

# Strategy and Action Plan

For the Liverpool City Region  
Creative Industries 2025



**LIVERPOOL  
CITY REGION**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

**METROMAYOR**  
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# Executive Summary

The Creative Industries Cluster Strategy & Action Plan is the Liverpool City Region's vision for delivering prosperity for a key growth cluster. It sets out the cluster's purpose, vision and mission as well as key insights on the audiences that bring its strategic ideas to life.

This strategy has been created in response to Fifth Sector's 2024 Cluster Mapping Report as well as stakeholder engagement sessions facilitated through workshops and interviews. These recommendations are based on "Competitiveness through differentiation" from the cluster mapping report.

***The strategy focuses on tackling the unique barriers the cluster faces across the Liverpool City Region and presents ideas for tackling these challenges with care and creativity.***

Its goal is to stimulate economic growth for the cluster, create bountiful opportunities for its people and to showcase the significant impact it has on the region's economy.

The Action Plan will be delivered throughout 2025 - 2028 and will be regularly reviewed for potency. Our cluster is an agile, forward-thinking one so the strategy should be challenged at strategic points to ensure it is still meeting the needs of its stakeholders.

The Creative Industries Board will act as the leadership team ensuring the strategy is realised to its fullest.

This is a first-of-its-kind attempt to articulate what the cluster looks to achieve. This is for the cluster, by the cluster.





## The Cluster's story

There are two main concepts influencing the story we are trying to create for the cluster; The UK's Industrial Strategy and the best-case scenario presented in the cluster mapping. By aligning these two we can create growth opportunities for the cluster and establish the region as a global leader in creativity powered by technology.

The UK Industrial strategy states:

"...successful clusters are characterised by strong concentrations of employment, output, high productivity and innovation. Within this, clusters can be strong in different ways: either having deep expertise in a concentrated spatial area or encompassing related businesses and employees in broad spatial areas that cross administrative boundaries."

This means that successful business clusters - groups of related companies, industries, and organisations located near each other - share some key features:

- **High Activity:** They have lots of jobs, strong production, and high levels of efficiency (productivity).
- **Innovation:** They are places where new ideas, technologies, and products are constantly being developed.

Within this, clusters can succeed in two different ways:

- **Tightly Focused Expertise:** Some clusters thrive because they have a small, concentrated area of businesses and people with specialised knowledge or skills. For example, a tech hub where experts in one field (like AI) are all close together.
- **Broadly Connected:** Other clusters work well because they link a wide range of related businesses and workers, even if they're spread across different regions or cities. These clusters might cross over local or national borders but still function as a connected network.



*Professor Rachel McLean, Liverpool  
John Moores University, Chair of the  
Creative Industries Board*

In simple terms, clusters succeed either by being specialised in one small area or by connecting a wider range of related industries across a bigger area.

This neatly aligns with the recommendations from the cluster mapping:

“The best-case scenario takes a different perspective, opening LCR’s creative businesses to opportunities resulting from transformation in consumption of creative content and services rather than focusing on attempts to compete through supply side interventions.

***By identifying different lenses on the problem, LCR can transform the cluster from a number of uncoordinated, overlapping sectors competing with one another for a shrinking customer base to one which can be at the forefront of a new paradigm of cultural consumption.***

The traditional siloed approach to categorising creative sectors (film, TV, games, etc.) is becoming less relevant. Content is increasingly cross-platform, with a focus on screens of various sizes (often experienced simultaneously), interactive experiences and physical/ experiential content.”

By fully getting behind this vision, we can create a genuine point of difference for our cluster and tell a story the world will want to listen to.

This differentiation strategy naturally gives us three areas of focus as a city region:

- **Cross-platform storytelling**
- **Latest technologies**
- **Digitalisation**

**Cross-platform storytelling** gives us the chance to “focus on cost-effective, high-quality content with strong local narratives that can appeal to global streaming audiences”.

**Latest technologies** gives us the opportunity to upskill and reskill our existing and emerging talent pools and encourages “knowledge sharing between diverse content creators, technology innovators and cultural institutions.”.

