Section 1. Context

1. How does your proposal demonstrate delivery of the 2050 Ambition?

Delivering against 3 themes, this proposal will see Twenty One realise its potential as a small venue for contemporary live arts - with a particular focus on experimental sound (music, performance, spoken word) - through the support of Focal Point Gallery. Twenty One will also act as a community hub and resource, supporting SBC services and the needs of our residents.’ This unique collaboration of cultural expertise and social value will be a pioneering model for the town, directly aligned to 2050, and will promote the ABCD model of community collaboration that is considered highly effective.
The site was invested in by SBC as it occupies a prominent seafront location and had been a vacant unit for several years. The initial capital investment provided a visually improved appearance at the City Beach gateway but requires a further operational investment to realise the venue’s full potential, never supplied in the original plan.

Through supporting foundational elements of the project, namely through a staff role, Twenty One, with the support of FPG will have the ability to procure a rent-paying, sympathetic F+B provider, attract new investment streams, build the business model through a commercial hire structure, and establish itself at the centre of the Southend community, delivering the themes of the ambition in the following ways;

**Pride and Joy**
- Creation of a unique venue to house local cultural, creative and community focused events, increasing the variety and quality of our offer, and encouraging pride and actively talking up Southend
- Creation of an alternative small music venue on the national touring circuit, to draw larger acts to the area, and encourage visiting performers to actively talk up Southend, building on its distinct heritage for experimental music
- Build the brand of FPG through audience development, increasing the draw of the organisation as a major arts institution to achieve Southend being known as a first choice coastal destination.
- Through FPG, launch an innovative contemporary music programme, building on our heritage and attracting new audiences in a similar vein to the Meltdown festival at the Southbank Centre in London.

**Active and Involved**
- Creation of a flexible space that can, and has been, occupied by a range of diverse community and charity groups, coming together in one venue in the name of individual causes. This will encourage people from different backgrounds to get along well together.
- Through a strong, independent brand (though linked to FPG) allow confidence and ownership of public assets by our community, allowing the community to come together in self-initiated activity.
- Providing an accessible and welcoming physical space in the centre of Southend to promote council services through events across a variety of SBC teams.

**Opportunity and Prosperity**
- Show SBC to be leading by example in the town centre development, by supporting an exciting creative and cultural venue supporting a wide variety of our communities.
- Through provision of an accessible creative space, and with support of local education providers, and the Local Cultural Education Partnership, the venue will provide performance, workshop and professional development opportunities, housing creative learning and digital activities to upskill our young people in a venue they can feel a sense of ownership over. Digital skills can be offered cross generationally.
- Support a creatively focused F+B provider to thrive in the town centre, encouraging other businesses of this nature as a place to locate too.
- Through development of the FPG brand, and alignment to the Cultural Development Fund, Thames Estuary Production Corridor and Essex 2020, Southend will be highlighted as a place renowned for creative industries.

2. **What evidence have you got that this approach will deliver of the outcome?**

Twenty One has been operational for two years with varying levels of success in different areas. The approach stated is based upon the learning that has taken place during this time, to build a business model that meets the outcomes and seeks to be financial viable.

**Catering Provider**
Fundamental to the scheme is appointing an F+B provider that is aligned to the vision of the facility. The requirement to work with SBC’s designated provider in the first iteration of Twenty One resulted in an insufficient partnership for the needs of the venue, and them withdrawing early for the project. We have
undertaken a market engagement opportunity to ascertain levels of interest in the venue should it go to market. This has produced the following results:

- 6 locally based F+B providers interested in the scheme, of different specialisms
- Significant interest in the community and cultural aspects of the venture
- Ability to contribute to rates and rent – with ability to reduce rates through SME/charitable means (which could be a requirement of the procurement process)
- Willingness to work towards a different, healthy offer on the seafront
- Commitment to running a small enterprise in an environmentally sustainable fashion

Event Use and Hire Prospects
Since launching the venue in July 2017, 155 events have been held, from 52 different cultural or community organisations working with 425 artists seeing over 2100 visitors, which articulates the demand for continued use. This is an average of three events every two weeks, with no marketing budget, and very little staff resource. Local groups that have held events in the spaces, and demonstrated support for its continuations include: South Essex Mind, Project 49, Essex Feminist Collective, Southend Pride, Leigh Folk Festival and Oxfam, Spinning Yarns, Sundown Arts, Old Kent Road, Metal, University of Essex, South Essex College, Southend Fringe Fest, TOMA and Culture as a Dare.

