Executive Summary

* 1. Introduction
     1. Background to Flood

Flood was a year-long, multi-platform epic performed live in Hull, online and on BBC TV. It spanned all four seasons of Hull’s year as UK City of Culture in 2017.

Flood was an epic adventure about the end of our world, set in the future, told in many parts. It was the story of what happens to Hull when the waters come.

Flood used live performance, special effects, digital manifestations and other platforms to tell a story across an entire year.

It was produced by Slung Low with support from Hull 2017, and written by James Phillips.

An eight strong Core Project Team (CPT), made up of individuals from Hull 2017 and Slung Low - the theatre production company who were commissioned by Hull 2017 - was brought together to deliver the project.

* + 1. The Episodes of Flood

The production was divided into four constituent episodes:

* FLOOD (Part 1): FROM THE SEA was a short film distributed online from early 2017 and also screened in an airstream caravan at various locations around the city.
* FLOOD (Part 2): ABUNDANCE was a live play originally performed at the city’s Victoria Dock in April 2017.
* FLOOD (Part 3): TO THE SEA was a live broadcast on BBC2, as part of their BBC Arts strand Performance Live, in August 2017 and subsequently made available for 30 days on the BBC iPlayer.
* FLOOD (PART 4): NEW WORLD was a live play performed first as a stand-alone event at Victoria Dock in September 2017, then again as part of an omnibus performance with Part 2: ABUNDANCE and a screening of Part 3: TO THE SEA in October 2017.
  + 1. Aims, Objectives and Purpose

The Flood Evaluation Report provides objective analysis and evaluation of how the project delivered against its own vision, aims and objectives (see Figure 1); and the extent to which it contributed to Hull 2017’s overarching strategic aims and objectives (see Figure 2).

The insights from this Report will be used to inform project planning and delivery within Hull UK City of Culture 2017 Ltd. and improve and enhance any outdoor theatre projects the organisation may undertake in future.

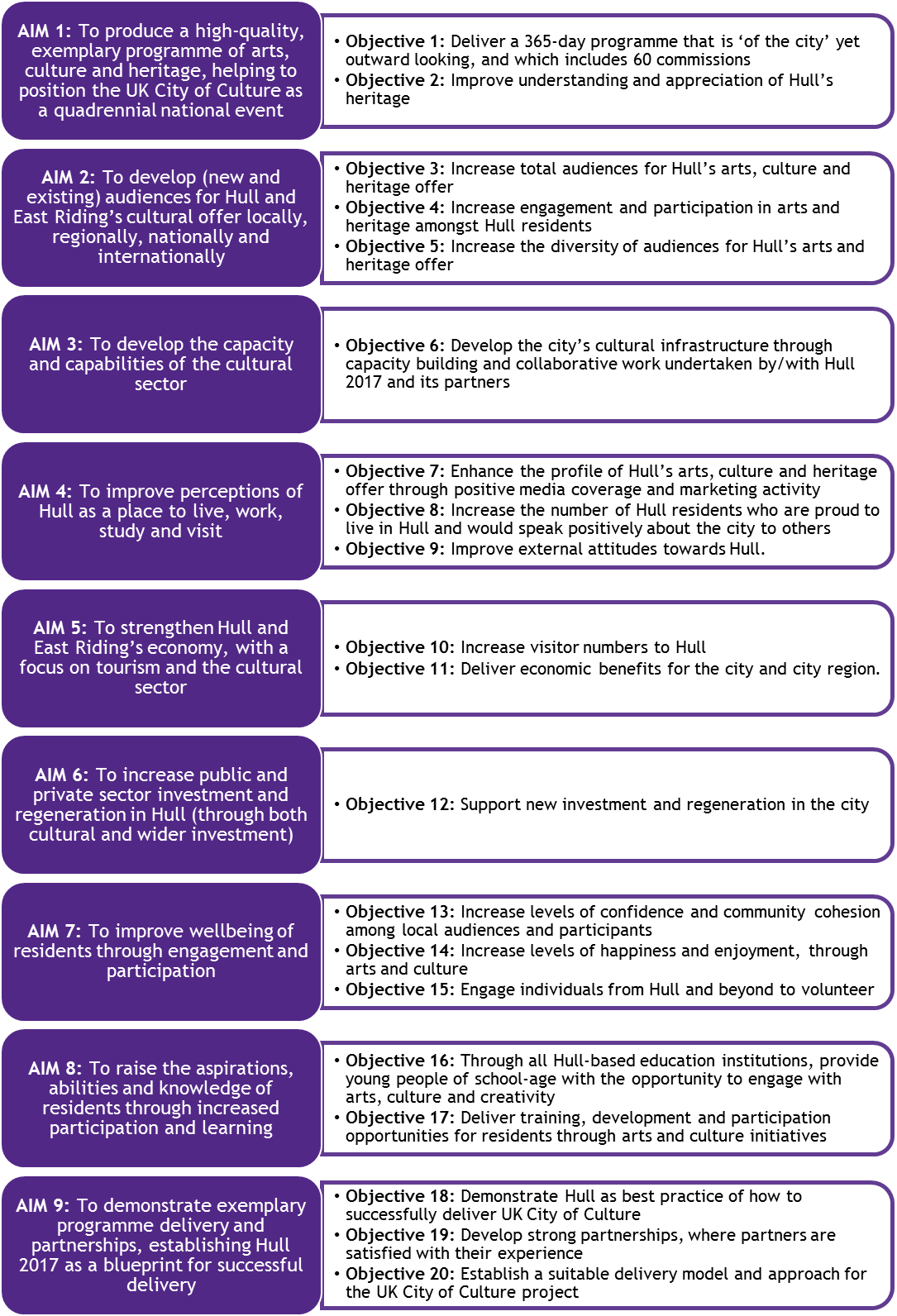
In addition, there are plans to share key findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations with other cultural organisations (both locally and nationally), so they can benefit from knowledge transfer.

