

Babylon ARTS

Business Plan 2025 - 2030

Executive Summary..... 1

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Executive Summary

Babylon Arts, established in 1995 and based in Ely, East Cambridgeshire, stands at a critical point in its nearly 30-year history. As a registered charity and a cornerstone of the region’s cultural life, Babylon Arts operates the free-to-enter Babylon Gallery, attracting over 23,000 visitors annually. While we have consistently delivered inspiring arts and culture experiences, supported emerging artists, and nurtured community connections, the organisation now faces an urgent need to reshape its business model and secure vital funding to ensure its survival and future growth.

Our mission to develop creativity and connect communities with arts and culture has never been more critical. Underpinned by values of resourcefulness, passion, curiosity, and inclusivity, we are committed to enhancing cultural engagement, increasing accessibility, and empowering underrepresented voices. Despite a strong track record—including renowned exhibitions, sensory-inclusive projects, and youth-focused initiatives such as the Young Curators Programme—Babylon Arts operates in a highly competitive and economically uncertain environment.

Rising operational costs, heavy reliance on short-term grant funding, and dwindling financial reserves highlights the immediate need for action. With reserves projected to drop to just £12,500 by March 2025, Babylon Arts must urgently transition to a sustainable business model. Alongside these financial pressures, we are also focused on broadening our audience base and deepening engagement with underserved communities, reflecting the evolving demographics and needs of East Cambridgeshire.

Our vision is bold but achievable. By 2027, Babylon Arts aims to become a dynamic and resilient cultural hub, featuring a sustainable arts centre offering artist spaces, exhibitions, and creative programmes that reflect the region’s identity and heritage. To achieve this, we will diversify income streams through innovative initiatives, including workshops, merchandise, and experiential visitor services. Inclusive programming will be co-created with the community, targeting measurable growth in participation from young people, minority ethnic groups, individuals with disabilities, and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

To make this vision a reality, Babylon Arts needs to raise £120,000 annually through statutory funding, corporate sponsorships, trust and foundation grants, and earned income. This funding is not just necessary—it is urgent. Without it, our ability to operate and thrive is at significant risk. By embedding sustainability into our operations and leveraging our role in community

engagement, local economy, and cultural tourism, Babylon Arts seeks to secure its position as an essential driver of economic and social impact in East Cambridgeshire.

This pivotal moment represents both a challenge and an opportunity. The decisions we make now will determine whether Babylon Arts can continue to be the creative heart of the Fens, fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable cultural ecosystem for generations to come.

1. Overview of Organisation

Babylon Arts is a cornerstone of East Cambridgeshire's cultural life, based in Ely and founded in 1995 by local residents. As a registered charity (Arts Development East Cambridgeshire/Charity no: 1043197) and limited company (02999055), we operate as Babylon Arts from the Babylon Gallery on Ely's riverside, a free-to-enter cultural venue that attracts over 23,000 visitors annually. We collaborate with local and regional organisations, educational institutions, local authorities and communities across East Cambridgeshire to bring arts, heritage, and culture to life—making them accessible, inspiring, and meaningful for all.

The Charity's mission is to: develop creativity and connect communities with arts and culture.

Our Goals

- Create and present inspiring arts and culture with and for the people of East Cambridgeshire
- Build creative networks and partnerships to expand arts and culture across East Cambridgeshire.
- Support early and mid-career artists in developing their skills and sustaining creative careers.
- Ensure our work has a lasting social, cultural, and economic impact, while also being environmentally responsible and financially sustainable.

History and track record

Creative Spaces: we present exhibitions and events at Babylon Gallery and Babylon cinema (until December 2024, an independent cinema based at Ely Maltings. We work in partnership to produce new work, practices and cultural experiences; delivering creative and cultural work outdoors and in communities.

Creative Communities: we collaborate with communities in local villages and towns to increase the cultural offer on their doorstep. Our work is inspired by local people and places, and a passion for nature and environment. Co-creating with communities is at the heart of what we do.

Young and emerging artists: we nurture young and emerging artistic talent through our Young Associates, Young Curators and Creative Spaces work, offering valuable opportunities to develop their skills, showcase their work, and gain hands-on experience. Through these initiatives, we also support career progression into the creative industries, equipping participants with the tools, networks, and confidence they need to thrive in their chosen fields.

MarketPlace: Babylon Arts for 10 years, until March 2025, was the lead organisation for Creative People & Places programme MarketPlace, an action, research and sustainable community engagement project, where people decide the creative and cultural activity that happens in Fenland and West Suffolk.

Snapshot of Success

Babylon Arts holds a unique and vital role as Ely's only free-to-enter cultural venue dedicated to showcasing the incredible creative talent of the local community. By attracting both residents and tourists, we help position Ely as a must-visit destination. Our efforts not only enrich the cultural landscape but also boost the local economy by encouraging increased footfall, extended dwell time, and greater spending in nearby cafes, restaurants, and shops.

In 2023-2024, Babylon Arts continued to act as a hub for arts, culture, and community engagement, delivering impactful programmes and events that enrich lives across East Cambridgeshire and beyond.

- **Vibrant Arts Programming:** The Babylon Gallery welcomed over 23,000 visitors to enjoy 13 visual art exhibitions, while Babylon cinema screened 68 films, attracting more than 3,500 attendees.
- **Empowering Young People:** We successfully secured Arts Council England funding to deliver another acclaimed Young Curators Programme. This year, two talented curators created exhibitions with meaningful themes: *I Am Because We Are* explored the concept of 'Ubuntu,' while *A Matter of Taste* combined food-themed art with community engagement. Building on this success, we launched a Young Associates Group, providing a platform for young creatives to lead events, including workshops that reached nearly 100 people.
- **Promoting Inclusion:** Our *Inspired by Nature* project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, broke new ground by making arts and heritage accessible to those with low vision. Collaborating with partners such as RNIB, CamSight, and Wicken Fen, we delivered a 10-month programme of sensory-rich activities. This included the *Sensing Nature* exhibition, which featured tactile and audio elements co-curated by our Young Associates and enjoyed by over 1,600 visitors. As a result of this work we received the Visually Better Employer quality standard.
- **Creative Careers Pathways:** Through hands-on opportunities, our Young Associates and Curators gained invaluable experience in curation, exhibition development, and creative practice. These young professionals were showcased at major events such as the Fitzwilliam Museum Creative Careers Fair and have been invited to lead workshops and exhibitions in new settings, solidifying Babylon Arts as a launchpad for careers in the creative industries.
- **Community-Led Arts Engagement:** As the lead partner for *The Library Presents*, we delivered 93 arts activities across 32 venues, covering 11 art forms. Accessibility was a key focus, with initiatives such as British Sign Language interpretation and Pay What You Think tickets enabling more people to participate.
- **Expanding Cultural Reach:** Over 10 years Our work with *MarketPlace* has empowered local communities to shape cultural activities, such as the immersive outdoor theatre *Escape from Fort Lagoon* and the popular *Rivers of Light* lantern parade, which drew over 500 participants.

Leadership and Governance

As of November 2024, Babylon Arts is governed by a Board of eight Trustees all of whom live in Ely or in nearby villages:

Chair - Linda McCord

Vice Chair - Linda Holland

Treasurer - Theresa Veith

Trustee (gallery and cinema) - Stuart Green

Trustee (gallery and cinema) - Ted Coney

Trustee (Strategy Group Chair) - Dawn Bainbridge

Trustee (legal and governance) - Iain Downey

Trustee (communications) - Charlie Coultard

The Board meets quarterly for full meetings, supported by three focused sub-committees. The Finance & General Purposes sub-group oversees financial performance and operational matters, ensuring robust management and accountability. Meanwhile, the Strategy sub-group shapes the organisation's long-term vision and drives fundraising efforts. The Gallery sub-group ensures we continue to exhibit quality art.

