in production or participation.

We know that we face similar challenges to those seen at a national level, with deprivation - of which we have significant levels in many areas across the district - negatively impacting on participation levels. We need to do more to ensure that we increase the diversity of both practitioners and participants in culture and creativity, particularly in relation to ethnicity, disability and sex, in addition to socio-economic background, by increasing targeted support and opportunities.

5.1.2 Ambition and quality

Wakefield has a long history of producing high quality culture and creative experiences and learning, leaving an indelible mark which has reached across the globe. This is reflected in the quality of our cultural attractions and strength of our independent creative sector.

It is important that local people and visitors can enjoy and be inspired by the best, whether that is experiencing our cultural and creative attractions or participating within their communities, and we therefore need to be ambitious in our approach and strive for excellence.

5.1.3 Sustainability of the sector

Our cultural and creative sector will play a key role in delivering social outcomes and driving the growth of our local economy. However, to maximise this role we need to support the sustainability of the individuals, organisations and businesses within it, allowing them to learn and develop the resilience to meet the challenges and changing landscape ahead.

There is significant experience and knowledge already within the sector and it is likely that much of this growth can come from better collaboration and joint learning. The Creative Wakefield will provide the connectivity to support this and provide a forum where these issues can be discussed and linked to wider agendas and regional and national programmes.

5.1.4 Environmental sustainability

The most significant challenge facing us all is the climate crisis and the need to support environmental sustainability. As highlighted in the Arts Council England's new strategy - Let's Create - the cultural and creative sector has the opportunity to act as leaders within local communities on this important issue.

As well as individually and collectively reducing the sector's carbon footprint we can also play a key role in engaging the public and wider business community on this challenging issue, sparking debate and inspiring action for change.

5.2 KEY AIMS

The five key aims for Creative Wakefield are set out below, with each aim relating to a priority area identified for Wakefield.

5.3 OBJECTIVES

5.3.1 PLACEMAKING: WAKEFIELD'S DISTINCT IDENTITY

Wakefield is home to some of the UK's most outstanding cultural destinations. It has played a leading role in the development of non-conformist movements in art and society. It has a particularly strong tradition of female artists and diverse local assets, from Pontefract liquorish to acclaimed working class poets.

It is, in its own right, rich in cultural assets, and home to several cultural organisations of regional, national and international significance. It has a rich and diverse built heritage, both in the city centre and wider district. There is considerable pride in that culture, creativity and heritage; and on the new Place Brand identifies this as one of Wakefield's most distinctive and attractive characteristics, with a particular focus on our strength around sculpture.

Creative Wakefield will lead and coordinate interaction across partners and with the Council from a range of cultural, heritage and creative sector experts and specialists. As such, it will function as a consultation forum for key local, regional and national policy programmes for emerging creativity transformation and so support place making in its widest sense.

It will also provide connectivity with the new Place Board, ensuring culture and creativity play a key role in promoting the district.

Creative Wakefield's first objectives are to:

- Work with and help drive the new Wakefield Place Brand, which strongly focuses on the whole district's cultural and creative strengths
- Inform the emerging Public Art framework and support its successful long-term delivery
- Ensure creative specialists from the Creative Wakefield network are engaged in the far-reaching planning process to reflect this cultural identity more strongly in the district's regeneration and ongoing public realm development
- Prioritise investment in the public realm to transform high streets across the district, including an improved Wakefield City Centre offer.

PLACEMAKING – INDICATIVE ACTIONS

- Support the establishment of a network of place ambassadors to advocate for Wakefield
- Ensure creative specialists can influence and feed into the planning process to reflect culture, creative and heritage more strongly in the public realm
- Secure resource to improve the public realm and implement a new Public Art Framework
- Establish a collaborative plan towards a City of Culture application and UNESCO City of Sculpture Status.

5.3.2 VISITOR ECONOMY: WELCOME VISITORS

Wakefield has a strong visitor economy base of day visitors, but has much more to do to drive a greater tourism economy, offering extended stays and encouraging return visits and greater spend.

