Made to measure? Public art value measurement strategies and their impact on local government arts policy and planning in England and Aotearoa New Zealand

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Abstract

This research examines the use of value measurement tools and their impact on public art policy and activity in councils across Aotearoa and England[1] between 2010 and 2022. It interrogates how local authorities approach definitions of value for artwork in the public realm, tools used to understand impacts and outcomes, and ways that evaluation and policy interact to effect public art in a council setting. Gaps in existing academic literature around challenges specific to public art evaluation – temporality, space, breadth of definition and resourcing – have prompted a thesis that contributes new knowledge on public art value measurement.

This project utilises a pragmatic mixed-method approach to examine council public art evaluation, focusing on detailed examination of councils working in public art. Questionnaires with local authorities, interviews with staff and analysis of grey literature, conducted over 2022 and 2023, have provided rich empirical data from which to undertake grounded theory analysis, building new understandings from practice-based experiences shared by participants. This positions the thesis as a response to perspectives in the literature review, providing additional layers of practical experience in dialogue with theoretical critiques that interrogate prevailing attitudes towards evidence-based policy, the unique circumstances of cultural policy, and the practical constraints of local government. This results in an extension of knowledge around public art evaluation, offering new understandings about the experiences of council staff working on the evaluation of public art, complementing academic and practical discourse on cultural value, local government policy making and public art.

This research argues that evaluating public art is a critical aspect of ensuring its ongoing viability in a council setting, given reliance on public funding. There are currently deficits between the forms of evaluation currently taking place and the

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[1] Rather than the entirety of the UK, this study focuses specifically on local councils in England. This is due to the different ways each devolved nation approaches local government – those in England share similar structures to those in Aotearoa, and given this project's time and resource constraints, it is prudent to limit the study to investigations into selected councils from these two systems.

ambitions of council public art staff for measurement approaches that provide a deeper understanding of their work. 'Value' is used in multiple ways by councils to justify their support for public art and deliver instrumental outcomes. Public art policies are strongly connected to evaluation, with councils operating in an evidence-heavy decision-making environment that creates an evidentiary burden for staff. This research project demonstrates that the felt deficiency in available tools to measure public art value is a risk to the ongoing sustainability and support of council public art programmes, which is particularly seen in councils that lack public art policies. In doing so it provides insights into the effects of value measurement tools on public art policy and practice. It also connects to broader discourse on the political power inherent in defining 'value', deeper insight into the challenges in operationalising evaluation strategies, and the role of evaluation in cultural policy making.

Contents

Figures

Glossary of terms

Aotearoa   The Māori language name for New Zealand

Karakia   Prayers and chants used in formal and informal settings and activities

Kaumatua   Elders in Māori society

Kaupapa   Principles or ideas that form the basis of an action

Māori   The indigenous people of Aotearoa

Pākehā   The Māori language term for New Zealanders of European descent

Te reo Māori   The Māori language

Te whare tapa whā   The four cornerstones of Māori health – physical, spiritual, family and mental health

1. Introduction

This thesis examines contemporary strategies used to measure and assess different types of value in public art. It presents new contributions on public art and value in a local government setting, specifically on the practical experience of staff working on public art and how this connects to discourse around cultural value, local government policy making and public art as a field. Using mixed methods, this empirical research project addresses gaps in literature around public art's distinctive challenges in evaluation, specifically temporality, space, breadth of definition and resourcing, as these create unique challenges when attempting to measure value. To begin to fill these literature gaps, this thesis examines how local councils in England and Aotearoa New Zealand[2] are currently utilising evaluation to enhance and advocate for the work they do in public art management, and how this is reflected in related policy and ongoing council-led programming.

Public art, a term that in its broadest sense describes art experienced in the public realm, is ubiquitous in the landscape of cities and towns around the world – although, as this thesis will explore, the ways that the term 'public art' is conceptualised is highly contested (Cartiere & Zebracki, 2016; Falls & Smith, 2013; Farley, 2018; Hall & Robertson, 2001; Hamilton et al., 2001; Zebracki, 2013). Its forms include sculpture, street art, monuments, memorials, performances, posters, projections, interactive media, temporary installations, festivals, and multiple other ways of presenting art and heritage in the public realm. Public art can be self-funded by artists, commissioned by private or public funders, crowd-funded or created by a community. Formal public art collections and programmes are often cared for by local councils and related organisations.