**Digitalisation** helps our cluster to push beyond its current boundaries and step into a modern era of business. It will play a crucial role in “risk-taking, experimentation, and IP retention within the local creative ecosystem”.

We are fortunate to have many great assets in our region that aligns perfectly with this vision.

From IBM’s home at The Hartree Centre to our rich tapestry of gaming studios to our independent creatives to our cutting-edge technologists, LCR’s Creative Industries Cluster has the opportunity to be truly different in its output and approach. We need to embrace our differences and bring our creatives, technologists, business-leaders, educators and more together under one unifying vision; Liverpool City Region is a global leader in creativity fuelled by technology.

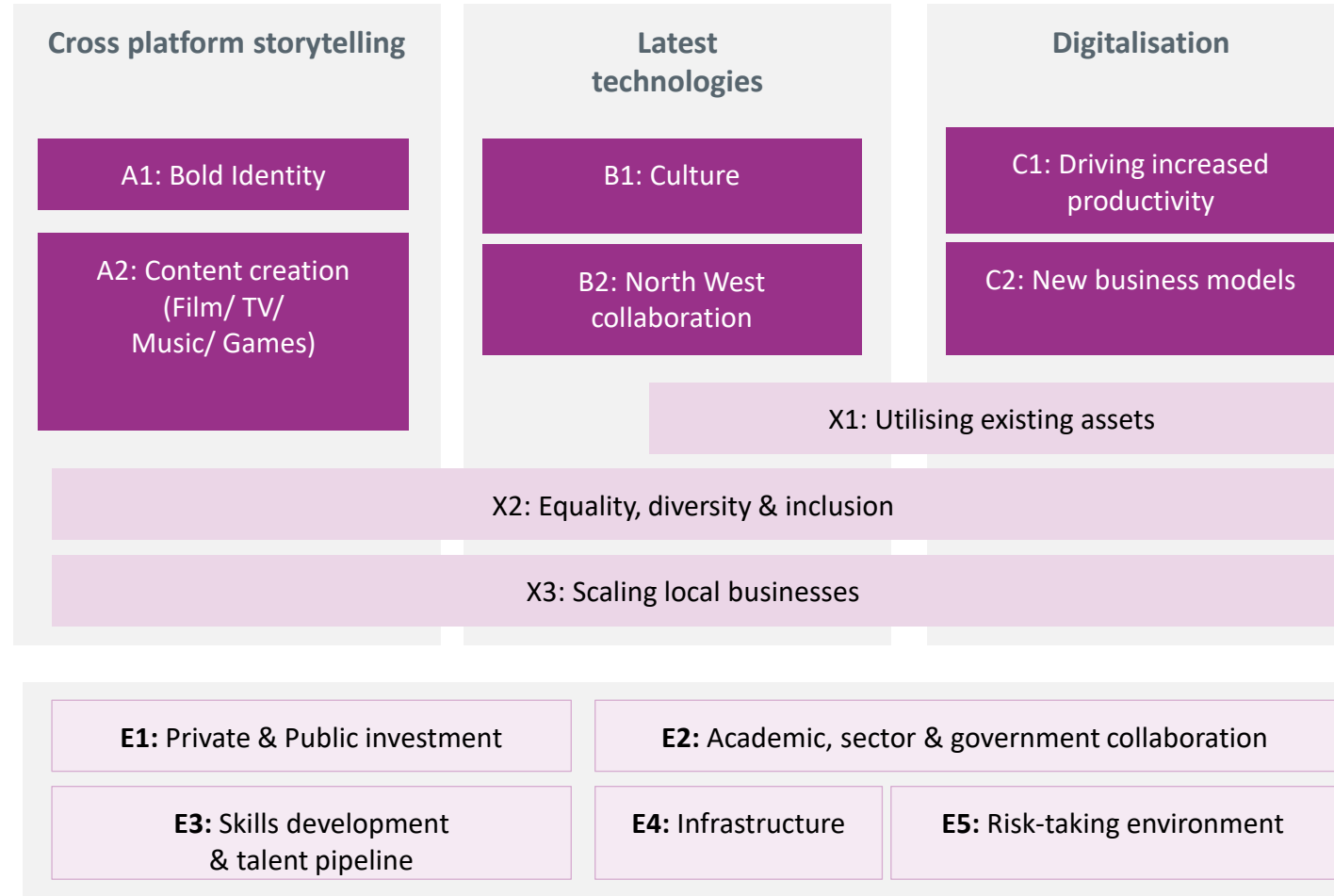
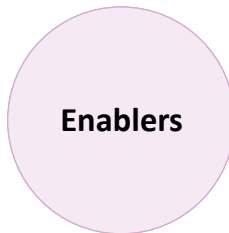