Further investment is needed to ensure that the current product is better promoted in a coordinated way to attract visitors and that the visitor experience is high quality throughout. The volume and range of guest accommodation and the district's transport infrastructure need to provide the connectivity, capacity and quality needed to support the growth of both leisure and business visitors.

Creative Wakefield should continue to develop the district's positive assets and offer. By seeking to diversify sources of investment and reduce dependency on public funding over time, it can enhance the sustainability of the product offer.

Creative Wakefield will ensure there is evidence-led product development and coordinated cross promotion and communications for the sector to reach the key visitor markets for Wakefield and ensure this connects with wider local and regional opportunities from Welcome to Yorkshire, the LEP and wider National opportunities.

To welcome visitors from far and wide to our cultural district, Creative Wakefield's first objectives are:

- Combine and strengthen the collection and use of evidence and data around the cultural visitor economy - including 'big data' - to enhance coordination and drive more effective investment
- Support better cross promotion of the district's cultural and creative assets to visitors
- Improve transport links and connectivity around creative infrastructure within Wakefield
- Advocate for the development and promotion of good quality accommodation that capitalises on the district's distinctive built environment heritage and non-conformist attitude
- Engage the wide network of partners within culture and business to bid for/agree on areas of coordinated programme, establishing Wakefield-wide artistic programming, including annual, place-based thematic programming.

VISITOR ECONOMY – INDICATIVE ACTIONS

- Establish current and future visitor segments and profiles
- Influence the content of the emerging Destination Management Plan and associated links with Welcome to Yorkshire
- Work closely with the LEP to influence the development of an integrated, low carbon travel and connectivity plan into and across the district. Priorities include improving maps and signposting to cultural destinations; making buses, bus routes and the bus station reflect the creative identity and heritage of Wakefield; creative city walking tours.

5.3.3 WELLBEING AND COMMUNITIES: EVERYONE CAN ENJOY GREAT CREATIVE EXPERIENCES

Wakefield has impressive cultural organisations and great practice in participative and community-focused cultural activity. But more needs to be done to ensure that everyone is included, whether as producers, audiences or participants. An inclusive creative offer for Wakefield needs to take into account the district's diverse geography, groups and cultural interests, raise aspirations through access to artistic excellence and ensure access to creative and cultural skills and career pathways. Everyone needs to understand the value of creativity - and feel permitted to be playful!

Feedback from local people highlights that they value culture and creativity and recognise the positive impact it can have on their communities and their own wellbeing, yet many do not regularly take part in cultural and creative activity.

Creative Wakefield should consider how to engage and coordinate a range of services and organisations - including libraries and community centres and organisations - to develop place-based anchors to encourage participation. It will ensure the voice of the community is heard when identifying funding opportunities and developing and delivering work at different scales.

To make Wakefield a place where everyone can enjoy making, watching or taking part in great creative experiences, Creative Wakefield's first objectives are:

- Combine and strengthen community and asset-based data collection alongside socio demographic data to better inform approaches to engaging new participants
- To work as a network to tackle areas of low engagement and participation, working with communities to build trust and confidence and establish local solutions to engaging residents in culture and creativity
- Consider the development of district-wide programmes under a shared Creative Wakefield banner: ambitious, place-based co-productions involving grassroots organisations, community groups and other cultural institutions, delivering around shared themes relevant to Wakefield's heritage and contemporary identity
- Establish a system which helps the district maintain a map of cultural activity to inform the development of bids and ensure that opportunities and resources are appropriately distributed across the whole district.

WELLBEING AND INCLUSION – INDICATIVE ACTIONS

- Establish robust data and insight to understand communities not engaged in creativity
- Identify or develop a platform to enable current community based work to be shared to identify current provision and avoid duplication
- Identify and support bids to expand infrastructure and support capacity in communities and opportunities for them to shape their own cultural and creative offer
- Seek collaborative use of neutral space to engage, including libraries, community venues and wider outdoor 'community' spaces
- Establish a festivals and events framework to extend opportunities to all

5.3.4 CREATIVE SKILLS: FLAGSHIP CREATIVE LEARNING OFFER

Creative skills, including design, digital skills and creative thinking, provide pathways into careers in fast-growing creative industries and present a growing opportunity for rewarding, productive and well-paid employment. The same skills are increasingly recognised as a source of competitive advantage across all commercial and public service environments and are prized both within and beyond the creative sector.