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[2] While New Zealand is the international official name of the country, there is increasing official and popular use of the te reo Māori (Māori language) name for the country, Aotearoa (Toki et al., 2021). Throughout this document, the name Aotearoa will be used, unless quoting a source that explicitly uses 'New Zealand'.

While there is an increasing range of academic work being conducted on value measurement in the arts (Baldwin, 2014; Behr et al., 2016; Belfiore, 2020; Centre for Cultural Value, 2021; Edmonds & Roberts, 2021; Gillam, 2018; Gray, 2008; Keaney, 2006; Meyrick & Barnett, 2021; Palermo, 2014; Simmons, 2015; Vuyk, 2010; Walmsley, 2013; Wehipeihana & McKegg, 2018), public art is mainly overlooked by researchers in the contexts of Aotearoa and the UK. This may be due to its nature as a wide-ranging, complex category of artistic practice that arguably presents few opportunities to use traditional measures such as visitor numbers, related consumer spending or visitor surveys that are commonly used to assess gallery exhibitions, museum attendance, structured performances in a venue or ticketed events.

I come to this research as someone who worked for two years in local government arts management in Aotearoa. In this time, I worked across roles in community arts administration, public art management, and creative industries economic development. From this context I regularly observed that a lack of effective value measurement tools made it difficult to comprehensively understand and communicate the value of public art collections and programmes to funding decision-makers. My own frustrations around this were compounded by a lack of time within my roles to research, adopt or develop measurement tools to assist in my understanding of local public art activity in my area, which meant I was not able to provide any quantifiable evidence to managers or elected members, outside of personal anecdote and including them first-hand in experiences, events and unveilings. I perceived that there was increasing understanding from leaders in council organisations and the wider community that public art can contribute to the economy, wellbeing, social cohesion, positive city profile and education (as can be seen in public art policies from Auckland Council, 2013; Birmingham City Council, 2015; Bristol City Council, 2017; Caust, 2005; Kovacs, 2011). However, amassing evidence to support claims about specific local projects is time intensive and expensive, if possible at all (Arts Council England, 2014).

The purpose of this thesis is to examine local government public art value measurement examples from both England and Aotearoa. Through using qualitative

interview and documentary analysis methods, supported with a questionnaire survey, I examine in detail how council public art evaluation is conducted across both Aotearoa (where I am originally from) and England (where I currently reside) contexts. The research provides a more comprehensive understanding of current tools and strategies used by council organisations to measure and communicate the value of their public art programmes, as well as an understanding of gaps in measurement strategies. This research should benefit professionals working in the sector, other researchers exploring the subject of cultural value, and artists creating public work, by providing new understandings about expectations around the value of public art for councils, information about currently utilised measurement tools, and demonstrating that policy is strongly informed by evaluation in a public art local authority context. This new addition to the literature provides an intellectual contribution to theory that connects the specifics of local authority public art work to broader dialogues around cultural value measurement, local government policy, and ensures that a practice-focused perspective is presented in conversation with wider philosophical debates around the instrumentalization of value.

1.1 Research context

This research project reflects and stems from my experience working in a local authority on public art. As noted above, for two years I worked within an Aotearoa-based council, including for some of that time within its economic development agency. Among other aspects of local government arts administration, I was responsible for managing the council's public art collection and administering its public art policy, funding for new work, and advocating for public art within the capacity of other council activity areas such as parks and urban regeneration. In this working context I experienced a range of joys, but also frustrations, around public art; in particular, the ways the evaluation (or lack thereof) impacted my work and the public art landscape in my region. My perception was that public art was negatively impacted by a lack of tools to demonstrate its value in comparison to other areas of council which, from my perspective, had more easily quantifiable metrics of success. These negative impacts included a perceived lack of support for resourcing from council by some elected members, a difficulty in finding time for evaluation, and

complexity in communicating the informal feedback I received about new public art projects in ways that were compelling and rigorous. This thesis is grounded in my desire to answer questions around the role of evaluation in policy and practice for local government organisations.