Figure 1: Project-specific Aims and Objectives

***\*\*\*To be inserted as graphic\*\*\****

* **Aim 1: To create a year-long epic story told in four parts (online, live in Hull & on BBC TV), ensuring all four parts connect with one another and stand alone**
  + **Objective 1:** Slung Low to commission script writer, James Phillips
  + **Objective 2:** Slung Low to recruit a Digital Producer to create intervening online content that will build character profiles
  + **Objective 3:** Produce a short film (prologue) to be distributed via YouTube and [www.hull2017.co.uk](http://www.hull2017.co.uk)
  + **Objective 4:** Create two high quality pieces of live, outdoor, site-specific performance
  + **Objective 5:** Create a live performance for BBC TV
* **Aim 2: To develop the skills and confidence of Slung Low in online digital engagement, film-making and broadcast that can be shared with others in the sector**
  + **Objective 6:** Support Slung Low and the Digital Producer with the development and distribution of online content
  + **Objective 7:** Work with partners at Battersea Arts Centre and the BBC to develop and deliver part three live on BBC Two
  + **Objective 8:** Slung Low and Hull 2017 to share project learnings and expertise with the Ambition for Excellence Consortium
* **Aim 3: To engage the residents of Victoria Dock where the project will be developed and delivered**
  + **Objective 9:** Slung Low to be theatre company in-residence from beginning of 2017 to October 2017
  + **Objective 10:** Slung Low and Hull 2017 to engage the local community through Victoria Dock Village Hall Community Association, schools and community groups.
* **Aim 4: To engage a large community chorus and local suppliers in the live, outdoor, site-specific performances** 
  + **Objective 11:** Recruit a community chorus from the Hull 2017 Volunteer Programme
  + **Objective 12:** Support community chorus members to step outside their comfort zone through masterclass training and rehearsal process
  + **Objective 13:** Encourage local suppliers and freelancers to engage with tender opportunities for Slung Low
* **Aim 5: To provide an accessible and thought-provoking theatre experience for live, online and broadcast audiences**
  + **Objective 14:** Tour the short film (prologue) in an airstream caravan to various locations across Hull to begin engaging local audiences in the project
  + **Objective 15:** Explore themes and issues of relevance to the world today within the narrative of Flood
  + **Objective 16:** Provide wheelchair access, wheelchair spaces, seating and blue badge spaces at all live performances
  + **Objective 17:** Provide audio described and captioned performances

Figure 2: Hull 2017 Overarching Aims and Objectives



* + 1. Methodology

The evaluation included a small amount of desk research, supplemented by primary data collection with a range of project stakeholders at different points within the project lifecycle. This enabled expectations and intentions for Flood to be measured, as well as the outputs and outcomes of the project. Mixed methods were used, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Research and Consultation on Look Up

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Stakeholder Group | Research Methodology | Sample Size |
| Creative Project Team | In-delivery online survey  Post-event online survey  Post-event depth interview | 4  3  4 |
| Artists | Post-event online survey  Post-event depth interview | 2  2 |
| Peer Assessors | Pre-event online survey  Part 1 post-event online survey  Part 2 post-event online survey  Part 3 post-event online survey  Part 4 post-event online survey | 3  3  3  3  2 |
| Audiences | Part 1 post audience survey  Parts 2 & 4 post audience survey  Part 3 post audience survey  2 x focus groups | 187  194  69  20 |
| Delivery Partners | Post-event online survey | 2 |
| Community Cast | 2 x post-event focus groups | 19 |
| Residents | 4 x in-delivery focus groups  Post-event focus group | 21  4 |

The evaluation focuses on both process and outcomes, measuring impact, capturing learning, and building understanding of what worked well and where improvements can be made.

* 1. Key Findings

Sections 1.2.1. to 1.2.17. highlight key findings from the Flood Evaluation Report. At the end of each section the Project Aims and Objectives (Figure 1) and Hull 2017 Aims and Objectives (Figure 2), to which these findings contribute are highlighted.

* + 1. Contribution to the Overall Hull 2017 Programme
* Four episodes spanning all four seasons;
* 1 short film;
* 14 days of live outdoor theatre performances;
* 1 BBC Performance Live broadcast, available for a further 30 days on BBC iPlayer;
* Dedicated website containing supplementary online content;
* Victoria Dock location – a community close to Hull City Centre;
* 1 theatre company and 2 artists commissioned.

Commissioned artworks represented a range of media and art forms including, readymade, digital, mixed media, film, vinyl, paper sculpture, illustration, sign-making, steel sculpture and digital projection mapping.