Staffing Structure

Core team:

Programme Manager (Creative Communities & Cultural Education) - Florence Tong

Marketing and Communications (freelance) - Beth Haysom

Until January 2025, Babylon Arts was also supported by a pool of six Duty Managers who manage the gallery and cinema, alongside approximately 30 volunteers who help to run gallery exhibitions and events, as well as cinema screenings.

Key Partnerships

We collaborate with a diverse range of partners to ensure the success and sustainability of our projects, fostering innovation, community engagement, and creative development.

Anglia Ruskin University's Research & Innovation Development Team brings expertise in student engagement, industry research, and innovation. ARU will lead efforts in knowledge exchange between students, artists, practitioners, cultural organisations, funders, and researchers. Additionally, they will spearhead a 'spotlight' project, engaging hundreds of students from disadvantaged groups to generate ideas, shape the project, and contribute to legacy planning.

Arts Council England plays a critical role as the Lead Organisation for MarketPlace and supports our National Lottery Project Fund (NLPF) application plans. They also facilitate our connection to their Relationship Manager for Fenland and Visual Arts, enhancing our engagement in these areas.

Our partnership with **Britten Sinfonia** strengthens as we collaborate on their funding application to Arts Council England, showcasing our shared commitment to innovative music programming.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Community Services, Strategies, and Partnership team will support promotion, signposting, referrals, and access to funding, ensuring a broader reach and impact for our initiatives.

Local connections also include the **City of Ely Council**, with Deputy Mayor Mike Banyard advocating for local authority support and investment in Babylon Arts. **Creative Fenland**, as part of our steering group, will assist with promotion and signposting, amplifying our activities within the region.

Other partners, such as **Ely Museum**, **East Cambridgeshire District Council's Economic Department**, and the **East Cambridgeshire Climate Action Network**, contribute by supporting local cultural and environmental initiatives, future funding opportunities, and strategic climate action networking.

We are proud to work alongside **Fenland District Council**, which has confirmed match funding for our Arts Council NLPG application, ensuring the success of the Creatives' Spaces workforce and creative practice development project. Similarly, the **Fenland Culture Board** supports our Place Partnership application and delivery.

Further collaborations include key cultural and heritage partners like **Wicken Fen (National Trust)**, **The Stained Glass Museum**, **RNIB**, and **CamSight**, as well as rural touring activities through **The Library Presents**. These relationships enrich our cultural offer and extend the impact of our projects.

On a broader strategic level, our involvement, over the past ten years, in the **MarketPlace Consortium**—comprising Anglia Ruskin University, the Association for Suffolk Museums, Cambridgeshire ACRE, RSPB, and Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds—highlights Babylon Arts' leadership role..MarketPlace will transition in April 2025 to become an organisation in its own right.

Together with these valued partners, we are creating a vibrant, inclusive, and forward-looking cultural landscape that supports creative growth, community engagement, and sustainability across the region.

Audiences

23,119 gallery visitors 2023/24 (21,000 2022/23) seeing 13 visual arts exhibitions, 3,685 cinema tickets sold 2023/24 (3,548 2022/23) watching 68 film screenings.

Both in-person and digital audiences are predominantly female (ca. two thirds). Where ethnicities are known, the research shows audiences are overwhelmingly White (98-99% British and White Other, compared to 92% within a 30-minute drivetime of the Gallery).

The majority of audiences are 45 years old and over, with Cinema audiences having a slightly older profile (77% 45 years old and above) compared to Gallery audiences (68% 45 years old and above).

Audiences are predominantly from Ely and Cambridge, as well as the surrounding areas, with some from parts of Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Peterborough and Norfolk. Audiences come from further afield to visit the Gallery, which is a key part of the attraction for tourists to visit the riverfront..

9-13% of audiences have a health problem or disability that limits day-to-day activities a little or a lot, compared to 16% of the population within 30 minutes' drivetime.

The main Audience Spectrum segments that Babylon ARTS attracted pre-Covid were Dormitory Dependables, Commuterland Culturebuffs and Home & Heritage. To date in 2020/21, Dormitory

Dependables and Trips & Treats have been the main segments to return and attend the drive-in Cinema screenings.

Audiences rate the quality of the programming and experience in the Gallery and Cinema very highly.

Financial Situation and Process

Budget

In order to fulfil our ambitions in 2025/26, we need to be able to recruit staff and raise in the region of £120,000 per year (excluding ring-fenced project costs). We are seeking funding from a range of sources including local authorities, local businesses, partners, Trusts & Foundations and earned income.

Description	Year 1
Gallery & Events Manager (@ £40K/ FT inc. NI, pension)	40,000
Marketing and Comms Assistant (@£26K/0.5 FTE inc, NI and Pension)	10,400
Fundraiser (freelance @ £250 per day x 4 days per month)	12,000
Finance & Admin Assistant (@ £26K/0.6 FTE inc NI & Pension)	15,600
Venue costs (rent, utilities and equipment)	25,000
Finance and Administration (IT systems, software, accounting etc)	10,000
Equipment and stock (retail offer and events)	5,000
Misc (staff travel and subsistence etc)	2,000

Total	120,000
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Income targets

To ensure we secure the vital funds to support our work, we have income targets set out below

Income Source	Target
Local Authority	£35,000
Corporate	£10,000
Individuals	£15,000
Trusts and Foundations Year 1	£35,000
Earned	£25,000

Assets/Liabilities/Cashflow

As our financial position is so uncertain for 2025/26, we have not included a detailed cashflow in this business plan. Our reserves at the end of March 2025 are estimated to be in the region of £12,500 - a critically low figure.

2. Context of Work

Summary and Needs Analysis

East Cambridgeshire enjoys a thriving cultural scene and annual programme of events and festivals of which Babylon Arts plays a significant role. According to Arts Council England's 'Active Lives' data¹, 51% of the population of East Cambridgeshire is actively engaged in arts and culture, close to the England wide average of 52.2%².

Throughout the year there are a number of cultural events that take place locally and whilst not necessarily similar in genre or programme, there is substantial competition for audiences and funding, particularly in the current economic climate. It is, therefore, important to consider potential clashes, maximise the unique experience that Babylon Arts provides and demonstrate how it contributes to the richness of East Cambridgeshire's cultural offer.

Additionally, there are several cultural venues of varying sizes and programming within Ely and surrounding locations, most notably, Ely Cathedral, Ely Museum, The Maltings, Cromwell House, Viva Arts, Haddenham Arts Centre and Cineworld located at Ely Leisure Park, who all deliver cultural activities within their own spaces. However, Babylon Arts is one of only a handful of venues in East Cambridgeshire dedicated to local visual arts with its own gallery space and offers a high quality exhibition experience for artists to showcase and sell their work, reaching a wider range of people at regional, local and hyper-local levels. The population of East Cambridgeshire is currently 87,762, seeing an increase of 4.6% since 2011 and is estimated to

increase to 98,200 by 2031. East Cambridgeshire is predicted to have the second highest level of proportional growth of any Cambridgeshire district between 2016 to 2036. The largest population settlements in East Cambridgeshire are Ely, Soham, Littleport and Burwell. Together, these comprise approximately 56% of the district's population, with the remaining population spread between about 50 villages.³ As of 2021, East Cambridgeshire is the fifth least densely populated of the East of England's 45 local authority areas, with an area equivalent to around one football pitch per resident.

With over 40% of the population aged 49 and over, East Cambridgeshire has a significantly older population than the UK average of 18.9%. There has been an increase of 27.2% in people aged 65 years and over, a decrease of 0.1% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and a decrease of 0.2% in children aged under 15 years. Nearly a third of the population are aged between 24 and 49 with the median age of 43 compared the UK wide median of 39.

Nearly 68% of the population live in single-family households and over 27% of the population live in a one-person household.

Over 60% of the population of East Cambridgeshire are economically active (excluding full time students), with 61.5% in employment and only 1.8% unemployed. 49.2% of those in employment work full-time. 35% are economically inactive, but nearly 23.5% of this demographic are retired, so are likely to have more leisure time, but not necessarily disposable income.