Public art evaluation can only take place when there is public art made and cared for. Public art production and oversight takes place in multiple contexts, and while this thesis is primarily concerned with local authorities, it is important to acknowledge that they exist within broader political structures and alongside other significant public art stakeholders. In Aotearoa, cultural policy development is informed by the Local Government Act 2002, which compels councils to deliver cultural wellbeing (DIA, 2002). This central government guidance does not describe forms of cultural activity (LGNZ, 2020), including whether councils need to support or produce public art in their regions, but it ensures a broad mandate for council involvement in culture. Within an English context, local authorities provide the largest funding for arts and culture and are supported by Arts Council England with guidance when producing policy to help inform their work in this area (Arts Council England, n.d.-b, Arts Council England, n.d.-a). Many local authorities have dedicated arts and culture policies, and some include elements of cultural practice in delivery against other policy aims, such as health and wellbeing, social services, recreation and economic growth (Local Government Association & Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association, 2017). While this demonstrates differing approaches between Aotearoa and England to outlining the involvement of councils in cultural activity by government, what is shared between both national contexts is a lack of specific central guidance around public art. This typically means that oversight and responsibility for its production is decided at a local level.

The thesis is also designed to address a specific conceptual knowledge gap in literature on public art. I seek to contribute to the body of research literature by addressing gaps in academic work around the particular challenges posed by evaluating public art in a council working context, in comparison to other areas of cultural value or local government activity. This thesis does not set out to provide a comprehensive overview of every method currently in use in all councils. Rather, my

interest is in examining the specific experience of participant councils from a range of local government situations and using their perspectives to understand relationships between perceptions of public art value, evaluation methodologies and the ways policy and evaluation interact. It also engages in dialogue with literature, both in its selection of methods as well as interactions with theory on cultural value measurement, local government policy environments, and public art. In coming to this project, I wanted to understand what specific challenges exist for value measurement for public art, and how these challenges are approached and addressed within the unique environments of local authority settings.

The motivations of local councils to be involved in public art, through mechanisms of financial, administration and consenting support, have evolved over time. In England, and its former colony, Aotearoa (which became a distinct colony in 1841 and had full independence ratified in 1947), the tradition of public art descends from Victorian principles of ennobling wider populaces. Public art projects were tasked with enlightening and 'civilising' (Selwood, 1995). Public art has been the catalyst for a range of other experiences and purposes across the past two centuries, including political engagement and demonstrations of allegiance (Johnson, 1995; Leib, 2002), commemoration (Mitchell, 2003), and opportunities to influence public social memory (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004). Contemporarily, different claims about the benefits of public art made by commissioning bodies, cultural organisations, artists and policy makers form justifications for engaging in public art activity. These include its potential to be accessible (Her & Hamlyn, 2009), contribute to urban development goals (Farley & Pollock, 2020), improve social cohesion (Cartiere & Tan, 2021), enhance public safety, provide a space for public debate (Selwood, 1995), act as a forum for identity expression (Zebracki & Xiao, 2021), and build a landscape welcoming to creative entrepreneurship (Robertson, 2017; Umney & Symon, 2019). A significant rise in public art policy adoption by local authorities across the UK during the last two decades of the 20th century was also justified by claims about the role of public art in economic recovery, through the attraction of companies and investment, increasing land values, the creation of employment, and lower costs associated with monitoring and preventing vandalism (Selwood, 1995). These outcomes are all associated with a range of instrumental values desirable to

councils. However, in practice, the explicit connection between economic, social, environmental, wellbeing, or education values and public art projects and activities are not always easily evidenced, leaving council public art work vulnerable – as councils exist within a policy environment that is strongly tied to evidence (although this relationship is complex and context dependent). This thesis is concerned with the contested nature of evidence in this setting and seeks to gain insights into the specifics of the relationship between evidence, policy, and activity in a local authority public art domain. The nature of this environment, and the ways evidence influences it, has significant ramifications for the viability and sustainability of public art work in councils, and thus it is important that we understand the nature of this framework in order to equip practitioners and researchers with knowledge to inform their work.