*“It is a programme to explore the city through temporary interventions and it is inviting artists … and audiences to look at the city in different ways.”*(CPT Member)

***Project Aim 1  
Hull 2017 Aim 1***

* + 1. Quality and the Creative Case for Diversity
* Of the CPT members and artists who provided equal opportunities data, there were:
  + Six males and four females;
  + Age groups from 20 to 49 years; and
  + Residents from across the UK.
* There were no disabled artists or CPT members, and little in the way of ethnic diversity. Despite this, the CPT stated that they had made a conscious effort to ensure diversity within the community cast and the professional performers.
* Flood was of high quality, with an average score across all Quality Metrics[[1]](#footnote-1) post-event of 8.3 out of 10.
* Flood Quality Metrics post-event scored a minimum of 6.3 out of 10 with most frequent scores between 9 and 10 out of 10 across the CPT, Peer Assessors, and audiences.
* Concept - it was an interesting idea; and Local Impact – it is important that it’s happening here (in Hull) were the two highest scoring Quality Metrics on average across the CPT, Peer Assessors, and audiences (scoring 8.9 out of 10 on average across all three groups).
* Peer Assessors felt the weakest Quality Metrics were Excellence - It was one of the best examples of its type, due in part to the complex narrative, and Distinctiveness - It was different from things I’ve experienced before, because they had seen elements of the production elsewhere.
* The individual episodes assessed by Peers ranked Part Four: New World the highest in terms of Quality Metrics, with an average of 8.5 out of 10. Part 3: To The Sea ranked lowest with 5.9 out of 10.
* Audiences gave particularly high scores for Distinctiveness (9.1), Local Impact (9.1) and the Concept (9.0). The average score being 8.8 out of 10. Indeed, only Captivation received an average score below 8.5, driven by the low rating of Part Three: To The Sea, the Performance Live broadcast on BBC2.

*“It is a very complex idea to use a mixed media approach to tell the story - especially with the episodes over such a long period of time. To have live elements and to intersperse these with the televisual elements, I’ve never seen anything like it, it really is very clever and interesting.”*(Peer Assessor)

***Project Aim 1  
Hull 2017 Aim 1***

* + 1. Audience Engagement

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Episode | Viewing figures |
| Flood: From the Sea (Part 1) | 15,421 |
| Flood: From the Sea (Part 1) - Audio Described | 502 |
| Flood: From the Sea (Part 1) - Tour of Hull | 778 |
| Flood: Abundance (Part 2) | 1,945 |
| Flood (Part 3) - BBC Two | 215,000 |
| Flood (Part 3) - BBC iPlayer | 9,000 |
| Flood: Abundance (Part 2) & New World (Part 4) Double Bill | 1,645 |
| Flood: New World (Part 4) | 1,574 |
| TOTAL ESTIMATED AUDIENCE FOR FLOOD | **245,865** |

* A total audience of 245,865 viewed Flood across all platforms.
  + Part 3 had the highest number of viewers thanks to its broadcast on BBC2 and subsequent availability on BBC iPlayer, whilst Part Four had the lowest audience numbers.
* The audience survey data suggests that the majority of audience members had engaged with one, if not all, of the previous Flood episodes prior to attending or watching Flood.
* Flood appears to have been successful in attracting visitors – 59% of audiences were non-Hull residents.
* In comparison to Hull 2017 audiences more generally, Flood audiences were slightly younger.
* There were significantly more females than males.
* Residents from the 10% most deprived deciles were under-represented by 33%. Whilst this is not unusual when comparing to other events and activities, it indicates that more must be done to programme for these audiences and / or identify the barriers to engagement that they are experiencing.
* The mean group size for Flood was 2.2, consisting of 0.1 children and 2.5 adults. The most frequent group size was 2. This demonstrates that Flood attracted mainly adults and couples.
* According to the post-event audience survey, there appears to be two main reasons why audiences decided to attend Flood. 41% of respondents stated that their main reason for attending Flood was ‘It’s a unique experience not to be missed’, whilst 34% said it was ‘Because it’s part of Hull UK City of Culture 2017’, the latter reason implying that the ‘branding’ of the event made it more likely that people would attend.

*“I follow everything on Twitter, I'm a real Twitter addict and I kept seeing things about it and reading things about it and I just thought, it just sounds so different and so unlike anything I've ever seen before. I've got to just go see it so that was really why I booked, just because it sounded so different.”*

*(Focus Group Respondent: Flood Audience)*

***Project Aim 3  
Hull 2017 Aim 2; Hull 2017 Aim 5***

* + 1. Bringing Arts and Culture to Hull Communities
* Flood Parts Two, Three and Four were produced and filmed in Victoria Dock, a residential neighbourhood close to Hull City Centre. This meant that Slung Low were stationed as theatre company in residence throughout much of 2017.
* Residents reported that Slung Low were able to forge positive relations with the local community, which in turn had a significant impact on levels of pride and community cohesion.
* Hosting one of the cultural highlights of the City of Culture programme had made the community feel more connected to the rest of the city, and a key part of the Hull2017 story.
* 93% of audience members stated ‘Flood’ provided a different experience of the city. Many said they had never been to Victoria Dock before.
* 65% of audiences agreed that Flood had placed the community at the centre.