Affordable hire fees for cultural use were introduced in March 2019 (previously hires fees charged only to commercial or private events). The ratio of events per week has remained consistent, with the same level of marketing provision (39 events over 5 months), proving the continued need for the venue, and income potential. At the current rate income generation is averaging £289 per month, which we anticipate to grow on increased marketing.

Public Feedback
- “Finally a brilliant arts venue to house ALL the vibrant communities and give them a platform, Twenty One is the perfect place for events and a great new venue to get excited about. So much potential – everyone is talking about it!”
- “Superb venue & community space, with very friendly staff. Great beer too!”
- “Wonderful space, lovely people and so supportive. A great venue for both the artistic and wider community.”
- “Really nice venue, chilled out atmosphere. I saw Pica Pica and M.G. Boulter - both excellent acts and the extremely appreciative audience listened in spellbound silence.”
- “It’s very exciting to see something other than the old pubs and greasy chips on the seafront.”
- “I HEART Twenty One, long may it reign” Zoe Howe
- “We love Twenty One as a venue for our monthly meetings. It’s a welcoming and comforting environment on the seafront.” WellbeingMatters
- “@TwentyOne_South is a great venue and hosted two of our #southendpride events, what a great asset for Southend!” Southend Pride
- “Showing the love for @TwentyOne_South today who have provided us with many opportunities to develop our work in its creative space & to fundraise for our work. We are so grateful to have this diverse arts venue on our doorstep & we hope to see it thrive in the upcoming future!” Blown Fuse Theatre (E15 graduates)
- “Re. @TwentyOne_South: It’s great to have a purpose built space to host such varied and exciting performances, symposiums, book launches etc. Every comedian who’s performed during our preview season has said how lucky we are to have this in Southend. It’s the kind of venue that earns Southend’s reputation as the alternative cultural epicentre to places like London and Brighton. @SouthendBC” Pope Lonergan, PINTS. Comedy
- “We love new arts venue @TwentyOne_South @SouthendBC it’s so important to have a quality arts venue like this one, there is a huge arts community in Southend and already there have been tons of great events here! Inc us @sundownarts we heart 21 x” Sundown Arts
- “Shout out to @TwentyOne_South One of my favourite spaces in #Southend! Props to @FPGSouthend + @SouthendBC for creating a space for performance, music, visuals arts and good nights out!” Scottee

Clr Laurie Burton

- “Walked past @TwentyOne_South this morning and am reminded of the little art sanctuary that Southend has to offer. Nice to do boring admin there too & have breaks by just popping onto the pier”  

Roxanne Carney

- “@TwentyOne_South appreciation post - it really is just what Southend needed, a proper community creative space - very excited about all the cool things happening & looking forward to getting more involved!!”  

Natasha Carter

Seaside Regeneration through Culture
Building on the work in Brighton, and more recently Margate and Hastings, cultural regeneration is a tried and tested model, with jobs increase, relocation and business investment made in areas that are culturally vibrant. The successful Cultural Development Fund through DCMS and Arts Council is pushing this agenda in the Thames Estuary region, to which Twenty One has already been identified as a venue which will play a significant role in this, feeding into developing the high street and town centre.

Recent Guardian piece from Arts Council Chair Sir Nicolas Serota elaborates on this:  


External Partner Investment
The venue has attracted the attention of regional schemes, including Essex 2020, who have identified Twenty One as a cultural and community hub for South Essex (Southend, Castle Point, Thurrock, Rochford) for the countywide programme of promoting STEAM. The management group Always Possible will work with SBC and FPG to establish Twenty One as a lasting hub for the region from funding from Big Lottery Fund. Similarly, the SECCADS programme, now South Essex Creatives, a project group formed through the Creative SELEP, have identified Twenty One as having the ability to host their activity. This work feeds in to the Cultural Development Fund supporting the Thames Estuary Production Corridor, which Twenty One will also play a role in.

Education Providers
University of Essex and South Essex College have both expressed interest in the venue, and have organised events in the space with their students. There is potential to encourage Twenty One to be an active venue for the student community. South Essex College have trialled a paid short partnership agreement with the space, using it to host end of year assessments for music production courses. Conversations are ongoing regarding the potential for this to move into a long term agreement through stabilisation of the venue. This work links in with Southend’s forming Cultural Education Partnership, supporting skill development.