Of the 50 neighbourhoods in East Cambridgeshire, none are among the 20% most income deprived areas in England, but there are 15 neighbourhoods that are among the 20% least deprived areas

East Cambridgeshire is less ethnically diverse than the UK average with only 5.5% of the population from minority ethnic groups compared with 18.3% nationally. There are several EU8 countries represented within the population making up 6% of the population.

In 2021, 5.8% of East Cambridgeshire residents were identified as being disabled and limited a lot. This figure decreased from 6.9% in 2011.

SWOT Analysis

The following SWOT analysis is used to evaluate our strategic position to help turn perceived company weaknesses into strengths, and external threats into opportunities. Many of the Opportunities and Threats stem from the operating context analysis – a PESTLE Analysis is included as an appendix.

<p>Internal Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Track record: Established history of service delivery (e.g. production, artist development), cultural programming (e.g. artist commissioning) and innovative community projects (e.g. outdoor arts) ● Expertise: Dedicated trustee, volunteer and staff team with significant knowledge, skills and experience (e.g. visual art and film) 	<p>Internal Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication: Critical need for marketing and communications strategy. To maintain and grow the mailing list, audience segmentation and mapping, and improved social media marketing, storytelling marketing and community-based strategies ● Capacity and resources: Need for consistent systems, structures and processes. Limited staff and
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<p>exhibition, arts management, fundraising, production, programming (young people, communities, accessibility), artist/creative practice development (new and mid-career)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Audiences: 23,119 gallery visitors (2023/24) and 3,685 cinema tickets sold (2023/24). Good small core audience and growing visitor numbers ● Collaboration: Strong partnerships with local and regional organisations, e.g. Wicken Fen, The Library Presents, Anglia Ruskin University, MarketPlace ● MarketPlace (Fenland and West Suffolk): Supporting communities to decide what creative activity they want to experience where they live – learning about audience development and co-creation. 	<p>resources to manage, maintain and expand activities, e.g. exhibition programming, retail buying, project and product development. Need for governance succession planning and diversification, e.g. young trustees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff retention: high overall turnover in staff, particularly leadership. This causes lack of artistic/creative vision, business continuity/planning, fundraising strategy and partnership relationships ● Audience demographics: Lack of socio-demographic data to evidence audience profile and build understanding, including organisational perceptions. Must prioritise relevance and inclusion ● Financial: Major reliance on grant funding (79% with 70% CPP restricted). Earned income 19%, and 2% donations. This is short-term with financial reserves of £39,563 in March 2024 predicted to significantly reduce to around £12,500 in March 2025 to cover missed fundraising targets and reduced earned income. ● Financial: Increasing rent and service charges for gallery, offices and storage.
<p>External Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Political change and Levelling Up: Access to place-based initiatives and investment aimed at improving local and regional cultural policy and infrastructure ● Unique place/landscape (Ely, East Cambridgeshire, the fens): Local placemaking potential, e.g. enhancing local cultural identity, supporting community connectivity, wellbeing and belonging ● Income diversification: Significant opportunity to develop explore new revenue streams and funding sources for economic and social impact (earned income, contributed income and legacy giving) 	<p>External Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Political change and Levelling Up: East Cambridgeshire not an Arts Council Levelling Up for Culture or Priority Place ● Economic downturn: Risk of decreasing income (e.g. gallery hires, commission, retail) due to household spending pressures and decreased public spending on culture (e.g. local authorities). ● Funder priorities: Shifts in funding priorities that focus on economic development and or indicate support for community voice and decision making, community organising and activism not actually realised in

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Audience development: To increase and diversify the audience base locally regionally and (inter)nationally. For core audience to be more reflective of local population (relevance). 	<p>funding distribution or skills development that people need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partner priorities: e.g. The Maltings priority for commercial events above Babylon Cinema sees film de-prioritised in programming and scheduling impacting customer satisfaction and ticket sales ● Competitive funding and sponsorship environment: competition for funds, misaligned to funder agendas in context of poor articulation of clarity of purpose, limited application and prospecting capacity.
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2.1. TOWS Analysis

	Opportunities	Threats
Strengths	<p>SO (Maxi-Maxi Strategies)</p> <p>Strategy 1: We have had an expert staff team but high turnover – we should develop activities that focus on our unique place and landscape and build on the collective strengths of the team and assets in our community. This will increase and diversify audiences, improve staff wellbeing and increase quality volunteering opportunities. A decision to transfer the operation of the cinema to another charitable trust will help to reduce unmanageable workloads and slow things down and reduce costs.</p> <p>Strategy 2: We have strong partnerships that will allow us to develop and sustain our offer. For example, we have the potential to bid for multi-year projects following test and explore projects (artist development/creative pipeline). And we have seen a gap in the market for business events (e.g. team building) that could expand our audience and increase the potential for sponsorship (e.g. Haddenham Arts Centre).</p>	<p>ST (Maxi-Mini Strategies)</p> <p>Strategy 1: We have a strong track record and trusted relationships in the cultural sectors and across sectors. This allows us to adapt to funder priorities if we focus on strategic partnership working, developing multi-year funding applications, and working and learning across geographical areas, e.g. Levelling Up for Culture and priority places. We need to organise and join up our data and evaluation work to make an authentic case for support.</p> <p>Strategy 2: We have identified need and a clear opportunity to focus on artistic and creative practice development which in turn will increase and diversify audiences, enable us to become niche and stand out, avoid confusing audiences and creating competition for funding and audiences. In 2025, with the right funding we will recruit a fulltime Gallery & Events Manager with entrepreneurial skills, business acumen, funding knowledge and fundraising experience to deliver the business plan.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>WO (Mini-Maxi Strategies)</p> <p>Strategy 1: Take advantage of the unique place, environment and landscape of East Cambridgeshire. Improve our knowledge on funding for environmental sustainability and climate change, and take action on policy and planning for environmental responsibility in business planning and cultural programming.</p> <p>Strategy 2: 87% of cultural audiences are worried about the climate crisis. And 77% think cultural organisations have a responsibility to influence society about the climate emergency, including 85% of under 35s. Invest in an online rebrand to articulate authentic clarity of purpose about our role in environmental sustainability.</p>	<p>WT (Mini-Mini Strategies)</p> <p>Strategy 1: With a major reliance on grant funding, the planned stepping down as lead organisation for MarketPlace in March 2025 and increasing gallery rent and service charges, focus on a new demand led approach to an artist space collective including retail, café and co-worker/exhibition space</p> <p>Strategy 2: Consider an organisational merger to minimise these threats.</p>

Key Risks

Risk	Mitigation Strategy
Economic downturn reducing disposable income	Develop affordable and flexible pricing models, like "Pay What You Think."
Staff turnover disrupting operations	Enhance employee terms, provide training, and create succession plans.
Audience disengagement due to limited marketing	Invest in digital-first marketing campaigns and storytelling.
Rising operational costs	Seek long-term partnerships for shared resources and explore sponsorship opportunities.
Insufficient diversity in audiences	Collaborate with community leaders to design inclusive programming.

Competitor Analysis: Ansoff Matrix

The table below illustrates the existing and proposed offer, showing potential growth strategies associated with each idea compared to the associated risks.