*‘This could only happen at Victoria Dock. You know, it's so unique and specific and that increases the pride because this wouldn't have worked at one of the other estates.’*

(Focus Group Respondent: Victoria Dock Resident)

*‘It makes you feel a part of it. There's a lot think that just seem to go on over there in the town centre, or on some of the remote estates. To have something here, in our own community, it's been a big difference.’*

(Focus Group Respondent: Victoria Dock Resident)

***Project Aim 1; Project Aim 2; Project Aim 3  
Hull 2017 Aim 1; Hull 2017 Aim 4***

* + 1. High Quality Production
* The vast majority of respondent groups agreed that Flood was a high quality production. All post-event Quality Metrics scored an average of 8.3 out of 10. Across all Quality Metrics, the CPT rated it 9.3 out of 10, Peer Assessors rated it 7.1 out of 10, and audiences rated it 8.8 out of 10.
* All individual post-event Quality Metrics scored a minimum of 6.3 out of 10.
* Presentation – it was well produced and presented, scored 8.7 out of 10 across all groups. Audiences rated it 8.8 out of 10.
* The individual episodes assessed by Peers ranked Part Four: New World the highest in terms of Quality Metrics, with an average of 8.5 out of 10. Part 3: To The Sea ranked lowest with 5.9 out of 10.
* The Presentation of Part Four was given the highest average rating of 9.3 out of 10.
* 93% agreed that Flood was an enjoyable experience. Feedback from focus group respondents suggests this was because it was visually arresting, unusual and provocative. Some of the words used to describe it were:

*‘Surreal’*

*‘Post-apocalyptic’*

*‘Unusual’*

*‘Perplexing’*

*‘A spectacle’*

*‘Thought-provoking’*

(Focus Group Respondents: Victoria Dock Residents and Flood Audience)

*“It was also a very bold and visionary piece of work, and then, beautifully executed as well. Really, once, it did not break down, it wasn't clumsy, it was beautifully, beautifully executed.”*

(CPT Member)

*“I think for me it was technically ground-breaking because I haven't seen quite a lot of the effects that they used ever before, when they were beaming video onto water. And the fact that it all went off and I didn’t notice anything go wrong, it might have done, but I didn’t see it, that was astonishing. It was complicated.”*

(Focus Group Respondent: Flood Audience)

***Project Aim 1***

***Hull 2017 Aim xx***

* + 1. Four Standalone Episodes
* CPT agreed that the whole was far greater than the sum of its parts, but in general audiences were able to get something from each individual episode.
* Audiences tended to think that the storyline was too closely intertwined across the four episodes for any of them to be truly standalone.

*“I don't think any of them would have made sense on their own really.”*

(Focus Group Respondent: Flood Audience)

*“You didn't have to have a continuation but the continuation was still interesting.”*

(Focus Group Respondent: Flood Audience)

*“I thought people who came to see part two really enjoyed part two as standalone. I don't think they felt like they missed anything. At the end, when we did part four, we had the recap.”*

(CPT Member)

* The fact that audiences felt that each episode was part of a series might also explain why ticket sales declined after each one.

***Project Aim 1***

***Hull 2017 Aim xx***

* + 1. Provoking Thought and Debate
* Flood was interpreted by some audience members as an exploration of intrinsic human behaviour; it had challenged them to think about their own morals and how they would react in situations of extreme adversity.
* Other issues identified by audiences included:
  + Migration – this prompted some to re-evaluate their understanding of, and attitudes towards, the issues of immigration and the treatment of refugees.
  + Society and the fundamental principles of government and democracy.
  + Climate change and its impact on communities.
* Flood also brought up personal memories of the recent floods in the city – a number of respondents said they had first-hand experience of the impact of the disaster. Some residents mentioned that it had made them think about the effectiveness of flood defences at Victoria Dock.

‘*The end of that one when the flood was in Hull it just brought it all to such ... It pulled it all together and you were just left there thinking this could be us and this is what we're doing to other people on our planet and I don't know. I was just completely immersed in the second one and really emotional and it just made me think for days afterwards, and I can remember the quotes that some of the characters had said.’*

(Focus Group Respondent: Flood Audience)

***Project Aim 5***

***Hull 2017 Aim 4; Hull 2017 Aim 7***

* + 1. Access All Areas
* The theatre site had level access with a wheelchair viewing platform, and blue-badge parking was available nearby.
* Captioned and audio described performances took place on certain nights.
* Peer Assessors recognised that the live performances had been largely accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds.
* Disability was also represented and explored as an issue within the performances.
* Despite the availability of some seating, some audience members with enduring health problems said they struggled to cope with the physical demands of standing outside in the cold for a prolonged length of time.

*‘It felt like access needs of audience members were well supported by the team.’*

(Peer Assessor)

***Project Aim 5  
Hull 2017 Aim xx***

* + 1. Involving the Community
* A community cast of 67 Hull 2017 volunteers were recruited to perform in Parts Two, Three and Four of ‘Flood’.
* Their demographic profile shows they were predominantly local residents (with a high representation from the East Riding), older, female and White British, which reflects the wider demographic profile of the Hull 2017 volunteering cohort.
* 1,565 tickets for the live performances were locked to distribute amongst Hull residents via community groups (as well as partners and staff) reflecting the CPT’s commitment to including the local community.
* HU9, the Victoria Dock postcode district, accounted for 6% of all audiences – the third highest.

