

## The Big Conversation 2025

### THE FUTURE OF CULTURE IN SOUTHEND QUESTION TOMBOLA ANSWERS

#### Culture Wars- How do we future-proof our creative work and freedoms against the threat of culture wars and censorship?

Art shouldn't be censored, art is thought provoking abstract and should bring conversation, and without debate people remain divided

Speak against those who try to divide us

Inspiring discussion

Artist should have the full right to express creative views without being penalised

Start with our younger generation

We need exemption from temporary political decisions that change with every council/government

Collaboration is a major way of ensuring voices are heard

freedom of speech isn't freedom from persecution for spreading hate

For Southend Council to do their job and stop inflammatory artwork and flags being displayed

Advocacy (this isn't Fern ;-)

Arts are braver than any other way of being heard

We need to change the narrative. Be more friendly to each other

Making sure there is a stated policy that reinforces that culture needs freedom of expression.

Maintaining that the arts brings us together.

Defend our work from AI

Critical thinking skills

We must defend the right to freedom of speech even when an opinion differs from our own.

Creative representatives in the council

Our voices are important and need to be heard

Strength in numbers, being part of a creative community/army xxx

Love

No double standards

By moving forward without fear

Be open minded

#### What do our politicians and our citizens believe our city's best assets are?

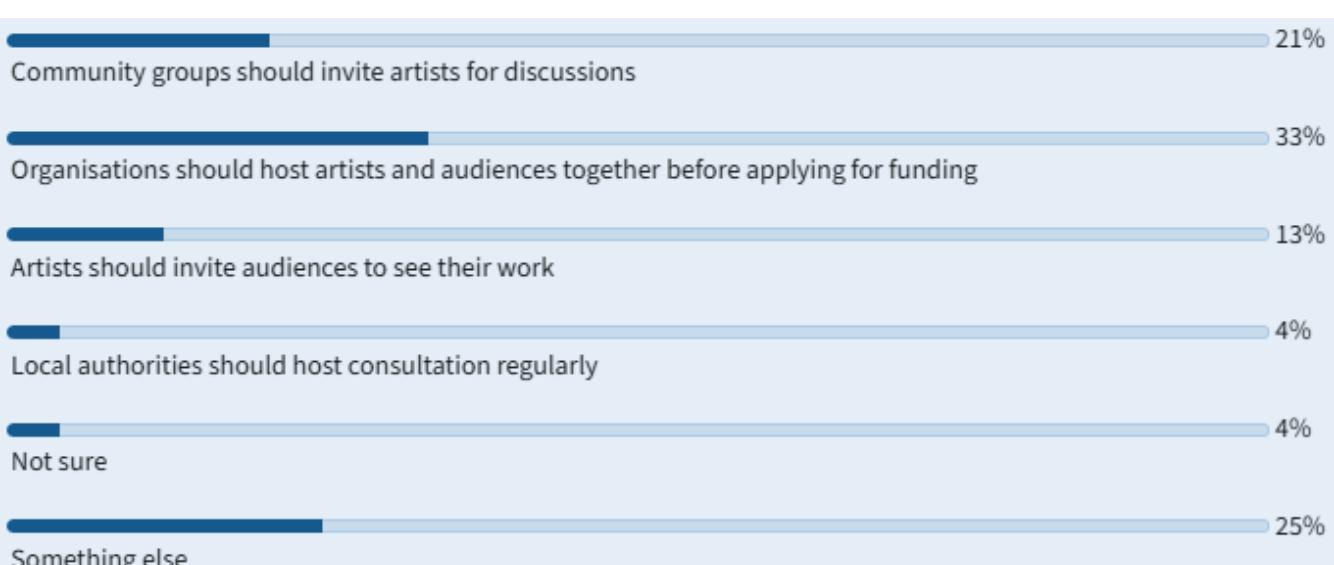
Coastline, geographical!	
Artists	 1
Seaside and creative environment that's not in London.	
Our estuary and seafront	 1  1
World's longest pier?	 1
Separate. I'm unsure if the politicians have the same values vision as the citizens and some of the things I believe our citizens absolutely cherish, are not necessarily valued by politicians.	 1  1  2  1
Coast line	
the diversity in our community	 6  3
The estuary	 2  1
The community	 4
Beer	 2  1  1

The coast line	 1
Community	 1
The people	 3
Grassroots art studios and spaces	 2
Green spaces	 1  1
Wheelie bins	
Contemporary art gallery	 2  1
DIY and radical spirit	 2
Creative Communities	
The people and multi culture	 2
Citizens believe community....not sure what politician's believe.....the local councillors have already left so clearly do not care	
Creatives	
The community	
Cultural heritage	 1  1  2  1