Existing	MARKET	New
<p>MARKET PENETRATION (low risk)</p> <p>Sell more of the existing product (exhibition hires, shop retail and visitor experiences) to current and new customers. To penetrate and grow the customer base in the existing market, more could be invested in social media marketing, particularly LinkedIn, X, Instagram, Youtube, Facebook and diversifying the shop retail offer. This would mean building Leadership and volunteer capacity to find new exhibition and retail products and using evaluation and testimony to continuously improve and innovate.</p>		<p>MARKET DEVELOPMENT (low risk)</p> <p>Reach new customers in the core audience groups by targeting priority geographic areas. Target new geographic areas based on data about audience segmentation, population, drive-time and transport links. Responding to demand, prototype and introduce a new activity (e.g. workshops, family fun days, artist talks, tours and social events with specific events tailored for small spaces), attracting new business from artists and creative practitioners. Could also test an 'Away Day' offer for local business in partnership with Haddenham Arts Centre. Potential to turn into donations or sponsorship.</p>

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT (high risk)	DIVERSIFICATION (high risk)
<p>Develop and secure primary sponsors for the Gallery. With additional capacity, design creative experience for existing markets and customers including professional and amateur artists and creative enthusiasts, young families and visitors (e.g. hire a hamper and easel). Integrate artist relationships into growth planning through consultation and co-creation. Integrate volunteering opportunity development into growth planning, increasing volunteer opportunities in customer experience.</p>	<p>Enter a new market with new opportunities related to the existing membership scheme, developing a service-wide Friends offer with incentives such as private view invitations, membership rates and concessionary rates for event tickets (e.g. student NUS, Job Seekers Allowance, Disability Living Allowance). Look into Own Art. An important strategy to diversify the customer base and represent the community.</p>

3. Vision, Mission and Values

3.1. Vision Statement

Our current vision, mission and values are:

Vision: To be the creative heart of the Fens

3.2. Mission: Developing creativity and connecting communities with arts and culture

3.3. Values:

- **Resourceful:** We seek new partnerships and opportunities to help arts and creativity thrive.
- **Passionate:** We care deeply about our communities and are committed to creating exciting creative opportunities.
- **Curious:** We are open to new ideas and ways of working, taking risks to reach new audiences.
- **Inclusive:** We value diversity, promote equality, and provide a supportive environment for everyone involved in the arts.

Our values underpin everything we do, particularly audience development, translated below:

Resourceful

- We work in collaboration with other organisations and individuals
- We proactively seek new partnerships, projects, funding and other opportunities to help us to meet our vision and mission
- We work effectively to maximise our resources (spaces, budgets, time, skills)
- We evaluate our audience development to understand its impact and develop it over time.

Passionate

- We get to know our communities and understand their needs, behaviours and wants

- We develop a range of programmes and opportunities that our core and target audiences will value
- We champion and nurture arts and creativity within and for our communities
- We share our passion and commitment to arts and creativity.

Curious

- We encourage and welcome new ideas and ways of working
- We experiment and try new things with our programming and communication to reach new audiences
- We take considered risks and are prepared to fail and learn from our mistakes
- We empower and encourage our communities to get involved (take part, book, attend, visit, join, learn, make etc).

Inclusive

- We consider how all our audience development initiatives can be as inclusive as possible across their inception, development and delivery
- We remove or minimise barriers and disadvantages to engaging with arts and culture experienced by people due to their protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) and/or income
- We ensure everyone feels welcome and safe in our spaces and participating in our programmes
- We recognise that identities do not necessarily exist alone but intersect in various ways
- We demonstrate leadership in achieving higher levels of inclusion in arts and culture.

Organisational Culture: Evolving and Embedding our Values

For nearly 30 years, we have thrived, adapted, and survived, guided by our core values in delivering our mission within and alongside our communities. However, both our staff and trustees recognize the significant impacts of post-Covid-19 challenges and the rising cost of living, which affect our staff, volunteers, customers, and audiences. As a small arts organization, we rely on a mix of earned income and project funding to sustain our work. Yet, without diversifying our income model, our long-term sustainability is at risk.

The pressures of working under these conditions are felt by our staff, volunteers, and freelancers.

Theory of Change

Our theory of change provides our organisation with strategic focus and practical action. It shows how we believe cultural development and economic growth is stimulated by generating creative and cultural employment opportunities. Our sustainable approach supports people's agency and creativity, leading to positive economic and socio-cultural outcomes for individuals, communities and businesses.

Strategic objectives:

- Make a recognisable creative and cultural contribution to economic development in Ely and East Cambridgeshire by strengthening the creative and cultural industries talent pipeline.
- Improve economic and socio-cultural outcomes for local people and reduce outcomes inequalities by developing an arts centre embedded in the community and empowering people to be a part of this.

- Work in partnership across sectors and geographies to drive change in public funding and business investment aimed at improving jobs in the arts and creative industries and engagement in culture.
- Adopt cultural tourism as an overarching indicator of success and make progress in cross sector partnership working to achieve shared goals in tourism and visitor economy.

Impact: Babylon Arts was set up as an arts development agency in 1995 to promote engagement in the arts for education and understanding. Our world in 2024 is very different and we believe we have a role to play in generating creative employment and cultural engagement opportunities that people really need. To that end, our ultimate aims are to:

- **Move towards a community-based development approach** to effectively engage individuals, communities and businesses in the development of Babylon Arts
- **Build the success of Babylon Gallery**, driven by a creative staff, volunteer and freelancer/Creative Practitioner team contributing to a shared goal for commercial growth
- **Establish a thriving arts centre and creative community** to collectively drive the development of cultural opportunities that people need.

Outcomes: We aim to invest in creative growth in Ely and East Cambridgeshire. Our work will build on the gallery and community partnerships to align them to maximise impact and leverage multi-year funding and investment.

- **Individuals:** Improved confidence and skills helping people at the start of their careers and others to sustain their careers, resulting in better financial performance, business growth and an increased likelihood of social impact
- **Communities:** More creative and cultural opportunities reflecting the interests and wants of local residents at the same time offering unique place-based experiences for visitors
- **Partnerships:** More diverse, connected and collaborative approaches progressing and developing environmental responsibility and sustainability embedded in creative practice and artistic product.

4. Future Plans

4.1. Growth Plan

In 2025, Babylon Arts will celebrate 30 years of arts and creative development from our base in Ely in East Cambridgeshire. We excel in audience engagement and collaboration, aligning resources to help local communities live the creative lives they value.

Looking ahead, we plan to:

1. Develop a business model that significantly increases profits that can be reinvested into our charitable activities, focusing on supporting local artists through our gallery in Ely.
2. By 2027, establish a sustainable arts centre and creative hub in Ely, offering studio spaces, exhibitions, and events.
3. By 2034, create a gallery space in Ely that reflects the identity of East Cambridgeshire, driven by community and sustainability.

By 2025/26: A Sustainable Vision for Commercial Growth. We will develop a business case to launch commercial activities that generate sustainable income, reinvesting profits into our charitable initiatives. To support our long-term sustainability, we aim to achieve an annual commercial income target of £100,000, with a clear pathway to increasing this figure as demand grows.

Our focus is on visual arts and the Babylon Gallery in Ely, creating opportunities for local artists to thrive. This includes establishing a high-quality retail offer, where artists can present and sell their work, and affordable studio spaces that enable creative practice. We envision the gallery becoming a recognised hub for local creativity and craftsmanship, appealing to residents and visitors alike.

We will showcase local creative talent through exhibitions and events to inspire connections, celebrate diverse voices, and provide a platform for artists to engage with and enrich our community. We will expand our support for young people through our dedicated Young Creatives programme by providing enhanced skills and career development opportunities within the creative industries; from curation to marketing we will build pathways for growth, develop creative confidence, and empower the next generation to thrive in the cultural sector. We will strengthen our partnerships and collaborations with local schools to create meaningful learning experiences, inspire creativity, and provide students with opportunities to explore and develop their artistic potential.

We will target groups that are under-served by the cultural sector in Ely and East Cambridgeshire. We will build on our work from our recently completed *Inspired By Nature* project which engaged people with low vision and schoolchildren from Special Educational Needs schools, to create more inclusive opportunities that nurture creativity, enhance accessibility, and ensure that everyone in our community can engage with and benefit from the arts.