Evidence-based policy describes a policymaking framework that begins with research, or evidence, that then influences practice and policy (Morrell, 2012). Evidence comprises a broad set of formats and concepts, and as such can include documentary (Pfister, 2018), statistical (Edmonds & Roberts, 2021), oral (Vilkins & Grant, 2017), embodied (Green et al., 2018) and informal forms of evidence (Borén & Young, 2021). Evidence is, in theory, used to inform the ways policies are developed, interpreted and reviewed (Marston & Watts, 2003). While this direction of policy development is typically identified as the dominant mode, in practice critics note the prevalence of its converse, sometimes referred to as 'policy-based evidence making', whereby councils create a top-down environment where specific forms of evidence are privileged and research supports their own goals (Dollery, 2018). Whether a council is ideologically aligned to a policy-making context that begins with evidence or begins with policy that is then supported by evidence, determines the way evidence is used, the types of evidence produced, and by whom. This thesis will therefore examine the resulting power dynamics of public art production in a local political environment. Public art is one of many areas of council activity covered by this approach to policymaking, where expectations are set that decisions will be founded on robust research, placing a large burden of proof upon public art to demonstrate its value. This research project seeks to examine the contested nature of evidence, political constructions of value, and relationships

between the use of evidence and policy making. In doing so, it contributes to both academic and practice-based debates around these subjects.

1.2 Research aims

The aim of this thesis is to examine strategies used to measure and assess different types of value in public art within a council context, across cases from Aotearoa and England. It is designed to increase understanding of the challenges and opportunities surrounding local authority public art work as they relate to evaluation. It also examines the relationship between policy and evaluation, as well as value measurement and its effects on public art activity. It focuses on public art as a unique and specific category worthy of examination (while acknowledging its complexity as a term), providing new understandings of how public art value measurement takes place in the wider environment of cultural policy, contributing new understandings to wider discourse around cultural policy making.

This aim has been refined into the following research questions.

1.3 Research questions

My three research questions are:

> 1. What is meant by 'value' in a local authority public art context, and how is this used and critiqued by different stakeholders involved in council-connected public art activity?
> 2. What strategies and tools are currently used to measure the value of public art activity by local government staff in Aotearoa and England, and how is the effectiveness of these tools perceived by those who deploy them?
> 3. What impact do these measurement strategies and tools have on the provision of public art activity and related policies, from the perspectives of public art staff in local government?

To provide some initial context for this work, it is necessary to give a brief introduction to some key concepts for terms used in these questions, alongside some of the contestations in literature around their use. These concepts will be developed, and their definitions critiqued throughout this thesis.

Value is a nebulous and frequently contested term which has different meanings in different contexts. It can refer to impacts or outcomes that are often complex and interlinked, but generally have holistic effects in social, environmental, political, economic and other realms (Meyrick & Barnett, 2021). This thesis will examine a range of ways value is understood and used, both as a theoretical conceptual framework as well as a practical method of communicating impact. As noted in the discussion above, evidence of value (or lack thereof) is a critical part of policymaking environments in local government. The following thesis will therefore interrogate a local authority approach to the concept, determining the practical application of theories of cultural value and how these specifically relate to public art.

The term *'currently'* refers to work that took place prior to and during the research phase – specifically, from 2010 up to March of 2023, when the fieldwork research phase of this project was completed. The justification for this period can be found in Chapter 3.1.

Public art activity here describes the range of public art engagement undertaken by council bodies. This can include management of permanent collections, commissioning of new work, provision of funding for public art activity and other support and guidance given to artists and communities producing temporary, semi-permanent and permanent art work in the public realm and policy development (Auckland Council, 2013; Birmingham City Council, 2015; Olsen, n.d.; Pollock & Paddison, 2010).

Policy describes the guiding principles that inform council work on public art, and includes both strategies (higher level documents outlining goals and values) and policies (specific paths of action or descriptions of processes) (Pollock & Paddison,

2010) as well as other supporting guidance documents. These may be public art specific or may have aspects of public art incorporated into wider themes, such as cultural or arts policies, parks and recreation policies, or economic development policies. For this research project, the specific concern is with the intersection between local authority policy and cultural policy, which collide in public art policy. The literature review will examine this relationship, and the definitions, functions, evolution of council and cultural policy over time. Public art is defined and categorised in local authority public art policy documents, and these definitions give some insight into how councils choose to officially regard public art. These documents will be examined in detail in Chapter 4 – in some cases they are expansive, and in others very specific.

1.4 Outline of thesis

In Chapter 2 I examine a range of relevant literature that surrounds and informs my own research project, to provide a baseline context and demonstrate the gaps that this project seeks to fill – specifically, a contribution of detail on the complexities of measuring the value of public art, particularly in a council setting, and a public art specific dialogue with literature on the broader field of cultural value measurement.

