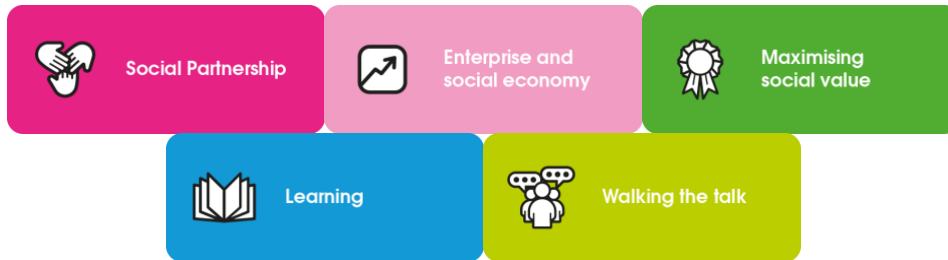




# Co-operative Councils

## Innovation Network

### COMMUNITY



## Stevenage Borough Council

### Arts and Culture for Social Cohesion – Creating Spaces for Art and Culture

We have an online arts and heritage forum to encourage a wide range of communities. Out of the arts and heritage forum came Project Junction 7 Creatives, which allows people to come together and create. Our annual event, Stevenage Day, promotes all the communities in Stevenage and is a macro representation of Stevenage.

Creating Spaces for Art and Culture in Stevenage focused on providing community spaces through events such as Stevenage Day and improving accessibility to facilities such as our museum and the Gordan Craig Theatre. We also looked at the development of creative spaces like Junction 7 Creatives, an organisation based in the heart of our town that helps local people access and explore creativity and culture.

Through our work with Junction 7 Creatives, we have been able to continue engaging with and supporting grassroots organisations that access their gallery space and meeting facility. Junction 7 supports both amateur and professional artists by providing a platform for works to be displayed and community arts groups to meet and develop ideas. They also support students through their internship programme with the local college.

Our involvement in this policy lab and the communication avenues it opened for us have also led us to work more closely with the Stevenage LGBTQ+ group to deliver a larger event within Stevenage Day 2024 to celebrate Pride Month.

As this is the first time the Stevenage group have organised a Pride event in the town, this initial celebration will be held alongside our annual Stevenage Day event. The existing support and organisational structures within Stevenage Borough Council will therefore be available for the Stevenage LGBTQ+ group to lean upon with plans to develop it into a standalone Pride event in the coming years.

We are also working with the Stevenage Equalities Commission for Ethnically Diverse Communities to host a conference in October for Black History Month. To celebrate the Creating Spaces theme, the conference will be held in the Gordan Craig Theatre, which is at the heart of our performance community. It will focus on making spaces like this more accessible to community groups and amateur performers.

Our focus on developing our creative spaces, access opportunities, and community-led events showcased a small sample of the myriad of art and cultural activities in the town that bring together communities and ensure that everyone has space for expression.

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**For further information contact:**

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