To enhance visitor experiences, we plan to introduce creative, engaging services such as Art boxes and arts experience packages, creative workshops, creative talking series and social events. For example, visitors might rent an easel, purchase a sketchbook or art materials, and enjoy a walk or sketching session paired with lunch, or take out a quarterly Babylon Art Box subscription to receive materials and technique guides to do at home. These offerings will aim to attract a diverse audience, including families, tourists, and art enthusiasts, helping us grow our engagement with under-served communities such as young people, minority ethnic groups, and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Through these initiatives, Babylon Arts will become known as a vital cultural hub that not only supports local artists but also invites the broader community to connect with the arts in accessible and meaningful ways.

During 2025, Babylon Arts will enhance its approach to audience and community engagement through meaningful consultation, co-creation, and collaboration.

We will actively listen to young people and local communities to understand what matters most to them, gaining deeper insights into the perceptions of both our existing and potential audiences. This feedback will inform our priorities as we work to support young people, emerging and mid-career artists, and creative practitioners, developing a strong network and a vibrant creative talent pipeline.

Our goal is to increase visits to and engagement with Babylon Gallery, with a focused effort to engage under-served audiences. Specific targets include:

- A 10% increase from young people,
- A 5% increase from individuals with physical or hidden disabilities,
- A 5% increase from minority ethnic communities, and
- A 5% increase from people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

By 2027: Co-designing capital development in Ely, e.g. Babylon Gallery made accessible and environmentally sustainable alongside new studio/maker spaces and shared working/networking/social space. The envisioned arts centre and creative hub will serve as a vibrant anchor for Ely's artistic and creative community, supporting the growth of talent and ideas while enhancing community cohesion. For local residents, this development will mean a welcoming, inclusive place where creativity thrives, offering opportunities for learning, connection, and inspiration.

While pursuing this vision, we will continue delivering diverse programming, advancing our arts development approach to support creative practice and socio-economic growth. For example, we will deepen our partnerships with other cultural venues including Wicken Fen, the Stained Glass Museum, Ely Museum, Haddenham Arts Centre and Ely Cathedral, alongside local and regional schools, community groups (e.g Camsight, RNIB, Vision Norfolk) and local authorities.

By 2030: Establishing a Gallery at the Heart of Ely's Identity

We will create a flagship gallery space in Ely that serves as a leader of community identity and sustainability. Our gallery will be a cornerstone of artistic and creative engagement in East Cambridgeshire, designed to reflect the unique character of the region while cultivating connections with broader audiences.

Driven by Community and Sustainability

Our curatorial approach will prioritise local relevance and environmental responsibility. The gallery will be co-designed with the community, incorporating sustainable materials and practices to reduce our ecological footprint while showcasing the voices, stories, and talents of East Cambridgeshire's diverse and growing population.

Aesthetic Rooted in Local Nostalgia and Iconic Design

The feel and style of our gallery and programming will draw inspiration from Ely's nostalgic, iconic signage and visual identity, creating a space that resonates with the community while remaining welcoming and accessible to all.

Embedding Co-Design and Collaboration in Practice

We will make community engagement central to our operations, embedding co-design and collaborative methods in everything we do. By involving local residents in the creative process, we aim to reflect the region's dynamism and diversity authentically.

Socio-Economic Development Through Creativity

Our gallery will be a catalyst for socio-economic growth, developing creative and social entrepreneurship. This includes providing opportunities for local talent, supporting cultural tourism, and generating income that contributes to the long-term sustainability of East Cambridgeshire's creative ecosystem.

4.2 Resources

To successfully deliver the outlined plans, Babylon Arts will require a combination of physical and human resources to enhance capacity, ensure efficiency, and meet strategic objectives

Physical Resources

<p>Venue Infrastructure</p>	<p>Studio and Workshop Spaces: Creation of affordable, functional spaces for artists, makers, and community activities within gallery space.</p> <p>Shared Working/Networking Space: A dedicated area for creative practitioners to collaborate and connect with the community.</p>
<p>Technology and Equipment</p>	<p>Upgraded digital infrastructure for live streaming, virtual exhibitions, and online workshops.</p> <p>Point-of-sale systems for retail operations, including gallery sales and ticketing.</p> <p>Software for audience segmentation, data analysis, and customer relationship management</p>
<p>Creative Materials</p>	<p>Art supplies for workshops, sketch kits for visitor experiences, and promotional materials for campaigns.</p> <p>Display equipment such as interactive installations to enhance the gallery experience.</p>
<p>Branding and marketing</p>	<p>Eye catching branding both physical and digital to promote the Babylon Arts brand.</p>

People Resources

<p>Core Staff Expansion</p>	<p>Gallery & Event: To drive creative programming and artist development initiatives.</p> <p>Programme Manager: To manage project funded initiatives, steward relationships with partners and support creative development</p>
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	<p>Marketing and Communications Officer: To implement and oversee audience engagement strategies and campaigns.</p> <p>Finance and Admin Officer: to support the day to day operations and financial operations</p> <p>Development Officer (STC): To implement fundraising strategies, focusing on diversifying income streams through commercial activity, corporate giving and project funding</p>
Creative Practitioners	<p>Partnerships with local and visiting artists to deliver workshops, exhibitions, and community projects.</p> <p>Engaged creatives to co-design and implement innovative programming.</p>
Volunteers	<p>Expanded volunteer pool to assist with gallery operations, and community events.</p> <p>Training programmes to equip volunteers with the skills needed to deliver high-quality visitor experiences.</p>
Freelancers and Consultants (ad-hoc/project focused)	<p>Expertise in environmental sustainability to guide venue upgrades and programming.</p> <p>Digital marketing specialists to boost online presence and engagement.</p> <p>Event managers to oversee the delivery of large-scale initiatives and campaigns.</p>

Organisational Development

Training and development	<p>Staff and volunteers will need training in accessibility practices, digital tools, customer services and fundraising</p> <p>Creative Practitioners will benefit from</p>
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	professional development workshops, networking events and mentorship programmes.
Policies and Frameworks	Co-creation handbooks, environmental sustainability policies, and diversity and inclusion frameworks to guide operations
Partnerships and Networks	<p>Ongoing collaboration with regional and national organisations, including Wicken Fen, The Library Presents, RNIB, Campsite, cultural venues across Ely and East Cambs and local schools</p> <p>Strengthened ties with Arts Council and funding bodies to secure resources and long-term sustainability</p>

4.3 Audience Development Strategy (overview)

Who Do We Want to Reach?

Babylon Arts wants to engage with the following groups:

- **Young People (16-30):** Especially those from rural areas or economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- **Underrepresented Communities:** This includes minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities (both visible and hidden), and those from lower-income backgrounds.
- **Families and Older Adults:** We aim to provide activities that are inclusive, affordable, and cater to people of all ages.
- **Creative Practitioners:** Emerging and mid-career artists who are looking for skills development, exposure, and collaboration.
- **Cultural Tourists:** Visitors from outside the region who are interested in unique local cultural experiences.

How Will We Reach Them?

To engage these groups, we will use several approaches:

- **Community-Driven Programming:**
 - Partner with local schools, colleges, and youth organisations to create workshops, exhibitions, and events for young people.
 - Collaborate with organisations that support minority ethnic communities and people with disabilities to create inclusive programming.
- **Strategic Partnerships:**
 - Work with local charities, social services, and cultural venues to reach underrepresented groups.
 - Strengthen these relationships to increase our impact.
- **Targeted Marketing and Outreach:**
 - Create specific marketing campaigns based on audience interests using tools like Audience Spectrum.

- Use social media to connect with young, digitally engaged audiences and print materials for older or rural populations.
- **Accessible and Affordable Offers:**
 - Offer "Pay What You Think" ticketing to make activities more affordable.
 - Provide sensory-friendly events and workshops for people with disabilities.
 - Create family-focused activities such as intergenerational art sessions and outdoor creative experiences.
- **Enhanced Visitor Experience:**
 - Offer experiential activities, such as art walks and packages, Art boxes, to attract cultural tourists and families.
- **Digital Engagement:**
 - Use technology to offer virtual exhibitions, live talks, and online creative tutorials for remote or busy audiences.

