



# TRANSPORTED

## PHASE I REVIEW

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### Transported Consortium



Lincolshire Community  
and Voluntary Service



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

Transported is a strategic, community-focused programme which aims to get more people in Boston Borough and South Holland enjoying and participating in arts activities. It is supported through the Creative People and Places initiative.

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# 1. Introduction to the Artist Commissioned Consultation Phase

## Context within programme as a whole

Transported is the Creative People and Places (CP&P) programme for Boston Borough and South Holland. Our Business Plan proposes the development and delivery of an arts programme to Boston and South Holland, Lincolnshire that reflects a set of values and an approach, and that crucially recognises the need for extensive consultation with the residents of the area so that we stand the best chance of doing what is needed, what is wanted and ultimately what will stand the best chance of some strands being sustained beyond the initial funding.

The programme's central purpose is to get people who currently don't engage with the arts to access great art experiences.

Our consultation's main purpose is to listen to local people, get a clearer picture of their localities and their needs and to identify the next steps in developing appropriate arts activity within the Creative People and Places remit.

Our starting point is our recognition that previous research has identified that Boston and South Holland are significantly below the national average for arts engagement.

Early consultation identified, at Open Meetings and through project development meetings, a number of reasons why people don't take part in the arts, including:

- People don't take part because they live in a rural area and would have to travel too far
- People don't take part because they don't know that an arts event is taking place
- People don't take part because they see the arts as elitist
- People don't take part because they don't know what they want, what's available or what's possible

Our approach for Phase I was to navigate around these (and other) barriers by undertaking consultation at places where people naturally gather together, without having to take a decision or go out of their way.

A second assumption was made that people can only reflect on arts activities according to their experience of arts activities. The results from the Arts Council and Sport England's Active People survey (2008 – 2010) in Boston and South Holland, because it showed that people in Boston and South Holland engaged less in the arts than people from elsewhere, confirmed our view that we needed to offer arts experience to push people to consider more expansive possibilities than before engagement with the Transported activity.

It is a reality that people can only make a decision based on knowledge and experience to date. An arts experience was necessary to put the research questions into the context of considering the viability of investing substantially in arts activity in the area and to give an

inspirational, fun, engaging experience as a basis from which to push ambition and understanding.

The national context for this funding stream is the recognition by Arts Council England that lots of people have not responded to existing initiatives. CP&P represents a brave investment in a National Action Research programme to do things that have not been done before and to find new and appropriate ways of evaluating them to provide the best chance of some of them being sustained.

## **2. Our Rationale**

Transported Phase I consultation harnessed the creativity of commissioned artists to engage with people where they normally meet: in a food factory canteen, a market stall, a village fete, a roadside café, so that we could ask a set of questions that could inform the planning of the programme.

Transported needs to be offering quality arts experience within a framework that has a chance of being sustained. It therefore needs to offer, beyond the ACE CP&P funding, tangible evidence of its value in delivering on other agendas, such as: community cohesion, health and wellbeing and economic development.

Our research, therefore, also needed to gather information about these areas that could inform the planning of the Phase II Strands of Arts development. The three main areas of questioning for this purpose were: You, Your Culture, Where You Live.

In addition to the research that was designed to inform our own programme planning, Transported is part of the national Creative People and Places programme and needs to gather evidence and data that contributes its evaluation and planning, as part of a National Network.

The format for this is centrally determined, and there is a National Programme Evaluation Network that will work together to reflect and modify the procedures as other schemes come up to speed and start delivering. Some of this data, numbers and levels of engagement, was gathered through the community research questions. Other data has been gathered from Engagement Worker reports and through focused follow up telephone and email consultations to members of the public and audience that completed the postcode section on the postcard.

This information is reported quarterly and annually to Arts Council.

## **3. Transported's Approach to Commissioning Phase I Artists**

A brief was developed and publicised inviting artists to propose interventions, performances and activities that would provide us the opportunity for a team of Community Researchers to ask our questions. An additional information sheet provided the context for these commissions, making it clear it was about a consultation and information gathering programme.