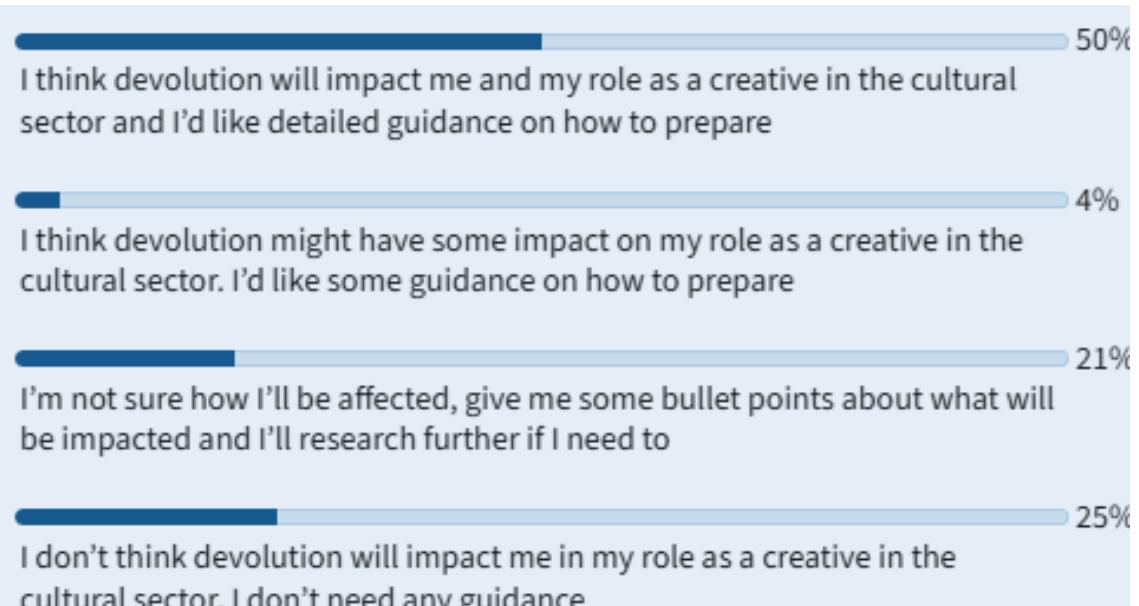
## What is Southend missing in order to make the city a more accessible space for creatives?



**Audiences and artists do not often get to spend time to discover what they want from each other when delivering projects as funders and organisations supervise this process: What could we do to address this?**



## What is being done to prepare the cultural sector for Devolution and Local Government Organisation?

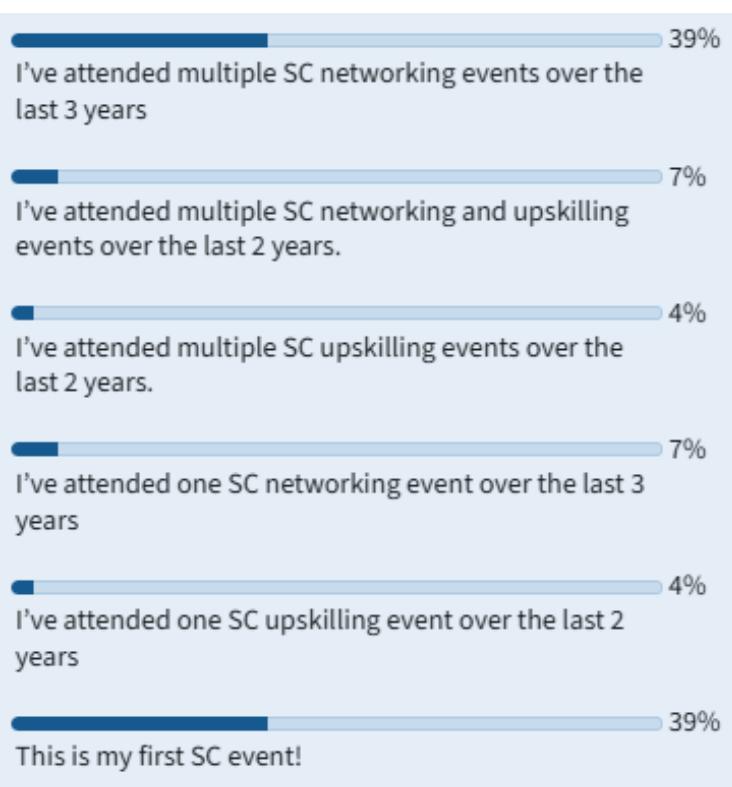


**Most of the creative industries rely on freelancers and sole traders. Often they are expected to wait upwards of 30 days for payment. To better support the creative industries and their predominantly freelance workforce, should the council and other PAYE**