Is This Different from Current Audiences?

Yes. Currently, our audience is mostly white, middle-aged to older individuals (45+). We want to reach:

- Younger, more diverse groups.
- Individuals with disabilities, who are underrepresented in our current audience compared to local demographics.
- Families with young children, especially those looking for accessible and affordable cultural activities.

What Research Will Inform This Strategy?

- **Audience Agency's Audience Spectrum:** We'll focus on key groups in East Cambridgeshire, such as "Trips and Treats," "Dormitory Dependables," and "Homes and Heritage," and tailor our programming to their interests.
- **Local Demographic Data:** We'll use census and community reports to understand the needs of East Cambridgeshire's growing and diverse population.
- **Surveys and Feedback:** We'll gather insights through post-event surveys, focus groups, and consultations to understand audience preferences and barriers to engagement.
- **Partner Insights:** We'll work with local organisations like RNIB, Camsight and schools to improve inclusion and accessibility.

Anticipated Outcomes

- **Engagement Growth:** We aim for a 10% increase in participation from young people and 5% growth from minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities, and lower-income communities by 2027.
- **Broadened Demographics:** We want our audience to better reflect the diverse population of East Cambridgeshire.
- **Stronger Connections:** We aim to build stronger ties with local communities, measured by more co-created events and repeat participation

4.4 Communications Strategy (overview)

In this section, we focus on improving the success of our services, products, and activities. We test new ideas and explore how to meet the needs and motivations of both current and potential customers. While we focus on broad marketing and communication strategies here, the detailed plans are outlined in our Communications Strategy and Audience Development Plan.

Our communications strategy aligns with Babylon Arts' Equalities Statement and Equal Opportunities Policy, emphasising inclusivity and socio-economic equity. Through our marketing and audience engagement efforts, we aim to amplify community voices, empower decision-making, and highlight the diverse cultural value we offer.

Central to this approach is a commitment to storytelling. By sharing the lived experiences of our audiences and showcasing the transformative power of arts and creativity, we will nurture a deeper connection with our community. From website content to social media campaigns, short films, and podcasts, our communications will celebrate the people and stories behind our work while driving awareness and engagement.

Strategic Objectives

1. **Improve Services and Offer:**
Test new ideas using feedback and data to improve our services. Make sure our offer meets the needs and interests of both current and potential audiences.
2. **Build Strong Customer Relationships:**
Engage with audiences through consultation and collaboration to create programmes together. Develop trust and loyalty through clear, consistent, and personalised communication.
3. **Expand Reach Digitally:**
Increase our presence on social media and improve our website to connect with tech-savvy and remote audiences.

Core Marketing Values

1. **Building Relationships with Customers:**
Strengthen relationships with our audience by keeping communication open for feedback and collaboration.
Use tools like Audience Spectrum to tailor messages and make our outreach more relevant.
2. **Encouraging Customer Loyalty:**
Deliver high-quality experiences to inspire repeat engagement. Build trust by meeting customer expectations consistently and creating loyal supporters who will share their positive experiences with others.
3. **Adopting a Digital-First Approach:**
Increase our social media activity, focusing on content quality, frequency, and reach over the next six months.
Create engaging video content, such as artist interviews and event highlights.
Improve the website experience, donation options, and accessibility tools.

Tactics and Implementation

1. **Content Creation and Storytelling**
 - **Social Media:**
Create monthly content plans that include promotions, behind-the-scenes features, and community highlights.
Explore the use of targeted ads to reach underserved groups like young people and minority ethnic communities.

- **Website Content:**
Regularly update the website with blogs, case studies, and event features to engage both new and existing audiences.
Add a section dedicated to accessibility and inclusivity to build trust.
 - **Video and Audio:**
Record artist Q&As, community interviews, and programme highlights.
Experiment with podcasts to discuss arts and creativity with local voices and experts.
2. **Campaigns and Outreach**
- **Seasonal Campaigns:**
Plan campaigns around major events, exhibitions, or community projects.
 - **Collaborative Initiatives:**
Partner with local organisations to promote events and programmes together. For example, with Haddenham Arts Centre, Ely Museum, Wicken Fen etc
 - **Audience Segmentation:**
Use data from surveys, ticket sales, and social media to create tailored campaigns for different audience groups.
3. **Engagement and Feedback**
- **Focus Groups:**
Hold regular focus groups and community consultations to gather feedback and understand audience needs.
 - **Post-Event Surveys:**
Send out surveys after events and programmes to measure satisfaction and gather ideas for improvement.

KPIs and Outcomes

1. **Digital Metrics:**
 - Increase social media engagement (likes, shares, comments) by 20% within 12 months.
 - Grow website traffic by 15% by mid-2025.
2. **Audience Growth:**
 - Increase participation from underserved groups (young people, minority ethnic communities, individuals with disabilities) by 10% by 2025.
3. **Customer Loyalty:**
 - Increase repeat attendance by 25% across key programmes.

Measuring Success

- Regularly track digital platform analytics (Google Analytics, social media insights).
- Conduct quarterly reviews of audience engagement and satisfaction surveys.
- Report progress on KPIs to the board and stakeholders.

Outlook

By using creative storytelling, data-driven strategies, and community-focused outreach, this communications plan will position Babylon Arts as a leader in cultural engagement and inclusivity. It will help us connect with a broader and more diverse audience while staying true to our mission.

5. Financial Breakdown and Income Plan .

5.1 Budget (indicative)

Description	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Gallery & Events Manager (@ £40K/ FT inc. NI, pension)	40,000	41,200	42,436
Marketing and Comms Assistant (@26K/0.4 FTE inc, NI and Pension)	10,400	10,712	11,033
Fundraiser (freelance @ £250 per day x 4 days per month)	12,000	6,000	4,000
Finance & Admin Assistant (@ £26K/0.6 FTE inc NI & Pension)	15,600	16,068	16,550
Venue costs (rent, utilities and equipment)	25,000	26,250	27,562
Finance and Administration (IT systems, software, accounting etc)	10,000	10,500	11,025
Equipment and stock (retail offer and events)	5,000	5,250	5,512

Misc (staff travel and subsistence etc)	2,000	2,100	2,205
Total	120,000	118,080	120,323

Commentary and Assumptions

Income Assumptions:

- **Statutory Funding:** We expect to receive funding from local councils and government initiatives aimed at supporting the arts.
- **Trusts & Foundations:** We anticipate consistent growth in grant funding from a range of established arts-focused foundations, informed by successful applications in previous years.
- **Corporate Giving:** We plan to expand corporate sponsorship through targeted outreach to companies with a strong CSR focus on the arts, youth development, and community engagement.
- **Earned Income:** Revenue from exhibition sales, ticket sales, workshops, and merchandise is expected to grow in line with the increase in audience engagement and programme development.
- **Low Level Giving:** Income from individual donations will grow slowly in the first year but is expected to increase with better integration of online platforms and tailored campaigns.

Expenditure Assumptions:

- **Staff Salaries:** Costs are projected to increase gradually due to staff expansion as we scale up operations. New roles in fundraising and digital content will be essential for supporting growth. Once established, it is anticipated that the fundraising role will reduce
- **Programmes and Projects:** Expenditure on programming is expected to increase as the scope of events and workshops grows, particularly with new projects targeting underserved communities.
- **Marketing and Communications:** Increased investment in digital marketing (social media, website, video production) and community outreach will help expand the audience base.
- **Fundraising Costs:** Additional funds will be allocated to establish a dedicated fundraising function and increase digital fundraising capabilities.
- **Venue Costs:** These will remain fairly stable, with minor increases due to inflation and facility improvements.

Contingency Plans:

- We have budgeted a contingency of 5-10% of total income in case of unexpected shortfalls in revenue or higher-than-expected costs.

Income, Expenditure and Reserves Prediction

Income: We anticipate a steady increase in income each year, driven by growth in earned income, improved fundraising, and increased community support. This growth is based on our scale-up plans and past trends.