In Chapter 3 I outline the methodology of the research project. It commences with an overview of the research strategy used, the justifications for decisions, and my positionality as a researcher. This chapter justifies the use of a pragmatic mixed methods approach. In combining multiple qualitative research methods I have been able to triangulate results and provide a more nuanced contextual understanding. Including a questionnaire aspect has also created a structured grounding of information (Bryman, 2016), while the more in-depth qualitative components have provided detailed understanding of responses to issues of council public art value measurement. The first part of this project was a questionnaire survey of councils across Aotearoa and England. The survey was complemented by the collection and analysis of publicly available public art policies from across both nations. This phase was then followed up with the selection of six councils which were involved in a more in-depth research process, comprising interviews with key staff and supporting

documentary analysis. Analysis was conducted on data gathered during the above research methods and informed by a grounded theory approach. The resulting thesis is an empirical PhD which responds to existing theory.

Three chapters then analyse the empirical findings of the research project, connecting to and building on conceptual literature around arts evaluation and cultural policymaking to demonstrate the specificities of public art and the challenges and opportunities in the field. In Chapter 4, local authority approaches to the value of public art are examined. This chapter uses results from interviews, documentary analysis and the questionnaire survey to create new understandings of value in a public art context and demonstrate the variety of ways that value is used and interpreted in a local authority setting. It argues that council public art staff operate in distinct contexts, with different definitions of public art and the potential values it is assumed to hold. It also demonstrates that public art staff are firm in their belief that public art is socially valuable for the communities they serve – however, this belief is not always supported or shared by those in decision-making positions within councils, such as elected members or senior management, which creates tension when advocating for this work.

Chapter 5 follows this exploration of value, by examining the tools used by council public art staff to evaluate their work, including design, and resulting use of data. It argues that these evaluation conditions and the tools used have a significant impact on the production of public art. The chapter also demonstrates that despite the variety of tools being used to evaluate public art, council staff felt that there were insufficient resources to achieve their ideal evaluation aims: to support their advocacy efforts and build stronger insights into their public art policies and planning. It argues that there are a range of challenges in producing and using tools to support these goals, including lack of internal support and resourcing, and poor perception of public art work from colleagues and decision-makers. The most pressing challenge identified by participants was time – specifically, time to conduct evaluation, difficulty in establishing long-term evaluation programmes, and the nature of public art as anything from fleeting event to permanent artwork.

To follow from this discussion on evaluation tools, Chapter 6 then argues that public art policy is essential for sustaining public art practice across local authorities in Aotearoa and England. Evidence of value and policy are interlinked and the relationship between them is unique to each council context. Despite this, all participants agreed that their policy working environments were evidence focused and this informs their decisions and approaches to value measurement in their work, be it through anticipating the perceived or explicit preferences of elected members, or a lack of evidence contributing to being unable to strongly advocate for public art programming. Evaluation, therefore, has a significant role to play in public art policy.

Finally, in Chapter 7 the thesis concludes with a summary of findings and addresses how future scholarship will engage with this work and address new opportunities that result from its publication.

All chapters build towards my ultimate argument – that value measurement is a vital, under-supported, complex part of council public art work.

2. Literature Review

This literature review provides the grounding for an exploration of public art value measurement. It takes an interdisciplinary approach in examining key texts from the fields of art history, museum and heritage studies, arts management research, geography, and cultural policy studies. There is relatively little existing relevant literature on council public art evaluation for either English or Aotearoa contexts, and as such this breadth of review is necessary to situate my own research within wider contexts of measurement and assessment of impact in other arts and heritage sectors, as well as alongside other research dedicated to public art management.

The following literature review is divided into three main sections. The first explores research on public art since the 1990s, specifically concerning its history, purpose, and management, as well as commonly understood types of value in this context. The second examines literature touching on local government responsibilities in public art and other cultural material from across the UK, North and South America, Europe, and Australia, in particular around the development of cultural and public art policy, the provision of funding, the role of public art in wider local government goals, and the tensions inherent with state involvement with an artform that is increasingly community driven. These foci situate the topic of evaluation within the practical realities of public art delivery. This section also interrogates how wider research on policy evaluation has relevance for public art. Finally, the third section examines notable reported case studies where value measurement has been used in a public art case study, as well as examples of value measurement tools used in the wider cultural sector.