And at the heart of all of this is purposeful growth. We want to see our city region's independents thrive, for our economy to grow and for collaboration to happen more readily. Our sector, more so than others, needs risk for true innovation to happen. We need to feel secure enough in trying out new ideas so that exciting, lightbulb moments can happen.

*By connecting the dots between our existing assets, creating opportunities for diverse talent and being at the front of innovative storytelling our region could become the go-to example of creative industry excellence.*

# Cluster Narrative



# Summary

## CA Vision

**A fairer, stronger, cleaner city region where no one is left behind.**

## CI Purpose

To champion and support the growth of an inclusive and innovative creative ecosystem fuelled by technology.

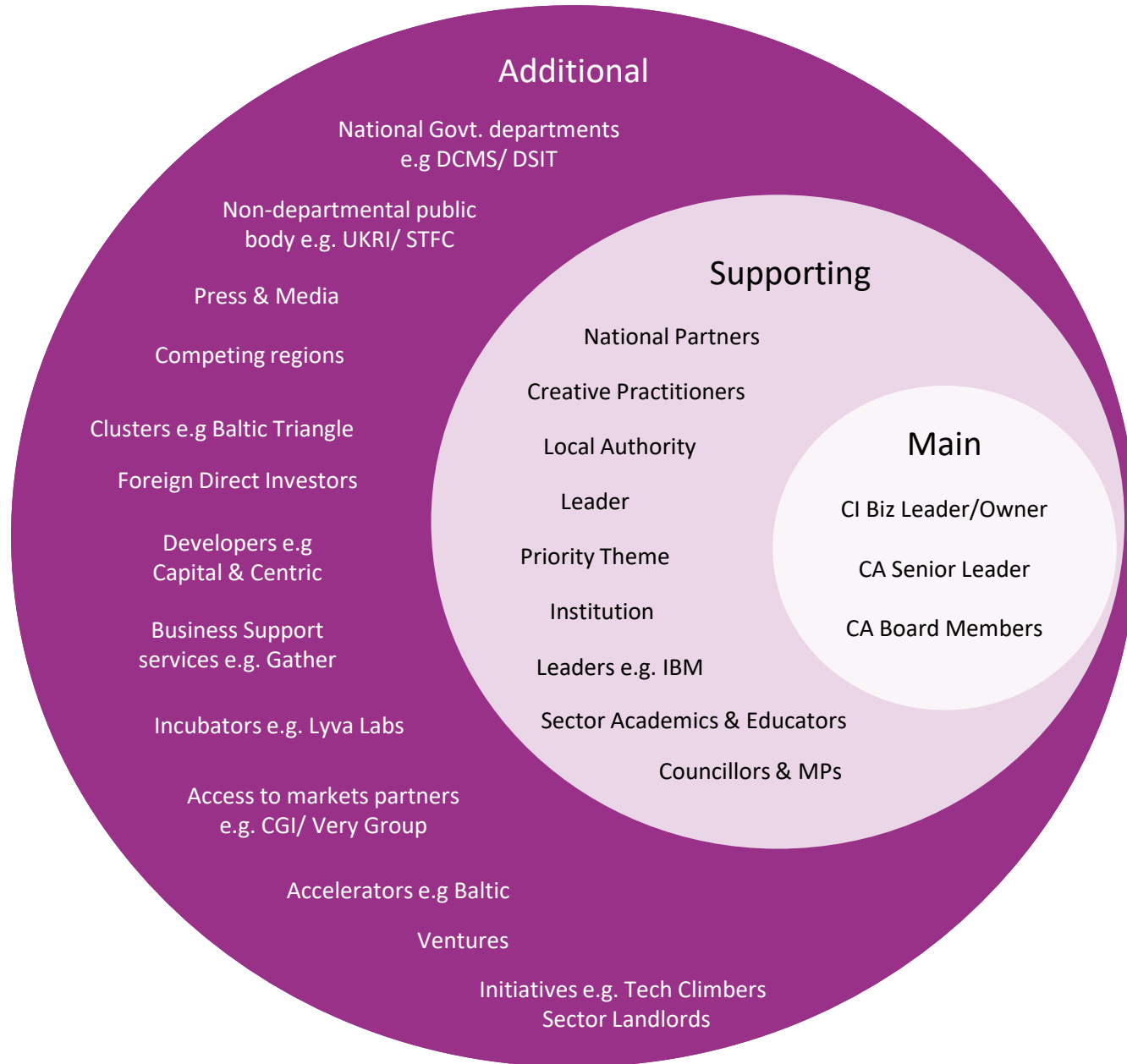
## CI Vision

Liverpool City Region is a global leader in creativity fuelled by innovative technology and powered by local leadership.

## CI Mission

We'll leverage private and public investment; collaborate and innovate; develop the skills required; take positive risks and build the technology infrastructure to power it all.

**Values:** Radical, Inclusive, Collaborative, Impactful



## Audience Overview

This isn't an exhaustive list, but rather a representation of the types of people or organisations who need to be engaged for this strategy to be successful.



## Goals and KPIs

**3-4 SMART goals have been created per focus area of the strategy:**

- Private & public investment
- Academic, sector and government collaboration
- Skills, development & talent pipeline
- Infrastructure
- Risk-taking environment

# Private & Public Investment

## Goals

## KPIs

### **Create a cluster brand**

Develop a clear and compelling brand identity and narrative for the creative industries cluster that highlights its strengths and attracts international investment. This narrative will be a shared resource endorsed by key stakeholders within the cluster.

