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Estuary Festival

Culture-led engagement for Pride in Place programmes

Case study: Canvey Island
(Phase One PiP area)

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Estuary Festival



Engagement challenges

- Sustained community engagement is critical to Pride in Place success.
- Many places experience:
 - **Consultation fatigue**
 - **Low trust in institutions**
 - **Fragmented delivery across sectors**
- Culture can support early engagement, buy-in and continuity.



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About Estuary Festival

- Place-based cultural organisation operating across multiple local authority areas.
- Track record of:
 - **Working in complex, coastal and under-represented communities**
 - **Delivering funded programmes at scale**
 - **Coordinating partners across culture, wellbeing, education and local government**
- Experienced in aligning delivery with policy frameworks rather than standalone events.

Cockles of my Heart II commissioned by Breakwater commissioned for Estuary 2025. Photo: Tessa Hallmann



Engagement methodology

- Long-term, relationship-led engagement rather than short-term interventions.
- Community co-design embedded from the outset.
- Local artists deployed as trusted facilitators, not just producers.
- Delivery responsive to local context, embedded, active and highly visible.



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Canvey Island

- A comparable Pride in Place context.
- Strong local identity alongside deprivation and health inequality.
- Environmental and infrastructure pressures.
- Historic underinvestment in cultural infrastructure.
- Required approaches that were:
 - **Trust-based**
 - **Visible locally**
 - **Supportive of wider regeneration objectives**

Call Me Back! by artist Damilola Odusote shown on Canvey seafront for Estuary 2025 . Photo: Lillith Freeman



Pride in Place engagement

- Raising awareness of the investment and its long-term benefits.
- Building trust and transparency around the Board's work and decision-making.
- Active participation from residents, businesses, and local organisations.
- Conveying core messages: led by the community, for the community. Your voice matters.
- "Together, we're building a better Canvey"



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Working in partnership

- Programme developed in close alignment with Board & LA:
 - Local plans and PiP priorities
 - Existing statutory and VCSE services
 - Health, sport and wellbeing strategies
- Operating as a delivery and engagement partner, not a duplicator
- Supporting local teams with additional capacity and specialist expertise



What is your vision for Canvey?

- * More flowers scattered around
- * More kindness
- * More trees
- * More food
- * More shops
- * More happiness

Which topic(s) are you most interested in (tick as many as you like)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Access and transport
<input type="checkbox"/>	Young people projects
<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing projects
<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Skills and Employment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Youth & Community Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/>	Seafront & Heritage
<input type="checkbox"/>	Green spaces
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sports facilities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Health & Wellbeing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Canvey Town Centre
<input type="checkbox"/>	Digital connectivity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please state)

What's your age?

<input type="checkbox"/>	19 & under	<input type="checkbox"/>	40-49	<input type="checkbox"/>	60-69		
<input type="checkbox"/>	20-39	<input type="checkbox"/>	50-59	<input type="checkbox"/>	70-79	<input type="checkbox"/>	80+

What's your relationship to Canvey?
I am 6 and love it!