Artists' proposals were shortlisted according to a set of agreed criteria reflecting the brief and purpose, including: Innovation and Originality, Feasibility/Risk, Relevance to the Location, Link to Consultation.

Shortlisted artists were then interviewed by telephone, answering a specific set of questions to help prove their suitability and ability to undertake the work.

The programme involved four strands:

Artist Led activity – where the artist or company could suggest venue and activity according to our criteria

Pop Up activity – taking place in non-arts and temporary venues or spaces

Ice Cream van – based around a converted van as a mobile arts space

Flash mob – mass performance in public spaces.

A total of 96 Artists were employed during the Artist Led Consultation Phase, May to July 2013.

Approximately one quarter of the hours worked was completed by local artists.

6372 people attended the Transported consultation events in a broad range of venues ranging from Village Halls to food factories, roadside cafés to museums and libraries.

#### **4. Consultation and Information Gathering Methodology**

Our primary consultation process involved a number of paid Community Researchers attending each artist led event, in proportion to the scale of event and anticipated numbers, asking our specific questions based on the three themes.

Each Community Researcher attended a training session or was mentored through two sessions and assessed before being employed.

We were looking for information that reflected individual people's views of what would improve their lives, the area in which they lived and what sort of arts activity they have done and might want provided in the future.

We were also looking for evidence of previous attendance at arts events and collected postcodes and contact details for more detailed follow up telephone research.

## 5. Beyond Data Gathering and Number Crunching

### 5.1 Artist Feedback

Artists were asked to feedback about their experience so that their learning could be built into future procedures where appropriate. Commissioned artists were invited to respond to an online questionnaire including their views about venues, consultation and the relationship between artist activity and consultation.

The artist feedback makes some very specific and valuable suggestions that will be incorporated where relevant into the new activity strands, particularly allowing for artist training and researcher briefing to keep threads linked together, adding to and developing venue mapping.

Several selected artists were asked to record their experience for Electric Egg, a video company which produced a series of short films in which artists share their advice and wisdom to inform future activity and commissions.

These films can be viewed on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/user/TransportedArt>).

### 5.2 SoundSpiral

Sound artist Rebecca Lee completed a number of consultation events, talking to and recording hundreds of residents and capturing their views and ideas.

The full sound piece, *From Gardening to Clouds*, can be heard at <http://www.soundspiral.net/>

A record of the visits and production of the piece can be found on Rebecca's blog

<http://gatheringgrain.wordpress.com/>

## 6. Venues, Organisation and Specific Suggestions

Inevitably we have also received a reasonable number of requests for specific projects or input. Some of these are appropriate, and are a clear indication of specific need or opportunity, appropriate to Transported objectives, and therefore provide useful insight that can shape future planning. Others are not in line with our objectives, but may also offer insight into the areas' needs and expectations.

We have received 18 proposals for projects and arts activities. We have been able to have conversations with venues and organisations to develop understanding of their aims and appetite.

## **7. Purpose of Consultation**

- To inform future planning of the next steps of the programme
- To record numbers of people taking part and levels of previous arts engagement in Boston Borough and South Holland
- To gather contact details for future in-depth research
- To gather data to answer CP&P questions

## **8. Early Approach, Revisions and Plans Going Forward**

This first phase of consultation was about gathering information based on individual responses to set questions. These questions were slightly revised in response to researcher feedback, following the Launch in Holbeach, to reflect the unease felt by some about asking questions about individual happiness and fulfilment.

We have subsequently adopted a survey strand which will provide audience development data.

There was initial discussion about using the clipboard questionnaire survey approach. In discussion with our trainer, Fiona Mitchell Innes, it was agreed that the survey was the prompt, with the goal of initiating conversation, through which it would be easier to get people to express their views, which then needed to be recorded afterwards.