2.1 Definitions

This section outlines two critical definitions that frame this research project – *value* and *public art*. Each definition section will present a background to these terms from both a research and grey literature perspective and explain the scope of each term in

the context of this project. This provides a grounding for the following literature review.

2.1.1 Defining value

In answering the research questions, it is necessary to define what is meant in by *value.* Tools to assess the monetary value of the arts and creative industries, both at a sector level and as individual projects, arose alongside the industrialisation of culture that accompanied the 1980s growth in neoliberalism. Strategic management and commercial principles were applied to arts and cultural organisations, outside of their original business contexts (Walmsley, 2013). This necessitated a focus on ways to measure the economic contribution of the arts. This approach disregards the social, wellbeing and intrinsic values often attributed to the arts, or attempts to quantify these through expression as financial data (Baxter, 2010). Alternative methods of assessing arts value are not yet widespread in England and Aotearoa (Walmsley, 2013). Tension exists between value prioritised by those with primarily commercial interests versus those who seek to prioritise value as defined by audiences or artists (Refki et al., 2020b; Walmsley, 2013).

This thesis is not primarily concerned with building a philosophical examination of definitions of value, but rather to understand how the concept of value is understood, contested, and practically deployed within the specific context of local government public art policy. However, it is important to recognise that there are complex dialogues in literature around Marxist approaches to value and culture (Dufficy, 2021; Marx, 2016; McMahon, 2015), Bourdieu and the creation of cultural capital (Bennett, 2005; Bourdieu, 2018a, 2018b; Brown & Szeman, 2000; Skeggs, 2004), and Kantian positions on the aesthetic experience that explain the production of subjective value (Hills, 2008; Kant, 2017; Pearlman, 2008). Marxist cultural analysis comprises a form of critique which critiques aspects of culture that are seen to reflect capitalism in their nature profit-driven and mass-produced (Dufficy, 2021; Marx, 2016). Bourdieu described cultural capital as the social relations that inform position and social mobility in a class-based society. Part of the formation of cultural capital includes the relationship of a person to education, knowledge, cultural products and objects, which are all ascribed a set of values (Bennett, 2005; Bourdieu, 2018b).

Kant describes a process of evaluation that focuses on the aesthetic or artistic, that focuses on subjective judgement experience of a viewer based on whether they feel pleasure in experiencing something beautiful (Kant, 2017). Using the interaction of these frameworks and theories with the field of public art research more broadly is important, but the primary aim of this thesis is to create an empirical contribution from local authority perspectives around pragmatic experiences of public art value. Therefore, some of these frameworks and dialogues will be explored later in this chapter, where relevant to aspects of public art value in this setting.

Value broadly refers to impacts that are often complex and linked, but have holistic effects in social, environmental, political, economic and other realms (Meyrick & Barnett, 2021). In building my own definition of value, I have come to see it as a term to describe the range of measurable and intangible outcomes or significances (positive, neutral, and negative) that public art can have. There are other terms regularly used throughout existing literature and indeed in some local authority policy documents – 'impact' is popular (Brighton & Hove District Council, 2021), as are 'benefits' (Cambridge City Council, 2010; Maidstone Borough Council, 2017; Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, 2019) and 'outcomes' (Auckland Council, 2013; Wellington City Council, 2012). In my own analysis I will use 'value' for consistency as it captures both 'impact' and 'benefits' and is also regularly used in published research on the topics of cultural value, economic value, public value, policy evaluation and aesthetic value theory. It is worth noting though that value is not always the term preferred by councils or their staff to describe the intended effects of their policies, and where I quote from individuals or organizational documents, I will use their terms of choice. This chapter will further examine literature on current perceptions around value as applied to public art and cultural policy, including specific categories of value.

Value is either assigned or denied to artforms, projects and cultural programmes by specific groups of people in certain social contexts, and this power dynamic affects dominant modes of discourse on cultural value. This recognition or denial of value is expressed through support (or lack thereof) for the work, by those who engage with it, resource it, make it and discuss it. Belfiore describes efforts across the UK by

critical researchers to holistically articulate the non-economic value of arts and culture in the decade since 2010 (Belfiore, 2020). These efforts have, however, taken place despite a central government policy environment where the overarching publicly stated aim of cultural policymaking is its contribution to the economy, and particularly its potential role in creating economic growth post-Brexit. Belfiore offers an alternative discussion on cultural value that instead focusses on the relationship between power and value, and how politically charged and complex the struggle for determining what is and isn't culturally valuable is (2020).