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Engagement in numbers

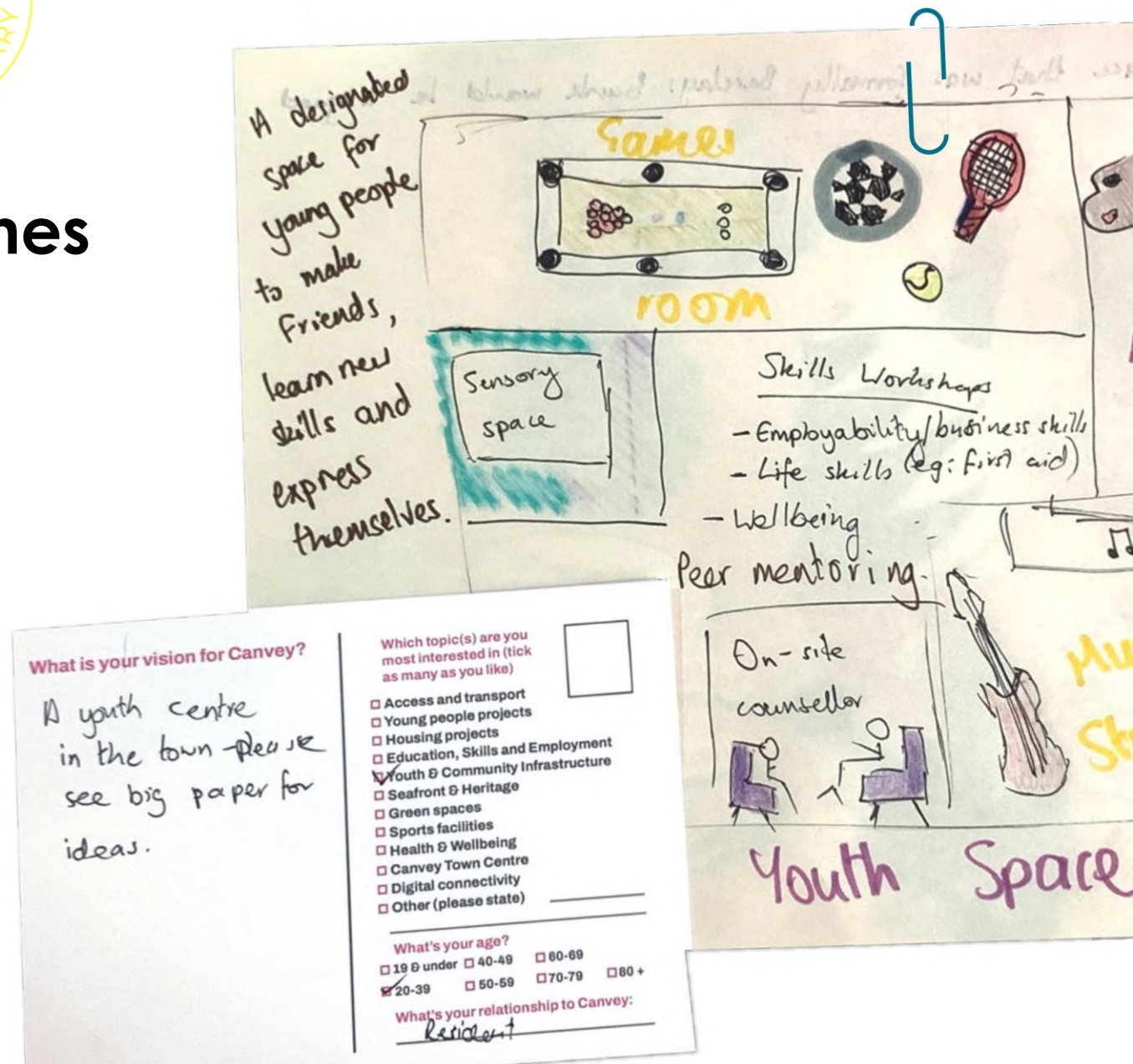
- **2 week** pop up exhibition & workshop space
- **817 postcards** from the future contributed by local residents
- **11 workshops** delivered in community settings
- **10 local artists** commissioned