There has been more recent discussion about the possibility of putting all the survey tools onto tablet, allowing data to be sent quickly and automatically to the next stage analysis.

## **9. Flaws, Faults and Limitations to our Data Collection**

Specific suggestions were submitted or did arise out of more developed consultation discussions, but these have to be seen in perspective. Organisations that were on the front foot, rather than necessarily reflecting those that do not engage, were more likely to step forward and present specific project suggestions.

Community Researchers were appointed to make sure we had capacity to attend a high number of events very quickly, with no formal interview as part of the process. The disparate experience, skills and confidence of researchers had an impact on the amount and quality of data collected, particularly at earlier events.

## 10. What Does the Data Tell Us?

Despite limitations, the collected data proved invaluable in shaping the Phase II strands and our approach.

- People in Boston Borough and South Holland believe that it is necessary and important to invest in projects and activities that build or contribute to community spirit
- People in Boston Borough and South Holland also identified things that they don't like or are issues in the area that are a consequence of poor or broken community spirit
- People generally were positive about more arts opportunities, more events and more activity
- People wanted there to be more jobs, and increased employment opportunities in the area
- People were positive about investment in the area that improved public spaces
- People were positive about more activity targeted at families

## 11. How Has This Influenced Phase II?

The data has allowed us to revisit the suggested strands from the Business Plan, identify suitable steps in taking some of them forward, taking out some strands, and introducing new ones.

## 12. What's Been Removed, Added or Amended from the Business Plan?

We have removed the "Bringing In" and "Bringing Back" strands as a separate area of delivery. This approach will be applied to all strands where appropriate and funded through them rather than as a separate budget stream.

We have replaced the "Building Up" programme described in the Business Plan with a proposed "Quality and Innovation" prospectus.

We have incorporated the ambition to support the creation of new work and export it to other areas and countries in the "Live and Local" strand and have already commissioned an original piece by Pestiferous Theatre Company that is touring beyond Boston and South Holland (and earning us the development fee).

We have extended the Consultation strand to allow ongoing commissioning of artists to lead consultation events in new communities and groups.

We have responded to the requests to contribute to community events by introducing a new strand.

We have responded to the overwhelming support of heritage venues and suggestions from heritage organisations and introduced a new strand: "Past Inspired".

### **13. What is Being Taken Forward from the Business Plan?**

Feedback from the consultation programme and Phase I has confirmed a number of projects as being appropriate to take forward in Phase II, including;

Festivals

Pop Up Spaces

On your Doorstep

Open Book

Public Art Commissions

A full description of these projects is provided in the **Phase II Outline**, together with more information about the context and next steps for each.

### **14. What Doesn't the Data Tell Us?**

We did not ask the question why people don't engage with the arts. We asked what would be more likely to engage them in the future, and the Phase II strands have been shaped to reflect these answers, together with the specific suggestions received.

The data does not tell us what should happen where, because the initial records were neither site nor event specific. We have amended the data collection procedure now so that we can shape delivery according to specific responses.

There are gaps in our consultation. We have not taken events to every village, and there will be people that don't engage (with the arts), that have not yet engaged with Transported. We have extended the Artist Led Consultation strand to assist with this, so we continue to consult throughout the project, and can also start to record people's footprints in relation to the Transported programme.

Early records did not record postcode and allow for demographic analysis, which therefore needed to be "guessed" by the team. We have amended the collection process so that this can be more accurate and offer more complete picture in the future.

## 15. Data Summary

### 15.1 Observations from Consultation Data

In the collection of the following data, members of the public were left free to make their own responses, unprompted by the researcher. The percentages do not, therefore, reflect numbers of people making choices from given options. An initial sorting and categorisation was made from the overall responses to each question, in order to make the data more meaningful and manageable.

As a result, we have made decisions about statistical significance, based on the total number of responses over the range of responses.