In their example, they use the case of TV programming to explore issues of power and representation for Gypsy and Traveller communities, and how the programme 'My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding' has been a massive economic boon to production companies and television channels at the expense of an already stigmatised ethnic minority. The programme is an example of a creative product providing both positive and negative value – positive in terms of net economic benefit and the 'cultural' value demonstrated by large viewership numbers, but negative in terms of massive increased stigma of an already violently discriminated-against group. Instead of merely amplifying the value of arts and culture in order to achieve policy that consequentially provides resource for certain artforms and activities (in the name of overall public benefit), Belfiore proposes a rethinking of research and public debate that switches focus instead to the ways cultural value is determined – finding ways to create more democratically accountable decisions around value and public resource, being more open and frank about the complex and challenging political power struggles that determine cultural value, and discontinuing operating on a deficit model (where target groups for increased engagement are determined through their participation in 'traditional' or 'legitimate' cultural activity, rather than other forms of arts and creativity).

Cultural value is created within a social environment, and understanding the relationships that inform its production is a necessary part of research in this field. Griswold (1986) proposes a cultural diamond framework to use when seeking to understand value in cultural settings, that shows interconnected relationships between social contexts, cultural creators, audiences, and cultural objects – in some

updated models, it also includes relationships with distributors of culture (Beigzadeh et al., 2023). To understand the value of cultural objects, such as public art, the relationship of an artwork with the other three (or sometimes four) aspects must be analysed in tandem. This approach argues that any understanding of, for instance, the relationship between a public artwork and its social context relies on also understanding the context of its producer(s) and its receiving audiences (Griswold, 2013). Griswold makes the distinction between culture and society, noting that culture describes an expressive experience and society describes a relational one – but that both are influential on the other. Therefore, to understand value, an analytical framework should ensure it considers all ways that culture is produced and interpreted. This thesis is primarily concerned with the perspectives of public art staff, who are at different times both cultural creators and cultural receivers, and their perspectives on the value of public art as a cultural product, for their communities. Therefore, the cultural diamond is one useful lens into the ways that cultural value is produced in the local government public art space.

While the above definitions of value inform the grounding of this thesis, my own understandings of value, and the following research design, later chapters (in particular, Chapter 4) will also outline what public art practitioners mean by value and use these to inform a definition of public art as it is applied in policy and practice.

2.1.2 Defining public art

The term *public art* is vague, problematic, and covers a broad range of activity. It has been in popular use by Western countries since the latter half of the 20th century (Knight & Senie, 2011; Zebracki & Xiao, 2021). Historically, art situated in public places has been a feature throughout human history, with cave paintings, temples, commemorative sculptural monuments and decorative architectural elements all examples across cultures (Sooke, 2014; Zebracki, 2013). Broadly, public art now describes artwork located in freely accessible public spaces, in many cases supported by public or philanthropic funding and sanctioned by local government authorities (Cartiere & Zebracki, 2016; Zebracki & Palmer, 2017).

Commonly understood to describe sculptures, memorials or two-dimensional works on walls, it increasingly encompasses a range of other mediums and formats both temporary and permanent in their nature (Schuermans et al., 2012). Since the 1990s, a growing focus on collaborative and community arts projects, as well as increasing popularity of time-based media, experiential artworks and using new technologies, has meant that public art practitioners now incorporate a wide gamut of approaches into their work in and with public space (Lehtinen, 2019; Schuermans et al., 2012). Public artworks are not only situated in physical spaces, as artworks combining online and offline elements as well as assisted or virtual reality are now incorporated into public art programmes (Knight & Senie, 2011; Zebracki & Palmer, 2017). Public art is often site-specific - a term tied closely to historic and contemporary public art, describing work which is created in response to or to be sited in a particular space, be that tangible, virtual, or within sites of discourse (Doss, 2017; Miwon Kwon, 2004).