***Project Aim 3  
Hull 2017 Aim xx***

* + 1. Challenging Participants
* Community cast members were overwhelmingly positive about the experience. It was described as a unique experience which had left many of them feeling proud of their involvement.
* They felt valued and trusted by the Slung Low team, who treated them the same as the professional cast.
* As well as rehearsals, most community cast members received additional, specialist training, ranging from fight choreography to driving a speedboat. All the training they received was well-received and appeared to be pitched at the right level. Other skills they learned through the process included:
  + working as a team;
  + how to take direction;
  + outdoor theatre production.
* Many reported that the experience had pushed community cast members outside their comfort zone, which in turn helped to increase confidence and self-esteem.
* Many said it had renewed their interest in theatre – both as performers and audience members.

***Project Aim 3  
Hull 2017 Aim xx***

* + 1. New Horizons in Arts and Culture
* Over three-quarters of audiences stated ‘Flood’ challenged their understanding of theatre. The multi-platform format, the outdoor performances on water, and the special effects were elements that surprised and amazed audience members.
* Distinctiveness – It was different from things I’ve experienced before, was rated 9.1 out of 10 amongst audiences.
* Enthusiasm – I would come to something like this again, was rated 8.8 out of 10 amongst audiences.
* 97% of audiences said they would attend further arts and cultural activities in the city.
  + Those from outside Hull were 8% less likely to be planning to attend or participate in other Hull 2017 activities or events, suggesting that travel and/or accommodation is a potential barrier to engagement for these visitors.
  + Younger audience members were 6% more likely to be planning to attend or participate in other Hull 2017 activities or events, compared to over 65s, suggesting that age is another slight barrier to engagement.
* Peer Assessors recognised the significance of producing this type of show in Hull.

*“As a production it has links to outdoor theatre presentations I’ve seen at Derry-Londonderry, Edinburgh and in Greek and Roman theatre settings in Europe – but it is certainly very different for Hull!”*

(Peer Assessor)

*‘I think it's a completely different experience. It's not as personal as when you go to the theatre, like it was a very different personal experience than that. I think it's sort of halfway towards film really.’*

(Focus Group Respondent: Flood Audience)

*“We go to theatres all over the country, and even all over the world; Vegas and places like that. This was very, very different. It was completely different to anything we've seen.”*

(Focus Group Respondent: Victoria Dock Resident)

***Hull 2017 Aim 2***

* + 1. Bringing People Together
* 52% of audiences agreed Flood gave everyone the chance to share and celebrate together.
* A number of audience members said the live performances felt like a communal experience, which in turn encouraged interaction with others.
* Community cast members said that the opportunity to work with the same group of people on a regular basis enabled them to develop friendships and expand their social networks.
* Slung Low’s residency on Victoria Dock acted as a catalyst for greater community cohesion and an increased sense of pride in the area.

*‘What Slung Low did was bring everybody together. We were a community, but that bit was over there, that bit was over there ... But so, it brought everybody together in the one place.’*

(Focus Group Respondent: Victoria Dock Resident)

*‘I think because we were such a small group, we sort of just I don't know just became best friends didn't we? All of us.’*

(Focus Group Respondent: Flood Community Cast)

***Hull 2017 Aim 7***

* + 1. Improving Perceptions of Hull
* By the end of the project, almost all CPT members, Artists and Delivery Partners said they would speak more positively about the city. Others already had a positive opinion towards the city before being involved, and this remained unchanged. Where positive changes occurred this stemmed from their experience of meeting local people, seeing the city’s architecture and witnessing the galvanising effects of the City of Culture work in terms of increasing engagement with the arts.
* Victoria Dock residents said they were proud to have hosted one of the most significant projects of the Hull2017 programme. Indeed, it has encouraged residents to explore other ways to celebrate the history and heritage of the local area.
* Audiences reported how ‘Flood’ particularly had opened their eyes to what Hull had to offer. 60% of audiences responding to the ‘Flood’ post-event audience survey strongly agreed or agreed that there was ‘more to Hull than [they] had expected’.
* There was a feeling amongst residents that Flood had generated interest and challenged negative perceptions of the Victoria Dock area. Audience members who were first-time visitors were more likely to be left with a positive perception of the city as a whole.

*‘The work put in by the Culture team really did feel like it started to have a positive effect on the atmosphere of the city and the aspirations of some of the people in it.’*

(Artist)

*“I felt quite protective of it as well...I mean, it was a pride in that it had come to our area. If anyone was criticizing it, I felt quite defensive about it, which surprised me. 'Cause even though I do live in the area, I've not really got anything to ... Well, apart from being on the shift, but I was just proud of it really, I guess.”*

(Focus Group Respondent: Resident)

*“There is all that sort of stigma attached to Victoria Dock. Hopefully it's just going to make people realize it's just an area that's got a lot to offer.”*

(Focus Group Respondent: Residents)

*‘The 2017 City of Culture project has clearly been a great profile raiser for the city around the UK and beyond but more importantly seems to have created a genuine city wide engagement with cultural activities as a positive force in the community.’*

(Delivery Partner)

***Hull 2017 Aim 4***

* + 1. Generation of National Media Interest
* Overall, the level and tone of the media coverage relating to Flood has been beneficial for raising awareness and positive perceptions of the city.
* Flood secured a total coverage volume of 247 across print, online and broadcast, which equated to a total readership of 630 million and estimated AVE (Advertising Value Equivalent) of more than £780,000.
* The largest amount of coverage throughout the year was in December when ‘Flood’ was repeatedly chosen as a highlight of the year and celebrated for its ambition and scale. These mentions appeared across the BBC network as well as in local media.
* The second largest spike in coverage took place in August around the time of the BBC2 Performance Live broadcast of Part Three: To The Sea with guest blogs by Alan Lane appearing in The Big Issue North and Broadway World, television previews in The Times and the Guardian, as well as key local arts features in The Yorkshire Post and The Hull Daily Mail.
* Volume of coverage grew steadily throughout the year, peaking around the four performances and/or broadcasts, culminating in a large amount of coverage at the end of the year when ‘Flood’ was selected as a highlight of 2017 on the BBC News Channel.
* Editorial coverage around the time of ‘Flood’ was largely neutral with 25% positive. Flood has often been praised for its community inclusivity and accessibility, as well as ambition and scale.