**15.2. For the purposes of the following data, a response of 7.50% or above is regarded as significant.**

When asked what they would like to see **changed about the place they lived**:

Of 283 responses indicating changes in **general activities**:

- 29.7% wanted more **events in general**;
- 13.4% wanted to see more **local events**;
- 9.9% wanted more **community projects**;
- 9.5% wanted to see more **arts events**.

Of 44 responses indicating changes in the **job situation**:

- 72.7% wanted **more jobs** to be available;
- 22.7% wanted a **better job**.

Of 226 responses indicating arts specific changes:

- 16.8% wanted more **live music**;
- 15.5% wanted to see **more theatre**;
- 8.4% wanted more **arts in general**.

Of 629 responses indicating changes not falling into **other** categories:

- 11.1% wanted to see a **better community spirit**;
- 9.5% wanted to **revitalize their town/village centre**;
- 9.4% wanted to see a **cleaner town/village**;
- 8.00% wanted **fewer foreigners**.

**15.3. For the purposes of the following data, a response of 5.00% or above is regarded as significant.**

When asked to **comment about their own lives**, in particular what might improve their lot, make them happier and feel more fulfilled, or feel more positive about the future:

Of 1687 responses indicating **personal benefits**:

17.6% find that **family** promotes their well-being;

6.5% would like to ensure **good health**;

5.9% would like **more money**.

Of 203 responses indicating **community benefits**:

22.2% would like **better community spirit**;

15.8% would like to see an **improvement in people's attitudes**;

11.3% would like to see **real action to improve their area**;

9.9% would feel happier if **immigration were restricted**;

8.9% would feel safer with **better policing**;

8.9% would enjoy **more community activities**;

7.9% would like to see greater **tolerance of multiculturalism**.

Of 370 responses indicating benefits to **both self and community**:

28.1% would feel more positive with **better job** availability;

10.5% would be happier with **better public transport**;

10.3% would feel more positive about the future with a **different government**;

7.6% would like to be **better informed** about local events.

**15.4. For the purposes of the following data, a response of 4.00% or above is regarded as significant.**

When asked about how prepared they would be to **invest in learning new art skills**:

Of 314 responses:

24.5% would like to learn to **draw or paint**;

13.4% would like to have a go at various **crafts**;

7.6% would like to try **dance**;

6.1% would like to learn a **musical instrument**;

4.1% would like to develop **photography** skills;

4.1% would like to develop skills in **drama**.

When asked about their willingness to **invest in seeing performance**:

Of 551 responses:

16.5% would invest in **live music** events;

12.2% would invest in **theatre**;

8.4% would go to **music festivals**;

7.6% would enjoy going to see **dance**;  
6.2% would go to **concerts**;  
5.4% would like to see **live local events**;  
4.7% would invest in **street theatre**;  
4.2% would promote **amateur productions**.

When asked about **investing money in art for the public**:

Of 183 responses:

18.56% would invest in **community projects**;  
12% would invest in **community artworks**;  
12% would invest in **promoting and advertising the arts**;  
7.7% would invest in an **art gallery**;  
6.6% would invest in **public art for the young**;  
6.6% would invest in **music-based projects**;  
4.9% would invest in **street theatre**.

When asked **what else** they would be prepared to invest money in:

Of 48 responses:

10.4% would invest in a **club for mature people**;  
10.4% would bring **top bands** into the area;  
8.3% would invest in the **arts in schools**;  
8.3% would invest in **arts workshops**;  
8.3% would promote **festivals**;  
6.3% would purchase **public artworks**;  
6.3% would invest in **community theatre**;  
4.2% would create an '**art café**';  
4.2% would invest in **sport**;  
4.2% would promote the **use of empty shops**;  
4.2% would improve **public architecture**.