Expenditure: As programming and staffing levels increase, expenditure will rise. However, we plan to maintain a balanced budget by monitoring and adjusting costs in areas such as venue and marketing.

Reserves: We aim to build reserves gradually over three years to ensure financial resilience, with a target of 10-15% of total annual income in reserves by Year 3.

Value for Money: The expected increase in audience engagement, repeat attendance, and social impact aligns with the investment in marketing, programming, and digital infrastructure. The growth in low-level giving and earned income will reduce our reliance on large grants and diversify income streams, ensuring sustainability.

Fundraising Strategy (overview)

Our fundraising and income generation strategy focuses on diversifying revenue sources to ensure long-term sustainability. We will:

- **Enhance Digital Fundraising:** Use online platforms (JustGiving) for low-level giving, complemented by targeted email and social media campaigns. We'll leverage storytelling to engage supporters. We will install a contactless donation port within the gallery, so visitors can make a contactless payment. This will be portable for use at external events outside the gallery.
- **Corporate Sponsorship:** Develop partnerships with businesses in the region, particularly those with a strong community or arts focus. We will offer branded opportunities and align partnerships with corporate CSR goals.
- **Grant Applications:** Expand our focus on securing funding from trusts and foundations that support cultural projects, community engagement, and youth development. For example, Arts Council, National Lottery Heritage Fund and others
- **Earned Income:** Continue to grow income from workshops, events and merchandise, diversifying offerings based on audience demand.

Benchmarking Analysis:

We will regularly compare our fundraising results with similar arts organisations to ensure our strategies align with sector best practices and identify areas for improvement.

How We Plan to Raise/Diversify Income:

- **Diversifying Income:** We will balance funding across multiple sources (statutory, trusts, corporate, and earned income). By expanding our corporate and digital fundraising efforts, as well as growing earned income, we will reduce reliance on any single revenue stream.
- **Diversification Tactics:** Our plans include exploring new funding avenues, such as crowdfunding campaigns for specific projects and setting up a Friends of Babylon Arts membership programme for regular supporters.

Statutory Funders

Local Authorities: We will target funding from local councils, especially those with cultural development funds. For example, Social Impact Fund, Business Growth Fund and Capital Growth Fund to support our development plans

Trusts and Foundations

We will target a range of Trusts and Foundations ranging from large funders such as Arts Council and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, to smaller grant making trusts including Didymus, the Lindbury Trust and more. For a breakdown of Trusts and Foundations we aim to apply to, see our fundraising tracker at appendix 4.

Low Level Giving

Platforms: We will utilise online donation platforms like JustGiving, and our website to facilitate small donations.

Integration: These fundraising activities will be integrated into our regular communication with our audience, with clear messaging about the social impact of their support.

Corporate Giving

We will target companies with a focus on community engagement and the arts. Potential targets include:

5. **Local businesses:** Small and medium-sized enterprises with a vested interest in regional development. We will prioritise local business within a 20 mile radius of Babylon Gallery who are likely to be interested in supporting local culture.
6. **Regional and national companies with strong CSR programs:** as a subsidiary to local businesses we will research and approach regional and national businesses, particularly those with a focus on arts, education, or diversity and inclusion

Earned Income

Ticket Sales: Expand offer through targeted events, workshops and talks, ensuring a mix of free and paid options to engage wider audiences.

Merchandise: In collaboration with local artists, develop and sell items, such as art prints, postcards, crafts, ceramics and jewellery. We will also source our own stock item for creative experiences such as art box packages and arts materials for leisure activities (e.g paint and picnic)

Workshops and Events: Generate income by hosting paid workshops for both young people and adults, as well as creative classes and private event hire. Workshops could include ceramics/pottery, watercolour and oils, textiles, life-drawing, stained glass and traditional crafts, as well as art history talks.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Context Analysis

Culture and Competition

East Cambridgeshire enjoys a thriving cultural scene and annual programme of events and festivals of which Babylon Arts plays a significant role. According to Arts Council England's 'Active Lives' data¹, 51% of the population of East Cambridgeshire is actively engaged in arts and culture, close to the England wide average of 52.2%².

Throughout the year there are a number of cultural events that take place locally and whilst not necessarily similar in genre or programme, there is substantial competition for audiences and funding, particularly in the current economic climate. It is, therefore, important to consider potential clashes, maximise the unique experience that Babylon Arts provides and demonstrate how it contributes to the richness of East Cambridgeshire's cultural offer.

Additionally, there are several cultural venues of varying sizes and programming within Ely and surrounding locations, most notably, Ely Cathedral, Ely Museum, The Maltings, Cromwell House, Viva Arts, Haddenham Arts Centre and Cineworld located at Ely Leisure Park, who all deliver cultural activities within their own spaces. However, Babylon Arts is one of only a handful of venues in East Cambridgeshire dedicated to local visual arts with its own gallery space and offers a high quality exhibition experience for artists to showcase and sell their work, reaching a wider range of people at regional, local and hyper-local levels.

Community

The population of East Cambridgeshire is currently 87,762, seeing an increase of 4.6% since 2011 and is estimated to increase to 98,200 by 2031. East Cambridgeshire is predicted to have the second highest level of proportional growth of any Cambridgeshire district between 2016 to 2036. The largest population settlements in East Cambridgeshire are Ely, Soham, Littleport and Burwell. Together, these comprise approximately 56% of the district's population, with the remaining population spread between about 50 villages.³ As of 2021, East Cambridgeshire is the fifth least densely populated of the East of England's 45 local authority areas, with an area equivalent to around one football pitch per resident.

With over 40% of the population aged 49 and over, East Cambridgeshire has a significantly older population than the UK average of 18.9%. There has been an increase of 27.2% in people aged 65 years and over, a decrease of 0.1% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and a decrease of 0.2% in children aged under 15 years. Nearly a third of the population are aged between 24 and 49 with the median age of 43 compared the UK wide median of 39.

Nearly 68% of the population live in single-family households and over 27% of the population live in a one-person household.

Over 60% of the population of East Cambridgeshire are economically active (excluding full time students), with 61.5% in employment and only 1.8% unemployed. 49.2% of those in employment work full-time. 35% are economically inactive, but nearly 23.5% of this demographic are retired, so are likely to have more leisure time, but not necessarily disposable income.

Of the 50 neighbourhoods in East Cambridgeshire, none are among the 20% most income deprived areas in England, but there are 15 neighbourhoods that are among the 20% least deprived areas

East Cambridgeshire is less ethnically diverse than the UK average with only 5.5% of the population from minority ethnic groups compared with 18.3% nationally. There are several EU8 countries represented within the population making up 6% of the population.

In 2021, 5.8% of East Cambridgeshire residents were identified as being disabled and limited a lot. This figure decreased from 6.9% in 2011.

Looking at the Audience Agency's segmentation system, Audience Spectrum, we can better understand the level of cultural engagement in the area⁴. Given the main demographic dominance of the extant older population mixed with new young families, couples and singles moving into the area, East Cambridgeshire's core audience demographic is broken down into the following segments:

- **32% Trips and Treats:** Suburban households often with children whose cultural activities usually are part of a day out or treat.
- **27% Dormitory Dependables:** Suburbanites and small towners interested in heritage activities and mainstream arts
- **17% Homes and Heritage:** Conservative and mature households who have a love of the traditional
- **9% Commuterland Culturebuffs:** Affluent, professional and suburbanite keen consumers of traditional culture.
- **9% Up Our Street:** Sociable retirees looking for inexpensive, mainstream, local leisure opportunities.

The remaining 7% make up Supported Communities, Frontline Families and Experience Seekers

On the Audience Spectrum, these groups are seen as 'mid-level engagers', favouring easy-to-access and affordable cultural events that they can attend with their friends and family. Looking at the data, it is evident that 'higher-level engagers' such as Metroculturals and Experience Seekers are less prevalent in the region. Whilst there is an opportunity for Babylon Arts to attract these different audience groups, it does mean we will need to work hard to promote our offer and align it to the interests of the local community.