Support from SBC colleagues
Twenty One has been used by a broad range of council teams, demonstrating wide appeal across our community. Many senior members of these teams have joined a project group in support of the venue. The value is seen across teams including:

- Economic Development
- Transformation – Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Early Help, Family Support & Youth Offending Services
- Culture and Tourism
- Children’s Services
- Housing
- Service Design
- Southend 2050

Evidence of cultural events supporting Tourism Growth
Cultural tourists are known to travel further, stay longer and spend more. Recent evidence states Edinburgh Festival as a top rated UK travel experience:  

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-49318668
Twenty One has already seen preview events from Edinburgh Festival performers (Scottee, Nathan Cassidy, Chris Stokes, Abbie Murphy and Mawann Rizwan) the diversity of cultural events it can bring year round will develop the interest in travelling to Southend. A Meltdown style festival will increase this appeal in a concentrated moment, further promoted through delivery by Focal Point Gallery, whose project Radical ESSEX has been hailed by Arts Council England as the “go to” example for [areas] to use culture to change a destinations’ visitor make up and to alter outsiders (and local’s) perceptions of what is possible.’ (Paul Bristow, Arts Council England Director, Strategic Partnerships).

3. What are the measures of impact, success and how will you embed learning?

- Number of events held, diversity of events and visitor numbers attending will be key measurement in the success of the facility. These will be measured each quarter. There will be a particular interest in measuring local and travelling audience numbers. The number of community, charitable and cultural groups will be measured, particularly new groups joining each quarter.

- Focus will be given to measuring meaningful experiences delivered in the venue – for example sessions focused towards learning and skills development and new collaborations brought through activity in the space. Storytelling will be key, responding to activities users of the space have in month and years to come, following the young people that use the venue.

- Anticipating conversation around activities in the venture, press and social media will be monitored and mentions of the venue reported.

- We will work with the catering partner to review financial success each quarter, through sales and hires (should this be part of their agreement, and otherwise this will be independently monitored). Meetings will occur more frequently at the beginning of any contract, to ensure success for all partners.

- A working group will be set up to monitor on-going successes and challenges, ensuring a flexible review model to make changes depended on the needs of the market. This will be based on the existing group that have come together in support of the venture, bringing in external partners to ensure wide spread success.
Section 2. Aims, Objectives & Collaboration

4. What are the key aims and objectives of the proposal?

Aims
For Twenty One to be Southend’s home for experimental sound, music, performance and spoken word events, complementing other live music venues in the town. In tandem, we will work with a range of partners to create a safe space for likeminded charities, learning providers and public services to offer events for diverse communities to access a dynamic seafront venue with a healthy, environmentally sustainable F&B offer.

Ideally situated on seafront in the centre of Southend, the venue will show SBC to be leading the regeneration of the town centre through culture and community based activity, shifting the conversation of the high street from retail to experience, and promoting Southend as a site for cultural excellence, in line with the Thames Estuary Production Corridor and Cultural Development Fund investment.

Objectives
- A minimum of 100 cultural and community events delivered in the venue each year
- Appearances in the venue by at least 10 national performers each year.
- Visitor numbers of at least 5000 per annum
- 1 piece of national press and consistent local press each year
- A year round healthy food offer on the seafront in a green venue
- A sustainable venture by year 5

Resources Required
This proposal asks for SBC support in realising the project to its full potential, through a financial commitment of supporting a FTE staff role and contributing to the business rates (or rate relief), and permission to begin a procurement process to establish a partner in which to run the venture. The current staffing is being delivered on top of the roles of existing FPG team members which is no longer sustainable.

5. Who else have you involved in discussions and how have the helped to shape the proposal?

The proposals for the continuation of the venue in this manner have chiefly come from members of the Southend community that have used the venture over the past two years, 52 charity, community and cultural groups or individuals including South Essex MIND, SAVS, Turning Tides, Metal, Cleo Lane (Mudlarks Choir), MG Boulter, SBC teams and Southend Pride. Consultation from further afield has been included also, organisations such as Kinetica have used the venue, as well as external hires from Google, Ted Baker and Rough Trade, whose interest has informed how this venue might operate.