However, the level of attainment of creative, digital and technical skills amongst Wakefield's population is below national and regional averages. This means that existing creative employers experience skills gaps and shortages that constrain their ability to grow; and potential investors may prefer other locations with a more ready supply of skilled labour.

In addition to these economic impacts, the opportunity to experience cultural learning through arts and other creative skills also has a wider social value in the development of individuals and communities, helping to address issues around exclusion and mental health.

Creative Wakefield should work towards pioneering a flagship creative learning offer which encompasses schools, further education, adult skills and life-long cultural and creative learning opportunities.

Creative Wakefield's first objectives are to:

- Establish at least one cultural partnership for every education establishment in the district
- Develop a more joined up approach to the cultural and creative learning offer for schools across the district, reducing duplication and ensuring consistent coverage
- Increase business engagement with the development of creative skills locally and as part of the National careers work
- Work locally and with the LEP and Creative Skills Council to influence a region-wide strategy for creative apprenticeships
- Scaling up of existing apprenticeship, internship and mentoring schemes in the district to multiply the current numbers of participants
- Encourage a district programme for creative commissions which contributes to a clearly defined offer for local and incoming artists to practice, excel and showcase their work to the world

CREATIVE SKILLS – INDICATIVE ACTIONS

- Audit existing education partnerships and learning provision from cultural and creative organisations
- Establish close working partnerships between schools, colleges and cultural/ creative providers
- Establish funding for a programme of creative curriculum CPD support for schools, academy trusts and colleges
- Pilot new coordinated models such as ensuring every school has a link to a lead cultural organisation and scaling up to ensure universality across the district
- Provide targeted creative careers advice to schools
- Work with National College of Creative Industries to increase employer awareness of creative apprenticeship pathways
- Advocate and lobbying relevant policymakers to develop fit-for-purpose creative apprenticeship pathways, with appropriate funding.

Courtesy of YSP, © Chris Kenworthy.

5.3.5 SPACES AND SUPPORT: CONNECT CREATIVE SPACES, PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES

Wakefield sits within a much larger city region. There is the potential not only to take advantage of the district's own growing cultural and creative energy but also benefit from wider growth across the region.

Because of their relatively small size and their need for continuing sources of new ideas and talent to advance their practice and competitiveness, artists and creative businesses tend to be drawn to city centres which offer both flexible and affordable formal workspace with a variety of public spaces and places for them to meet to share ideas and identify new talent.

Wakefield currently suffers from a lack of those dynamic and diverse places and spaces. This has limited the growth of creative business networks and has led in turn to weak signals of demand for skills development and business support. This makes it harder for education and skills providers, and public funders, to accurately target those interventions most likely to result in increased employment, productivity and profitability. Lack of visible opportunity in creative employment also deters potential new entrants of all ages from pursuing creative skills in education.

In identifying and addressing the sector's own needs, Creative Wakefield can help demonstrate the need to more clearly identify creative career pathways to students and others looking for new opportunities. The sector's need to shape more creative and diverse places and spaces for itself can also contribute to the transformation of high streets and public realm in Wakefield and in town centres across the district.