Placemaking,

East Cambridgeshire is committed to investing in and supporting culture within the area. Whilst the local authority does not have a dedicated cultural strategy, there is evidence that they value culture as a driver for creating an area where people want to live, work and visit. Ely, a gem within the district, was lauded by The Guardian as one of the top ten destinations for a British city break, highlighting its rich cultural offer and enticing outdoor activities. This recognition highlights Ely's ability to offer a variety of experiences within a compact area, including its world-famous cathedral, variety markets (farmers, vintage and crafts), and vibrant riverside attractions of which Babylon Arts plays a crucial role. The Chairman of the Operational Services Committee at East Cambridgeshire District Council recognises Ely as a premier destination for leisure and culture.

The council's commitment extends beyond Ely to the wider district with its diverse attractions such as Wicken Fen, the Dojima Sake Brewery at Fordham Abbey, and the historic Devil's Dyke. This acknowledgement is part of a broader strategy to develop community cohesion by appreciating and valuing the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances, supporting equitable opportunities, and building strong relationships among residents.⁵

East Cambridgeshire District Council is actively working with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to unlock funding for various projects aimed at enhancing cultural and economic development.⁶ These include significant improvements to Ely's station quarter, city centre, and waterfront area, as well as ambitious regeneration projects in Soham and Littleport, all designed to stimulate local economies, create job opportunities, and enrich the cultural landscape.

Economic

The UK faces an uncertain time with challenges around the cost-of-living crisis, loss of staff and public engagement, and rising fuel and energy prices⁷.

Almost half of people say they are worse off now than they were pre-pandemic and 81% are worried about the effects of the cost-of-living crisis on themselves and their households. Over 50% say that they plan on cutting back on paid-for entertainment and leisure activities as a result, along with other non-essential expenses⁸. The impact of the current cost-of-living crisis is having a profound impact on household's ability to engage with cultural activities and this is being felt across the whole UK cultural sector. Many people from low-income backgrounds or living in rural areas may not have access to cultural activities due to high ticket prices or limited transportation options. This results in a lack of diversity and inclusivity in the cultural sector.

To compound the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, a significant challenge for the sector is funding. Public funding for the arts has been declining, and competition for private funding has become increasingly intense.⁹ The pandemic further exacerbated the funding challenge as many cultural institutions experienced revenue losses due to lockdowns and reduced attendance¹⁰.

However, as more funders take a place-based approach, Arts Council funding is being directed away from London-centric cultural organisations in support of the government's Levelling Up agenda¹¹. Neighbouring Fenland is a levelling up priority leading to an opportunity for Babylon Arts to capitalise on this strategic approach by exploring grant funding to support free activities and engagement programmes, particularly for those least culturally engaged.

Additionally, households are looking to enjoy cultural activities closer to home to reduce pressure on transport costs, entrance fees and subsistence/accommodation. The Arts Council England's 10 year strategy 'Let's Create' outlines key investment principles that encourages creative villages, towns and cities.¹² This may benefit Babylon Arts as a potential driver if one of our key priorities is to connect local people to high quality arts and culture engagement where they live.

Environment and Technology

As of 2021, East Cambridgeshire is the fifth least densely populated of the East of England's 45 local authority areas, with an area equivalent to around one football pitch per resident.¹³

The area has undergone regeneration and growth that is well planned and complements its high quality historical and natural inheritance. Communities benefit from quality public spaces and parks with access to the countryside that make the area special. Public transport has improved with Ely train station becoming a gateway for regional and national travel. People are increasingly reliant on sustainable modes of transport and less reliant on cars to access places and services.¹⁴

People are becoming ever more concerned about the environment with young people, in particular, keen to take climate action that includes being aware of organisation's environmental sustainability policies when choosing which cultural activities to engage with.¹⁵

If Babylon Arts intend to apply to Arts Council England in 2025, we will need to address the fund's Environmental Responsibility Investment Principle¹⁶.

The pandemic has highlighted the need for the cultural sector to adapt to the digital age. However, East Cambridgeshire is an area affected by digital poverty and poor wi-fi connection in the UK. Efforts to close the digital poverty gap in the area has seen the creation of East Cambridgeshire District Council's Digital Inclusion project.¹⁷

Babylon Arts prides itself of its programme of in-person events with digital engagement focused largely on accepting bookings, providing programme information and news although has created virtual exhibitions displayed on our website. There is an opportunity to increase online access engagement through technology which may include live streaming events, talks and exhibitions, creating digital content for the website and enhancing social media channels. As digital poverty remains a core issue, it will be important for any future digital strategy to assess the challenges faced by some of its most disadvantaged communities, ensuring it does not widen the accessibility gap.

1 <https://datawrapper.dwcdn.net/FArbA/4/7wmode=transparent> 2 [The Active Lives Survey | Arts Council England](#) 3 <https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/agendas/5%20-%20Community%20engagement%20strategy%202024-28%20combined.pdf> 4 <https://www.theaudienceagency.org/asset/3243> 5 <https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/content/creating-cohesive-communities> 6 <https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/press/council-approves-ely-and-soham-plans-and-will-take-next-step-unlock-crucial-funding> 7 <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2022/06/29/the-uks-cost-of-living-crisis-has-hit-its-museums-and-heritage-sites> 8 [Impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis | The Audience Agency](#) 9 [Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre | A new deal for arts... \(pec.ac.uk\)](#) 10 [Culture in Crisis: impacts of Covid-19 on the UK cultural sector and where we go from here - CultureHive](#) 11 [Levelling Up Fund list of local authorities by priority category.xlsx \(live.com\)](#) 12 [Bringing creativity and culture to your doorstep | Arts Council England](#) 13 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E07000009/> 14 <https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/youth-pages/youth-travel> 15 <https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/youthstrategy2021AC.pdf> 16 [Investment Principles | Arts Council England](#) 17 <https://www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/2023/11/20/bridging-the-digital-divide-in-cambridgeshire-ely-library-welcomes-lucy-frazer-mp-to-discuss-the-importance-of-digital-inclusion-work/>

Appendix 2: PESTLE ANALYSIS

The following PESTLE analysis provides further detail of marketing specific points in relation to external threats, highlighting what could be developed to strengthen the brand.

Political Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Impact of leaving the European Union, e.g. show availability, and access to funding ● Access to funding from local authorities and non-departmental public bodies to support short to medium term delivery and long-term sustainability and resilience.
Economic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide jobs in the creative and cultural industries, the fastest growing sector in the UK, with the potential to make a significant contribution through artist studios ● Building a good understanding of customer interests, needs and motivations ● Must target customers with good purchasing power whilst tackling the cost of living crisis and affordability for those with low disposable incomes and from the poorest households
Social Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The organisation has strong values including access and EDI in work engaging children and communities and supporting young people into creative careers. Could do more to embed EDI in artistic quality ● Brand positioning and visual identity is poor and could highlight social, health and economic benefits and outcomes ● Customers build trust with the organisation and are loyal, however some customers are confused about purpose and offer ● Business development could be more representative of local communities.

Technological Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consumer and societal benefits of cultural engagement and the potential to increase digital productivity and resource ● Operational and financial quick wins by investing in digital solutions for HR, project management and data management including Xero and app-based technology ● Investment in website and goals for PatronBase to improve ticket sales, encourage giving and donations and grow our membership.
Legal Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Good GDPR policy and practice ● Good health, safety, wellbeing policy and practice ● Good safeguarding policy and practice ● Need to improve standard contracts for freelance practitioners and companies ● Need to produce standard partnership agreements for partnership working.
Environmental Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reducing carbon footprint as a business development priority, establishing a Trustee lead to drive action, implement plans and use tools provided ● Need to consider environmental sustainability in any new capital venture ● Integrate UN Sustainable Development Goals into evaluation framework.