Clear evidence-based outcomes

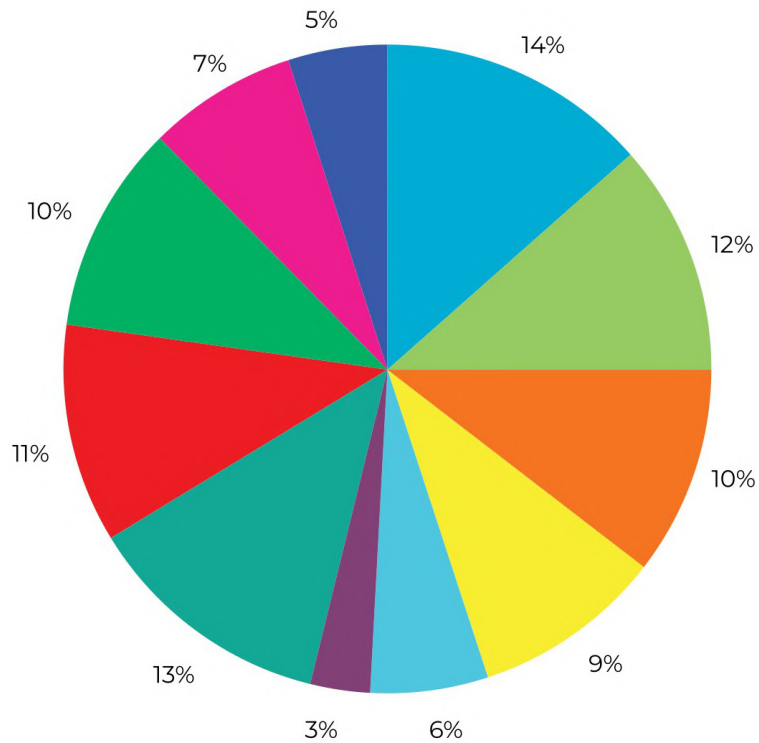
1. Strong and inclusive participation
2. Clear articulation of community priorities
3. Desire for ambitious & locally grounded regeneration
4. High-quality qualitative insight to shape delivery
5. Increased trust and readiness for delivery



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Postcard Elements



- Access & Transport
- Canvey Town Centre
- Health & Wellbeing
- Youth & Community Infrastructure
- Sports Facilities
- Digital Connectivity
- Young people projects
- Green Spaces
- Seafront & Heritage
- Education, Skills & Employment
- Housing projects



Participation & inclusion outcomes

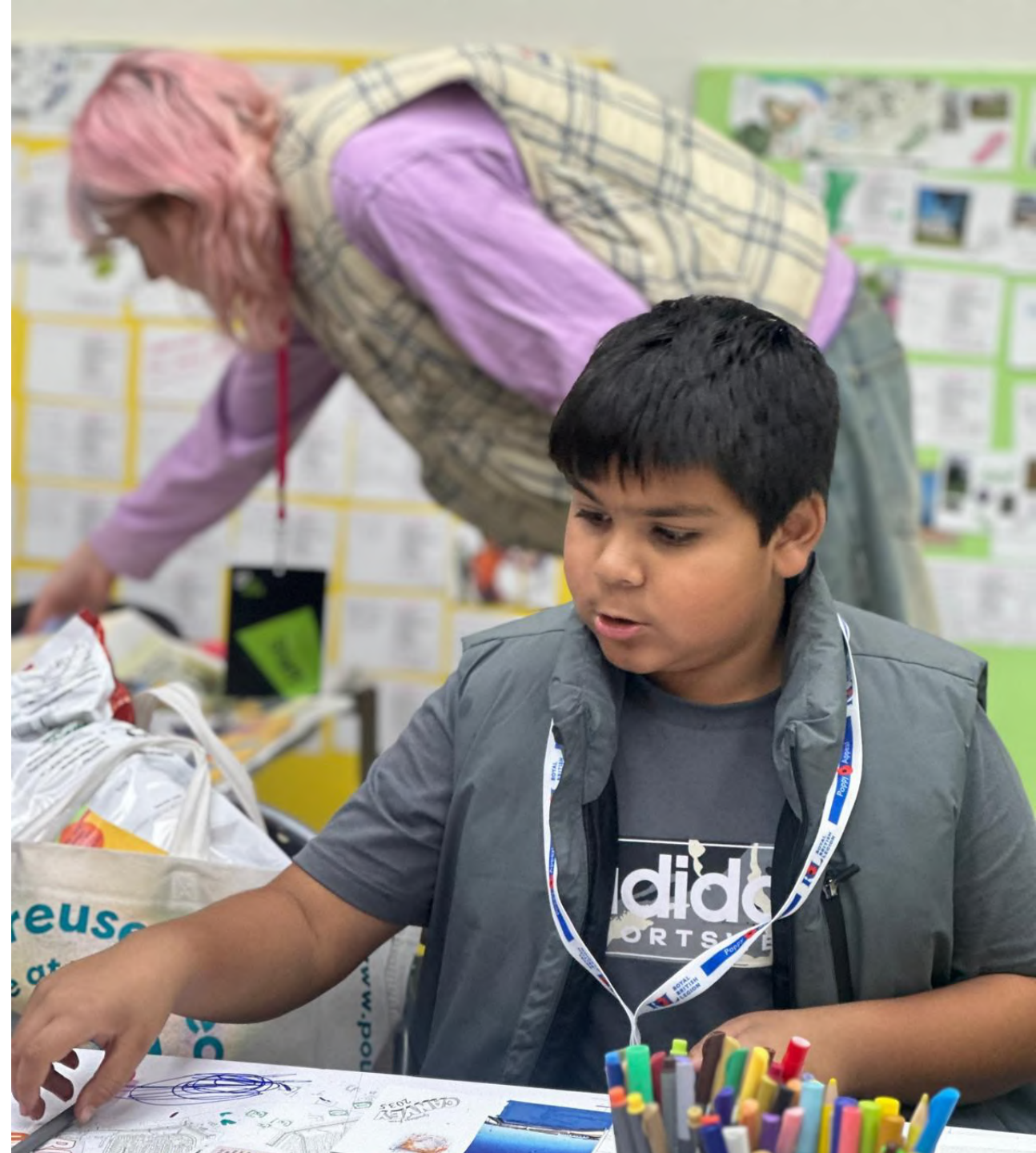
- High levels of engagement achieved.
- Engagement reached groups typically under-represented in formal consultation, including youth groups, residents in sheltered accommodation, disabled people, families, & faith groups including the Haredi Jewish community.
- Approaches designed to reduce barriers and increase sustained participation.