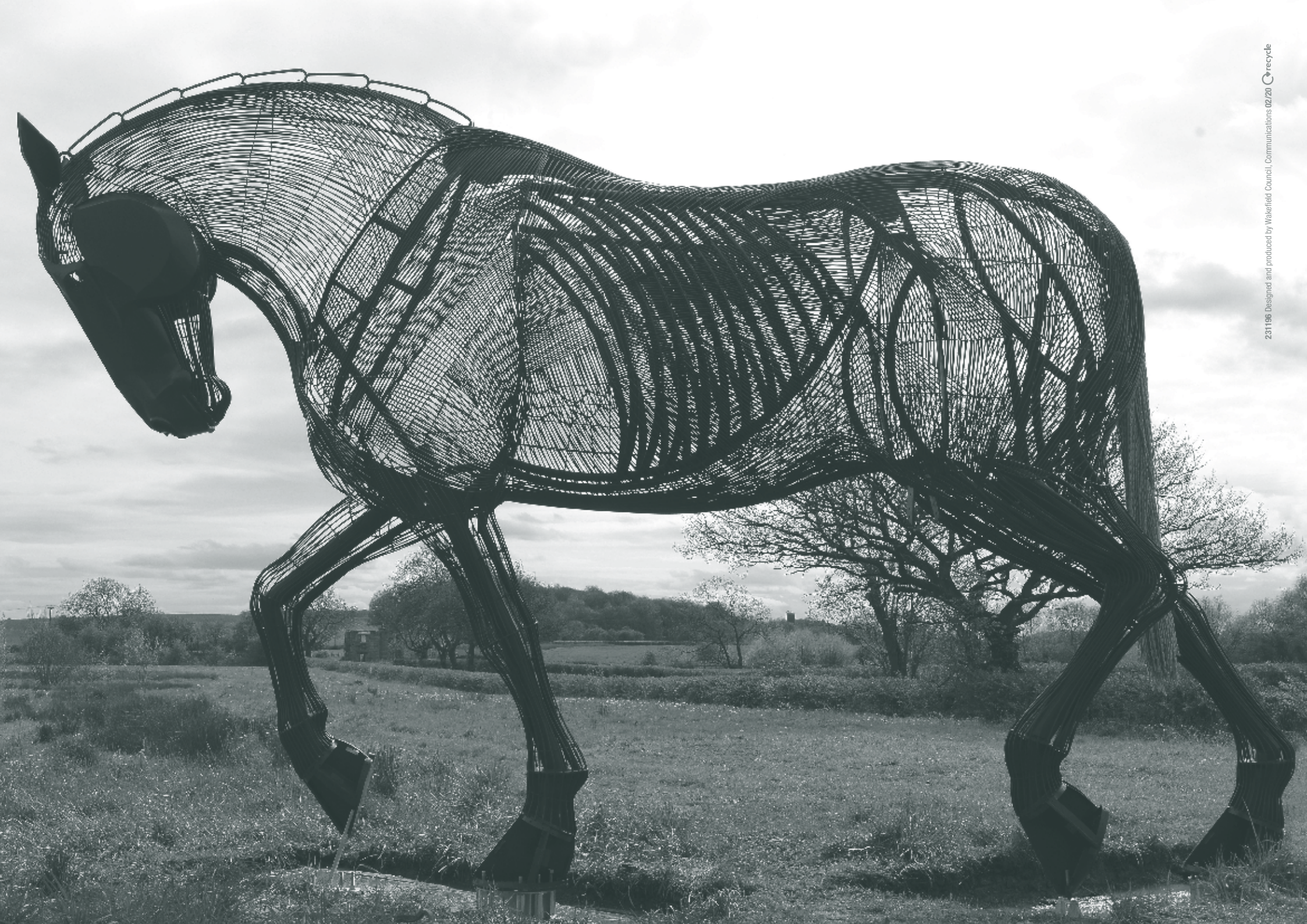
Whilst the scale and significance of Wakefield's creative industries are smaller than those of its regional cousin, it can capitalise on the regional relationship with Leeds, offering more affordable and well-connected opportunities. Creative Wakefield presents an opportunity to develop a common focus and access point for support, including accommodation.

To connect creative spaces, people and businesses to catalyse growth of Wakefield's cultural and creative industries, Creative Wakefield's first objectives are:

- Develop an approach to reviewing creative space requirement and influencing the development of an appropriate coordinated offer
- Engage with and inform the emerging urban transformation programmes
- Support the development of a joined up cultural and creative business support offer, including mentoring, showcasing and access to capital and resource for development and growth.

SPACES AND SUPPORT – INDICATIVE ACTIONS

- Further research, and ongoing evaluation of the success and impact of current and future investments
- Bid into the Creative Industries Growth Programme; collaborating with and advocating Wakefield's opportunities to the LEP
- Being consulted upon and influencing bids to improve public realm (for example Future High Street Fund)
- Support business development schemes, networking events, and communication strategies improving understanding in small businesses of how to access the support they need.



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