Most recently, recognising the Youth Mayor’s desire for a music festival in Southend, we have reached out to the mayor and the youth council about whether Twenty One can play a role in this activity.

Beyond Focal Point Gallery colleagues, a working group for Twenty One has been established, a useful, rational and supportive network of colleagues who believe in the success of the venture. This group comprises:
Tim Rignall – Capital
Glyn Halksworth – Housing and Inclusion
Scott Dolling – Cultural and Tourism
Chris Burr – Economic Development
Gary Perry-Ambrose – Finance
Darryl Mitchell – Procurement
Rosemary Pennington – Cultural Wellbeing
Alan Richards - Assets

Other Council teams have used the venue and expressed support for this proposal:
Economic Development
Transformation – Mental Health and Wellbeing
Early Help, Family Support & Youth Offending Services
Culture and Tourism
Recognising the multi-faceted, collaborative nature of this proposal and the various outcomes it will contribute too, several outcome leads of the list stated above have been consulted.

We have worked closely with partnering organisations, Always Possible, leading the work on Essex 2020, and Space, Colchester, who are coordinating South Essex Creatives. Arts Council England have visited the facility and are very supporting, encouraging funding bids to Lottery Project Grants and their Small Venues Fund.

South Essex College have been a hugely supportive partner, and see a great value in investing in the venture for the benefit of their students.

6. What are the links and dependencies with the other outcome proposals?

As managed under Focal Point Gallery, the proposal links to the expansion of gallery through Forum 2, submitted under O+P and P+J, linking to C+S and A+I (combining PJ2.1b and PJ2.1e), as well as plans to install public art on the high street, alongside wider landscaping encompassing the Forum area, (PJ2.1d) and building artists’ studios on the high street (PJ2.1c) The latter two proposals are being merged with other activity in the town centre area, with progression continuing through external funding possibilities.

Though dedicated staff support is needed for this project, particularly in the initial stages, it is possible that over time resources can be shared across the FPG organisation, and business models and funding streams maybe applicable to both areas. The projects are initially being modelled separately for the purposes of not being financial dependent of one another.

The proposal links to other projects pertaining to the town centre, contributing to the vision of this area of Southend, building a holistic, joined up vision that meets our outcomes (OP2). By default, this then links to aspects of tourism and place branding (PJ1.3 + 2.2). It will play a role in ensuring we are creating spaces that are ‘inviting and active’ (PJ4.3).

The proposal has strong links to proposal in the A+I theme, regarding community integration and working together, we are specking with colleagues about Twenty One being a site where much of this work can happen.

This proposal is not dependent on the success of other proposals, but can plan a strong role in working with other areas to ensure the best levels of success.

7. Who are the partners (or potential partners) and how to you envisage their role(s) in collaborating to delivering the proposal to achieve the outcome?

The key partnership to the success of Twenty One will be to procure an F+B provider that understands and responds to the vision of the venue we are trying to achieve. Through a market engagement process, we have a good understanding of how a procurement should operate to obtain the best results, and will work with colleagues in procurement to achieve this. We need to ensure that the partner is contributing financially to the success of the business, but also to the community and cultural vision.

We will work with community, cultural and charity groups to delivering an accessible, diverse programme representing all areas of our town. Collaboration through a hire structure will support the business model of the venture in addition. Whilst numerous partners have already been mentioned, we will also ensure the venture has a robust marketing and outreach strategy to ensure its wide reach to new members.
We will partner with South East Creatives to ensure the venue is reaching out the wider cultural community, and with Always Possible working towards Essex 2020 will work to ensure Twenty One is a hub for the cultural community long term. They will lead discussions with Big Lottery Fund, and in turn we will work with Arts Council England to ensure the venue is sustainable, initially through their grants to support small venues, available until March 2020.

Through a developed site and more consolidated offer, we will work with Southend Tourism Partnership and Visit Southend to place Twenty One at the centre of our cultural tourism offer.

8. What potential challenges do you anticipate in respect of a) implementing this proposal, b) caused by this proposal once implemented?

The key to success will be selecting the correct catering partner, which will be a challenge in both implementation and ongoing success. Through learning taken during occupancy with the original catering partner, and information gathered through a market engagement process, we are confident that an arrangement can be built to ensure success. This will need to be delivered through the correct procurement process however, and we will work closely with colleagues to ensure the optimal outcomes. Getting this arrangement wrong will severely impact the levels of success.