***Hull 2017 Aim 2; Hull 2017 Aim 4***

* + 1. Capacity Building of Creative and Cultural Professionals
* Flood engaged a broad range of creative and cultural professionals from across the UK, including 8 Core Project Team members, a Playwright, a Digital Producer and a Theatre Company. Many of the individuals involved in the production were new to working in Hull.
* A key motivation for these individuals and collectives to work on Flood was the city's status as UK City of Culture. Other significant motivations included:
  + The opportunity to work with certain individuals or organisations with whom they admired or had previous working relationships
  + The openness of the brief and the artistic freedom and flexibility offered by Hull 2017;
  + The innovativeness of the project (for Delivery Partners)
  + The opportunity to reach new audiences;
  + The opportunities to raise their own profile.
* The major impact on creative and cultural professionals involved in the production of Flood was learning how to deliver site-specific, outdoor theatre and understanding the logistics of production. This resulted in many creative professionals learning a range of new skills and techniques.
* Both artists and some CPT Members also said they had learned or developed skills in community engagement and health and safety.
* Some CPT Members and Artists also talked about developing skills in project management, project development, and audience development. Some CPT members also learnt ways of increasing the accessibility of outdoor theatre performances.
* During the in-depth interviews Artists talked about a number of practical skills they’d learnt, such as:
  + How to make a podcast;
  + How to drive a speedboat, and;
  + Understanding technicalities of working on water.
* Flood provided many opportunities for those working on the project to collaborate with other individuals and organisations. All CPT Members and Artists said they had built new relationships and developed pre-existing relationships, which had meant an increase and diversification in their professional networks.
* CPT Members reported that Flood has made a significant impact on Slung Low as an organization in terms of changing their ambitions as a theatre company and giving them confidence in their capabilities.
* Slung Low reported that Flood has enabled them to strengthen their relationship with the Arts Council, who provided funding to Hull 2017. There was some suggestion that the increased funding they awarded to Slung Low midway through 2017 was in part influenced by their involvement in Flood.
* Both the Playwright and the Digital Producer said that seeing their work being performed on this scale had made them feel proud and given them confidence in their work and abilities as an artist.
* Many of the creative professionals involved said they had established positive working relationships with other individuals on the project which may lead to future collaborations.

*“It would be really hard to go back to what we were doing after Flood. The sense of scale, the sense of ambition is huge. We've learnt so much production-wise.”*

(CPT Member)

*“The partnerships that I made with the creative heads of department in Slung Low were really useful in terms of the work that we produced here but also beneficial to me just as a creative seeing how these people that are the top of their craft work.”*

(Artist)

***Project Aim 1; Project Aim 2   
Hull 2017 Aim 3; Hull 2017 Aim 9***

* + 1. Economic Impact
* 84% of audiences stated that their visit to the city centre was mainly due to their attendance at Flood. 13% it was partly the reason for their visit.
* The proportion of respondents saying that Flood was the main reason for their visit increases by age group: 79% amongst 16-44s compared to 89% amongst 65s and older.
* The aspects best-rated by visitors were, in particular, the general visitor welcome, with 94% satisfied or very satisfied (68% very satisfied), and overall value for money, with 90% satisfied or very satisfied (46% very satisfied).
* Places to eat and drink and signposting both also drew good levels of satisfaction, from 83% and 80% respectively, with over a third of respondents very satisfied with either aspect.
* Average visitor spend was £52.60 (excluding accommodation). For Hull residents the average spend was £18.62. Food and drink accounted for over half of this spend.
* The average length of stay was 2.6 days (varying from one day to six days) and 2.0 nights (varying from one night to five nights).
* The average total spend on accommodation was £69, ranging from zero to £350. Of those who paid for their stay (9 people), the average total spent rose to £123. The average that these people spent on accommodation per night was £43.

***Hull 2017 Aim 4; Hull 2017 Aim 5***

* + 1. 3Ps - Project Management, Production Management, Partnership

The overall management of the project was rated fairly highly by most respondent groups.

Both Delivery Partners said they were ‘Very Satisfied’ with Slung Low’s project management and ‘Satisfied’ or ‘Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied’ with Hull 2017.

Artists rated Project Management an average of 4.5 stars out of 5, suggesting that the CPT were effective in supporting Artists, providing resources and facilitating communications with other key partners.