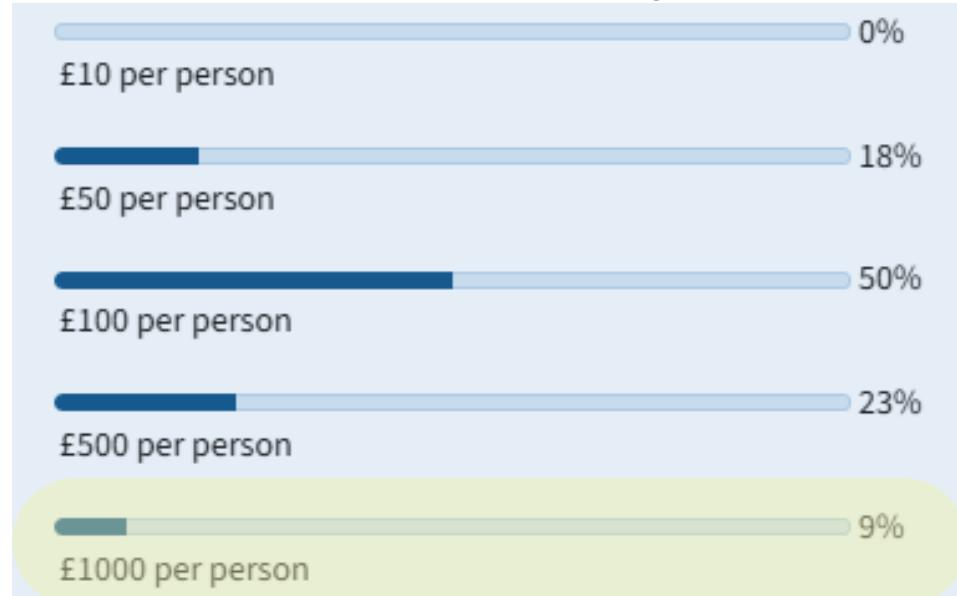


*"50% upfront. 50% paid later"  
"Misunderstanding artists and how they work"*

## Do Southend Creatives offer ways to form sustainable relationships with the creative community?



**What are the current wellbeing value added contributions to our community from creative arts projects? The added value of wellbeing to our communities from creative arts projects is**



**£8 BILLION A YEAR NATIONALLY!!**

# All Questions Submitted

What is the current monetary value added contribution to our Community, from Creative Arts projects?

What is being done to encourage more participation of our BAME communities in creative arts in the city?

How will creatives in Southend work towards cultural unity and celebrating diversity, when politicians are seeking power by divisive rhetoric, tactics and campaigns?

"How do we position Southend as a cultural destination on a shoestring?"

What is the current monetary value added contribution to our Community, from Creative Arts projects?

What are the current wellbeing value added contributions to our Community e.g. through better health outcomes, tackling health inequalities & isolation, from creative arts projects?

How does the work created in Southend get recognised nationally?

How can we prepare Southend's creative sector to survive financial challenges?

Decentralisation- What steps are being taken to facilitate audiences and artists coming together to discover what they really want from each other, without the supervision of gatekeepers and intermediaries of space, funding and resources getting in the way of the discussion and production?

Creative freelancers and sole traders- Most of the creative industries are powered by freelancers and sole traders.

Yet, unlike large companies with capital reserves, they are routinely expected to wait 30 days or more for payment, often after already working weeks before invoicing. How can we build a culture that supports freelancers more fairly, where immediate payment is standard practice, and where charging admin or late fees is normalised, as it is for larger organisations?

Venue Space - In the last Big Conversation, many creatives asked about places where they could present their work, and the barriers to setting up new creative spaces. What progress has been made in Southend in breaking down these barriers and creating more accessible, community-based spaces to work, create and perform?

How are Southend Creatives working towards forming sustainable relationships within the creative community?

What is Southend missing in order to make the city a more accessible space for creatives?

Culture Wars- How do we future-proof our creative work and freedoms against the threat of culture wars and censorship?

What steps do we need to undertake and how best shall we work together to increase the profile of what is happening amongst Southend's creative hubs and people so that Southend becomes known nationally as a 'Creative City' (rivalling Margate)

How do we use culture to create unity and cohesion at a time of division and polarisation?

What are you doing to prepare the cultural sector for Devolution and Local Government Organisation?

If Southend as a borough expands under Devolution, will Southend Creatives expand to reflect that, or will we maintain localism as a network?

Macro level politics- ECC's recent skills and employment strategy does not consider the arts vital. How do we ensure the arts remains central to political discourse?

Inclusive creativity - Research notes that access to the arts is becoming more elitist, due to socioeconomic barriers, there are widening participation gaps. Class inequalities in creative professions are demographically demonstrated. So, how can we work together as a City to ensure inclusivity for aspiring young artists with less resources. Making certain no one is left behind? And all can develop talent?

Our City's assets - What do our politicians believe are our City's best assets? And, working together, how can the local creative community better promote, use and regenerate these assets for the future?

Although council barriers in terms of reducing red tape and costs, have been discussed numerous times, they are still prohibitive. The staff available to manage applications seems ever diminishing too. How can we help speed up a change to these barriers to assist local creatives to deliver events, enhancing and expanding the cultural offer.

How can we speed up the process of reducing red-tape and the costs creatives face when working with the council to deliver projects and events? These have been discussed on many occasions and creatives want to work with the council to enhance the expanding cultural offer.