## 16. Recommendations from Artists' Evaluation

Artists have also been invited to evaluate their contribution to the Consultation Programme, and analysed results have produced valuable observations:

1. For future phases of the programme, it would be worth considering adding evaluation as a contractual obligation for artists, with their final payment being triggered by completion of an evaluation questionnaire, to ensure that a continuous cycle of planning, delivery and review runs throughout each stage of Transported.
2. Location was felt to be an important determining factor in both the type and quality of engagement of the audience with the various activities and should be given appropriate consideration when planning future events.
3. The theme of marketing, or lack of, has been recurrent in the consultation process. It is a far from straightforward issue with a project whose aim is to engage the unengaged, and perhaps merits some further thought. A more detailed dialogue with the artist involved in presenting the activities would ensure that the rationale behind the project and its marketing strategies is better understood.
4. Transported events located within specific larger events tended to work well – these events would attract audiences looking to spend time being entertained. By contrast, those that worked least well were those where people were focused on a particular task, such as shopping, that they had to complete within a planned timescale.
5. Venues for future events should be researched and carefully considered for their suitability to ensure that the needs of both the artists and Transported are met.
6. Artists commented that they feel that successful engagement relies on far more than purely the creative skills of the artists, with people skills and a flexible approach playing a vital role in the consultation activities, which they delivered. Future artist appointment should take this into account.
7. Artists were aware of the value of engaging audiences at a level with which the audience felt comfortable and that they were willing to take a flexible approach to engaging audiences, seeking out opportunities to interact with people rather than waiting to be discovered by them, and adapting content to respond to their interests.
8. 81% of the artists reported using social media both as a marketing tool and a platform to document and share their work, although this value dropped to 63.6% for the same activity in the context of the Transported consultation. It may be worth building the use of social marketing into the artist's contract depending on the project.
9. Although over half of the artists surveyed reported promoting and sharing their consultation activities, very little of this content is visible through Transported's social media accounts. What these findings suggest with certainty, therefore, is the need for systems to be put in place within future strands of the programme to make it easier for this content to be identified and shared by the Transported Communications Officer. It would be useful to find out where and how artists promote, document and share content, build a database to make this information accessible, and to encourage artists

to post in the Transported forum on Facebook and to use Twitter to signpost @TransportedArt to content via links to the digital platforms that they use.

10. There was little take up of formal shadowing opportunities and it is unclear why, but what is clear is that the Arts Engagement Workers benefited from working with and alongside other artists.
11. There is a sense from artists that where there was contact with fellow creative practitioners it was appreciated. Perhaps some more focused networking and sharing of learning could be built into the process in the future, but outside of the actual events with the public.
12. Whilst many artists felt the Community Consultation process worked, there was a lack of engagement between the artists delivering consultation activities and the community research process. Instead of one feeding into the other it seems that many artists saw the latter as a separate entity. For future strands of the programme that require a similar consultation process it would be worth considering providing a training session for artists so that they would have a robust understanding of the process and what it hopes to achieve.
13. It is clear that not all of the individuals recruited as Community Researchers had the communication skills necessary to perform the role effectively whereas others were excellent. This is an issue that requires careful consideration if the CR role is to continue to support the consultation strand of the programme.
14. The following points were highlighted by artists as areas of interest for future projects:
  - keying in to the common themes and interests prevalent in the local area
  - a heritage element that is instantly recognisable and cross cultural
  - a relaxed approach with the opportunity to participate
  - unexpected interventions in out of the way places to awaken interests not previously suspected
  - the need to focus on developing new, appropriate, artistic practice
  - the possibility of relevant feedback
  - requests for regular activity, not weather dependent, child/age friendly, easy access and without cost or travel
  - building on small confidence boosting activities to free up perceptions of what is possible and get past initial reserve
  - emphasis on participatory working
  - ways of telling local stories
  - offering a longer term activity with advertising so people know where, when and what to expect
15. There was a view that some previously un-engaged local people now have some idea as to how the arts could enhance their lives.

16. More time should be allocated to forward planning to ensure that artists and the programme have sufficient lead up time to enable everyone to benefit from the planned activity.
17. As some of this is new to some of the Transported Team, it is important that the team builds in CPD opportunities to ensure the members continue to develop in line with the needs and expectations of the project.