Ensuring high levels of community engagement, through outreach and marketing will be needed to ensure success. An initial following has been built up, and through dedicated staff provision and marketing budget we will ensure the facilities and attributes of the venue are widely communicated to ensure engagement.

A key challenge will be ensuring the long term financial viability of the venture. The initial partnership agreement with the F+B provider will be key to this, as well as working with colleagues in the economic and business development teams to ensure the model to be robust. FPG staff have significant experience in writing and securing external funding. Further details of the financial breakdown can be found in the associated business case. We will also work with external partners Always Possible who have identified Twenty One as a site for creative hub potential in the Essex 2020 scheme, and will work with us throughout this year to obtain funding for long term success.
Section 3. Social Value

9. How could the proposal deliver social value - in terms of the local community, businesses, economy and environment and what will the specific impact and benefits be?

The social value of this project will be widely seen, for many of the reasons already given in this case. In summary;
- a space for the community to come together, to work together, in charitable causes and cultural output
- the project has the ability to see more funding come into the borough through charitable, community and cultural concerns
- through an additional contemporary music offer, programmed through FPG’s expert resources, the impact of the cultural offer in Southend will grow, further attracting, as the venue already has, interest from promoters such as Rough Trade, who have international reach and will further promote Southend’s brand, seeing long term investment.
- the project will support (or create) a socially focused business
  - it will support a local supply chain through the F+B provider – local beers, food stocks etc.
  - SBC leading a green agenda through no single use plastics and recycling facilities, a leading example in this area of the town, in addition to supporting the efforts of schemes like the beach clean up
- the venue is cycle friendly, with installed bike racks, and will encourage this transport and local scheme on this subject.
- the project will encourage business support for social and culturally focus projects through a support scheme.

This project was discussed as a case study in an ABCD training session, and it was considered to be a great space for encouraging community engagement and ownership, exactly in line with the ABCD principles, giving people the power to organise, reach out and galvanise. Long term, there is potential for the project to exist under a cooperative model should the community desire it.

10. What is the perceived impact the proposal will have on groups with 'protected characteristics'?

Through the neutral branding of the space, and breadth of events that will happen, there is ability of groups to feel ownership of the space, already seen through the diversity groups operating within it, including Southend Pride, South Essex MIND, Wellbeing Matters, Trust Links and Project 49. Events have seen a focus towards LGBTQI+ issues, music from world cultures, celebration of International Women’s Day and intergenerational activity.

FPG are committed to prioritising a diverse programme, in line with our status as an Arts Council NPO, supporting the Creative Case for Diversity. Across all our programme, those with protected characteristics are represented by at least 30%, with a particular focus on Ethnicity, LGBTQ+ and Age. Marketing channels include accessible features, including image description, and events are advertised with ability to make adjustments as per the needs of the audiences, such as large print guides or BSL interpretation.

The venue itself have been designed to be as accessible and inclusive as possible, welcoming through no separation of need. Toilets are gender neutral and accessible and there is level access with wide doorways, to encourage all members of the community.

11. What is the proposal’s potential direct or indirect impact on the wider community?

The development of Twenty One will show Southend to be a creatively focused town on a national platform. In its short operational time, it received coverage in The Guardian and invitation to be part of Time Out London’s feature on Southend (not going ahead due to Vertas pulling out of the venture). Google and Ted Baker were attracted to the venue and therefore Southend, through seeing the venue on Instagram. This type of engagement does much to change perceptions of the town, encourage visitors and relocation to the area. This proves the ability for the venue to attract new levels of tourism, whilst still supporting Southend’s existing communities through locally focused work.
Through a focus on a contemporary music production, including elements of digital production, the venue will support Southend as a smart city, engaging with much of the community through digital means, and showcasing their values at cultural and community events. Through the support of University of Essex and South Essex College, digital learning through the venues facilities will be encouraged not only to their students, but to all users of the venue.

Indirectly, through the support of community services and schemes, and providing an outlet to visualise important SBC resources in a contemporary and accessible way, the project will support community cohesion and buy-in to the 2050 vision, increasing awareness of what the council does, and how people can get involved.

With a focus on cultural and community use, the venue will promote Southend seafront as a year round offer,