* However, they rated communications between themselves and Hull 2017 as only 2.5 out of 5. To some extent the issues with communications were caused by a lack of clearly-defined roles and responsibilities at the start of the project stemming from a change of Producer.
* Discussions with the CPT suggest that Flood’s project management benefitted from a collaborative approach between Hull 2017 and Slung Low. The relationship between the two parties improved considerably throughout the year as they developed trust and learned about each other’s methods of working.
* There was a sense that the Hull 2017 team had provided effective support to Slung Low to develop and produce Flood – not just financially – but also by giving them the creative space to develop the concept, brokering important partnerships, securing additional funding, and providing practical production support.
* Some of the key project management challenges were:
  + Production timescales, an effect of an extended creative development period;
  + Different working methods;
  + The number of partners involved in the project.

*“It's just about going on that journey and knowing that relationships change, and they take a lot of nurturing. We did nurture that relationship a lot. We put a lot of energy into supporting [Slung Low] so they could deliver that work, rather than trying to do it for them.”*

(CPT Member)

*“[Hull 2017] were able to help broker some partnerships within the city and bringing on board the council and introducing us to the ESAG group… their support through that process, indeed throughout the whole year, was very smooth and very easy, and them securing the site for us, I think they were very well placed to do all that for us and that felt very smooth, that was great.”*

(CPT Member)

***Project Aim 1; Project Aim 2***

* + 1. Marketing
* By far the leading way of finding out about Flood was the Hull 2017 website, mentioned by over two-thirds of respondents, followed by social media with a third of respondents.
* Printed advertising, word of mouth and TV were also significant in driving awareness.

*‘I think for me because I hadn’t really heard anything about it, I just saw the poster, I’ve not heard or seen any hype, I just saw this poster and thought, wow, seeing the bridge get flooded like that.’*

(Focus Group Respondent: Flood Audience)

*“I post stuff on Facebook, I used to post as they were building the set a lot of photographs and stuff in the building of it and so people were getting interested in where is Victoria Dock? And where is Half Tide Basin? And then I attached to that with arty things around the area. People were getting more knowledge of the area.”*

(Focus Group Respondent: Victoria Dock Resident)

* 1. Key Learnings

The following section outlines the key learnings highlighted throughout the Flood Evaluation Report.

* + 1. The openness of the brief provided the freedom and flexibility to create a unique and ground-breaking piece of work

The innovative nature of the project was seen as one of its major strengths. The openness of the brief – along with the provocation of Hull 2017 - enabled Slung Low to flex their creative muscles and develop the concept for Flood, which challenged the conventions of a traditional theatre project.

* + 1. Flood belonged to the Victoria Dock community but had universal appeal

Staging Flood at Victoria Dock was a source of great pride for local residents, and there was a feeling that the production belonged to them. However, the themes and issues explored through the narrative had universal appeal, and the liver performances were enjoyed by audiences from across the city and beyond.

*“I felt quite protective of it as well...I mean, it was a pride in that it had come to our area. If anyone was criticizing it, I felt quite defensive about it, which surprised me. 'Cause even though I do live in the area, I've not really got anything to ... Well, apart from being on the shift, but I was just proud of it really, I guess.”*

(Focus Group Respondent: Resident)

* + 1. Site-specific, outdoor theatre requires special consideration for audience members

As the project unfolded, the CPT learnt a number of lessons that helped to improve the audience experience of the live performances. Spotlighting, aided projection and optional seating areas were all introduced to positive effect. Further consideration should also be given to how the weather or time of year might affect the audience experience; for example, encouraging audiences just to move around a little can help to counter particularly cold conditions.

*‘It was easier to follow, I mean I’d seen it before but it was much easier to follow, but again the length of the previous time, the spotlights, you could see who was talking, it was much easier to follow, so you sort of knew what to expect, it helped to make more sense of the story.*

(Focus Group Respondent: Flood Audience)

* + 1. High-quality, community-based arts projects can galvanise community spirit, increase social cohesion and provide new experiences for residents

Slung Low’s residency at Victoria Dock had a unifying effect on the local community in that it encouraged interaction between residents, the vast majority of whom were fully supportive of the project. The fact that the team had chosen Victoria Dock for such a significant and ground-breaking project created a sense of pride in their community and its assets. Furthermore, many audience members said they had never seen anything like Flood before.

*‘This could only happen at Victoria Dock. You know, it's so unique and specific and that increases the pride because this wouldn't have worked at one of the other estates.’*

(Focus Group Respondent: Victoria Dock Resident)

* + 1. Offering participatory opportunities can help build cultural infrastructure

Community cast members thoroughly enjoyed working alongside a professional cast and crew. The experience has raised aspirations and demonstrated the potential for participation on any level to inspire individuals to explore further opportunities within the arts and cultural sector.

*‘From that experience I've grown to have patience for acting and want to do more and want to set my actual foot on the acting field.’*

(Focus Group Respondent: Community Cast)

* + 1. Different platforms require specialist expertise and advice to ensure artistic quality is maintained

Flood Part Three: To The Sea was rated poorly compared to the other episodes, a reflection of the fact that Slung Low had never worked in TV before. Specialist expertise in television production and a better understanding of the industry culture might have given the team more confidence to create something more suitable for the platform whilst still in keeping with their artistic vision.

*‘It is vital to find key TV production support with expertise in the area / environment that you are filming in, in order to minimise risk and create additional work in order to deliver.’*

(Delivery Partner)

* + 1. Transparency holds the key to fostering positive community relations

As Slung Low demonstrated on Victoria Dock - who provided regular and detailed information about the project to all residents through community groups, printed materials and word of mouth – transparency is key to developing a positive and mutually beneficial relationship with communities.