x1 brand identity and narrative

### **Play a pivotal role in helping the Scaleab project to secure funding**

The Scalelab project will secure £6.75M from national government thanks to significant support from the CI board. LCR can be a pilot region for scaling businesses.

Scalelab secures £6.75M in funding from national government

### **Attract and host a cornerstone Creative Industries event to the region**

By November 2026, LCR hosts an event that celebrates the convergent points between music, film & TV and gaming.

1,000 people engaged by attracting an existing cornerstone event to the region

5 - 10 key international influencers invited to get involved in the above activity to help platform LCR on an international stage

# Academic, sector & government collaboration

Goals	KPIs
<b>Define The 100 List</b> Create a list of 100 brands, organisations and people that help to bring the strategy to life in order to engage them with its ideas and proliferate its reach.	The 100 List is co-created by the CI board
<b>Create the creative community engagement group and put on three events</b> This group will include members from The 100 List as well as wider stakeholders. It gives a chance for academics, sector professionals and local government to collaborate and problem solve.	The CI Engagement group is formed and hosts three key engagement events
<b>Organise two knowledge exchange trips</b> Organise two knowledge exchange trips to a UK and international city that shows how they successfully champion their own CI Cluster.	Two knowledge exchange trips with an international & UK city. Insights shared with the board, engagement group and on the Growth Platform website.
<b>Create a deeper collaboration with Tech Climbers</b> Make sure that the campaign is aligned with the CI strategy and action plan in terms of themes and content to create a unifying voice for the cluster.	A collaboration workshop is organised and hosted between Tech Climbers and The CI board to create a relevant programme of content