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Value for PiP Boards

- Independent, place-sensitive engagement delivery.
- Ability to convene cross-sector partners around shared aims.
- Evidence-based approaches aligned with funder reporting and scrutiny requirements.
- Reduces pressure on internal LA capacity during delivery phases.



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Legacy & Sustainability

- Continued involvement in local boards and partnerships beyond programme delivery.
- Cultural work informing future investment and placemaking decisions.
- Strong foundation for follow-on phases and longer-term strategies.
- Model tested across multiple locations.

Canvey Engagement for Pride in Neighbourhoods. Produced by Estuary Festival, commissioned by the Canvey Town Board. Photo: Tessa Hallmann



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Transferable learning

1. Use independent delivery to strengthen trust and participation
2. Combine creative methods with structured data capture
3. Depth of insight + volume of responses can be achieved
4. Design engagement to reach under-represented groups by default
5. Align engagement outputs to decision making
6. Outsource delivery to reduce pressure on statutory capacity & improve outcomes
7. Build long-term engagement, not one-off consultation

Canvey Engagement for Pride in Neighbourhoods. Produced by Estuary Festival, commissioned by the Canvey Town Board. Photo: Amy Ryall



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Final reflections

- Culture can support Pride in Place Boards to:
 - Reach deeper into communities
 - Build confidence and local ownership
 - Strengthen cross-sector collaboration
- Provides a cost-effective way to deliver high-profile activity through partnership working.
- Engages diverse voices/perspectives and builds local pride and identity.
- A tested framework & methodology for Pride in Place engagement.



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Let's Build Pride in Place: Together

Prompt for discussion: *Where could additional engagement capacity or specialist delivery support strengthen your Pride in Place programme?*

Estuary Festival is ready to work in partnership to lead ambitious, inclusive Pride in Place engagement programmes.

Contact me if you would like to:

- Commission a bespoke PiP engagement programme
- Work with an experienced place-based cultural leader
- Activate diverse local communities to inform your regeneration plans

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Canvey Engagement for Pride in Neighbourhoods. Produced by Estuary Festival, commissioned by the Canvey Town Board. Photo: Tessa Hallmann & Thea Behrman