*“It was a relentless campaign of information. We went to ... we put letters through the doors. We went to every community meeting we could do…there was an ad campaign which was amazing, and we promised them all they would get free tickets to the show, which was great 'cause it sold out in less than 24 hours.”*

(CPT Member)

* + 1. Supplementary digital content can be used effectively to build and maintain audiences

Flood Part One: From The Sea was effective in building excitement and anticipation amongst potential audiences ahead of the live performances, whilst the Flood website was effective in keeping audiences interested in the story of Flood in between episodes, despite limited usage. This was important given that length of time between each one. Regularly updated online content such as behind-the-scenes footage, interviews with cast members and recaps of the story so far were popular with audiences.

*‘I found them really interesting. For me they certainly built up the excitement. Looking forward to seeing the last part kind of tide you over between parts. Yeah I really enjoyed looking through them.’*

(Focus Group Respondent: Flood Audience)

* + 1. The BBC broadcast and related coverage raised the profile of the project significantly

Without the Performance Live opportunity, Flood simply would not have achieved the same level of reach. It could also be argued that it increased interest amongst the national press, many of whom selected it as one of their end-of-the-year cultural highlights.

* + 1. Shareable online content and a visible community presence offer quick marketing wins

Personal recommendation continues to be a key influencer, and the availability of shareable online content makes it easy for audiences to promote events to their wider networks. Equally, the buzz created by Slung Low during their residency on Victoria Dock shows that a visible community presence can act as an effective way to raise awareness.

* + 1. Projects involving multiple partners comes with challenges, especially where differences exist between organisations’ cultures

As with many other projects, the successful delivery of Flood relied on a number of partners working together effectively. Whilst this was largely achieved, there was some tensions created by the different organizational cultures coming together.

* + 1. Successful projects are built on harnessing and trusting creative talent

Flood benefited from Slung Low’s experience and expertise in delivering high-quality outdoor theatre. They were given the creative freedom to develop the concept alongside a successful playwright with whom they had a positive working relationship. They were given autonomy in terms of the production of Flood, and were trusted in their community engagement, which paid dividends in the long-run. All this came with the support of Hull 2017 and the CPT.

*‘That's amazing to work with people like that, but the second ... they gave us belief, but the second thing they definitely gave us is money, 'cause without it, it's all well and good having lots of ambition, but you just run out of it in the end.’*

(Slung Low)

* + 1. UK City of Culture status is powerful

UK City of Culture status was a significant factor in creative professionals and Partners choosing to be involved in Flood in the lead up to 2017. It was also a significant motivator for audiences. The award’s national significance, the build-up since winning, and the unique opportunity that the year presents to both engage and create change is something that people have bought into.

* 1. Conclusions & Recommendations

Overall, Flood achieved xxx the project aims and objectives; and made a significant contribution towards the broader aims and objectives of Hull 2017. This is down to the combined efforts of all the individuals involved in developing and delivering the project, working collaboratively; as well as audiences unrivalled enthusiasm for supporting the year.

The experience of Flood highlights several recommendations linked to the delivery of future UK City of Culture and largescale outdoor arts events, whether in Hull or elsewhere.

* + 1. Define clear roles and responsibilities from the outset
* Issues with communication stemmed from confusion around the roles and responsibilities within the project management structure. Defining clear roles and responsibilities – and lines of communication – from the outset should streamline the delivery process.
  + 1. Continue to monitor audience numbers and invest in developing new audiences
* Flood ticket sales decreased throughout 2017, highlighting the importance of developing new audiences throughout the lifecycle of durational projects. This might be addressed through the diversification of marketing activity and targeted activity ahead of key ticketing announcements.
  + 1. Adapt marketing and comms in light of audience feedback
* There was a suggestion that audiences saw each episode as part of a series, which suggests a slightly different comms approach towards the end of the project might have prevented the decline in ticket sales mentioned above.
  + 1. Keep communities informed and offer participatory opportunities
* In order for communities to be open and willing to accept artists in residence and/or arts and cultural activities in their neighbourhood, they should be kept fully informed of the aims and objectives of each project. Providing opportunities for residents to participate can also help to identify key community champions.
  + 1. Employ learning to future outdoor theatre productions
* As mentioned above, the needs of audience members at outdoor, site-specific theatre productions requires specific production expertise and safeguards. Extra consideration should be given to elderly and disabled audience members, particularly in cold weather.
  + 1. Explore ways to involve amateur drama groups in professional theatre productions
* The experience of being part of a professional production has encouraged many community cast members to explore other performance opportunities. Involving amateur dramatic groups in future productions can only help intensify this galvanising effect.
  + 1. Direct audiences to platforms where they can explore related content and share experiences
* Audiences want to share their experience and interpretation of arts and culture with others, learn about the work of artists, and explore related content and events. Future events should ensure there is a platform for this and that audiences are directed to it.
  + 1. Place trust in artists and creatives with a proven track record
* Flood demonstrated that established artists and arts organisations with a track record in delivering projects can be given the freedom and flexibility to realise their creative vision.

1. The Quality Metrics are a set of statements that aim to help understanding about what people value about the work. There are nine metrics tested by the project delivery team, peer assessors and public – Concept, Presentation, Distinctiveness, Challenge, Captivation, Enthusiasm, Local impact, Relevance and Rigour. A further three are just asked of the project delivery team and peer assessors: Originality, Risk, and Excellence. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)