# Skills, development & talent pipeline

Goals	KPIs
<p><b>Put on the CI Skills Showcase for young people twice</b> Put on a skills showcase twice for young people to demonstrate the breadth of roles and opportunities available to them in the cluster. The events can utilise existing assets such as Make, SciTech Daresbury and Baltic Creative and become recurring annual events.</p>	<p>500 young people reached through the CI Skills Showcase</p>
<p><b>Run an LCR-wide CI campaign</b> Run a campaign across all six boroughs showing success stories from the cluster, the impact it has on the wider economy and the careers available to young people.</p>	<p>CI Cluster careers campaign across all six boroughs</p>
<p><b>Establish and run the first cohort of the Early Career Board Development Programme</b> Establish and run the first cohort for an innovative early career board to learn from existing board members and equip them for future positions</p>	<p>The Young People's Board Development programme is established and attracts its first cohort of ten people from underrepresented groups.</p>
<p><b>Develop an LCR-unique freelance benefits offer</b> Define and articulate a city region unique offer to creative freelancers that supports career development.</p>	<p>One collaborative workshop held to understand the barriers and challenges to establishing such an idea</p>

# Infrastructure

## Goals

## KPIs

### **Creating a business case for discounted travel for artists & freelancers**

Articulate a business case for offering discounted travel to artists and freelancers in the LCR to encourage greater social mobility and help with the cost of living.

Business case articulated and shared with the CA and relevant travel bodies to understand feasibility. Insights and updates shared with the CI board.

### **Run a workshop with CI reps, the councils, the CA and private landlords around preferable business rates and rents for CI businesses**

Run a workshop with key players from the public and private sector to understand how we might create preferable business rates and rents for CI businesses to help with business costs.

Rents & Rates workshop delivered

### **Establish a working partnership with Manchester's AI Empower programme to encourage knowledge sharing**

Understand what can be learned from [Manchester's AI Empower programme](#) and how it can benefit the LCR region to encourage greater connection between Manchester and Liverpool CI clusters. Interested members from our own AI community should be engaged as well to encourage better regional working partnerships.

Relationship established with Manchester's AI Empower programme and conversations began around what LCR can learn from them

# Risk-taking environment

Goals	KPIs
<p><b>Establish the Ideas Incubator and apply for a multi-million pound collaborative bid in year 1</b> Establish The Ideas Incubator to encourage co-creation and collaboration across the three key priority areas (independent storytelling, latest technologies and digitalisation) to create a space for creating ideas and share the load for applying for larger grant schemes.</p>	<p>Establish the cross-discipline Ideas Incubator and have one multi-million pound co-created grant application</p>
<p><b>Collaborate with The Lifted Project to bolster efforts to secure more investment for female-founded CI businesses</b> Share the CI strategy with The Lifted Project and discuss opportunities for furthering their work within the CI Cluster.</p>	<p>CI strategy shared with The Lifted Project and discussions had around how the two projects can collaborate and align efforts</p>
<p><b>Establish the Weird &amp; Wonderful Micro Grant for creatives</b> Establish a micro fund is to support independent creatives, freelancers and micro businesses within the CI cluster to deliver weird, wonderful and auteur-driven ideas.</p>	<p>Weird and Wonderful Micro Fund is established</p>
<p><b>Continue the support of leadership teams within CI businesses</b> Get behind and continue to support the existing leadership programmes in place within LCR such as Gather.</p>	<p>Continue to invest in leadership-specific support such as Gather</p>

# Funding Opportunities

Funding, and delivery of, the ideas in this strategy must come from multiple source. Here are some ideas for where those sources might be.

## Government Departments

- DCMS
- UKRI (AHRC, STFC, Catapults)
- DSIT
- DfE

## Academia

- University of Liverpool
- Liverpool John Moores University
- Edge Hill
- Hope University

## Foundations & Third Sector

- Nesta
- National Lottery
- Kings Trust
- Enterprise Nation

## Trade organisations

- Creative UK
- Tech UK
- BFI

## Corporate

- Microsoft
- AWS
- IBM

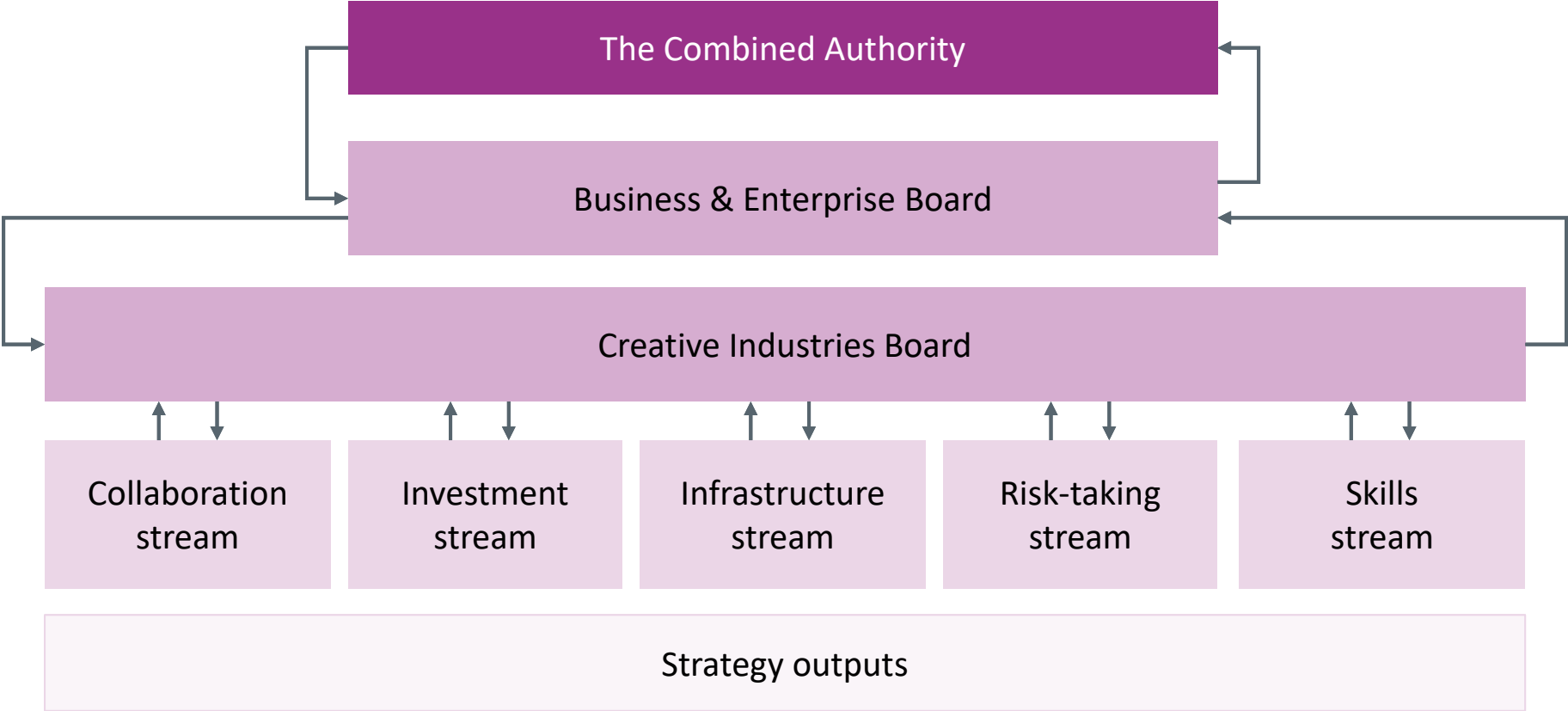
## Professional Services

- Banks
- Law firms
- Accountancy
- Recruitment

## Management consultancies

- Membership organisations
- Chambers of Commerce
- FSB
- NWBLT
- IoD

# Strategic Delivery Framework





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