A broader set of criteria for public art has been proposed by Cartiere and Zebracki:

> "Public art is art outside of museums and galleries and must fit within at least one of the following categories:
> 1: in a place freely accessible or visible to the public: in public
> 2: concerned with, or affecting the community or individuals: public interest
> 3: maintained for or used by the community or individuals: public place
> 4: paid for by the public: publicly funded"
>
> Cartiere & Zebracki, 2016

Key to defining public art is its relationship with audience (Mikulay, 2011). A diverse range of audiences encounter artwork in public spaces, evoking responses that can be political, opinionated, emotional, or simply apathetic. The meaning of works are interpreted, adapted and valued by the different "publics" who interact with it (Mikulay, 2011). Public art audiences often comprise those who have not explicitly sought out an art experience; rather, they are involuntary observers who happen upon a creative product in their urban environment (Zebracki, 2013). This creates a tension between the individual, subjective experience of engaging with art, and the public phenomena of publicly sited artworks that encourage a collective, communal experience (Hein, 1996). While community input is often sought during

the commissioning and enaction phases of significant public art projects, responses including vandalism, public controversy and outspoken media derision demonstrate the difficulties in creating work with broad appeal. These behaviours also indicate the emotional responses that can be had by those publics who may not have sought out the encounter (Krause Knight & Senie, 2012). Public expressions of opposition to public artworks, including those designed via co-creation or alongside communities, can be rich sources of meaning and contribute to public political expression and interesting social tensions (Spiers, 2020). Conversely, many works can become part of the fabric of a space without prompting any noticeable reaction at all (Krause Knight & Senie, 2012). Attempts to create work that appeases the preferences of everyone who could encounter it can result in bland or ignored artworks (Phillips, 1989).

Public art created with social values and political dynamics at its core, variously known as new genre public art, dialogic art and relational aesthetics, attempts to build audience and participatory publics into its very methodology (Calo, 2012; Lacy, 1995). Centring the public in this way, as the inherent concept of the work and as people rather than place, interrogates the concept of a unified 'public' and whether it describes a characteristic of an audience or instead its nature as a subject (Lacy, 1995). New genre public art is a term introduced by Suzanne Lacy to describe work that directly engages with audiences to examine pressing socio-political and cultural issues (Caldarola, 2019). It considers not only subject or site, but also how collective value systems are expressed aesthetically and how the relationships of artist and audience respond to this (Lacy, 1995). This dialogic approach to public art, where conversations and relationships form the basis of the work, can include interchanges between artists, communities, funders, critics and local authorities (Calo, 2012). In this school of public art, artistic voice can sometimes be discounted in favour of communal and social concept; however, Bishop rejects this, noting that discursive exchange is most interesting when it involves a necessary tension between a strong authorial perspective and potentially controversial reception, and that evaluation and criticism of participatory artworks is essential for understanding the ambiguity and the nuance involved in public art practice that centres on the social (Bishop, 2012).

The above definitions of public art are drawn from extant literature. In Chapter 6, the ways in which councils operationalise definitions of public art within policy will be examined, and comparisons with the above research made.

2.2 The value of public art

2.2.1 Introduction

What are the purposes and motivations for creating and endorsing public art? For both national contexts covered in this research, a public art tradition descends from historic approaches to enlightenment and public good (Selwood, 1995). Contemporarily, different claims about the benefits of public art made by commissioning bodies, cultural organisations, artists and policy makers. As noted in Chapter 1, these include its potential to be accessible, contribute to urban development goals, improve social cohesion, enhance public safety, provide a space public debate, act as a forum for identity expression, and build a landscape welcoming to creative entrepreneurship (Cartiere & Tan, 2021; Farley & Pollock, 2020; Pinder, 2008; Selwood, 1995; Zebracki & Xiao, 2021). A significant rise in public art policy adoption by local authorities across the UK during the last two decades of the 20th century was also justified by claims about the role of public art in economic recovery, through the attraction of companies and investment, increasing land values, the creation of employment, and lower costs associated with monitoring and preventing vandalism (Selwood, 1995). These varied objectives are explored in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Value can be subcategorized into intrinsic and instrumental value, which provides a framework with which to understand public art and value in the context of public art in a local government setting (Vuyk, 2010). Intrinsic value typically denotes something valuable in and of itself for individuals or communities – in the case of public art, this comprises a set of benefits that are personal to audiences and artists, subjective, emotional, and stem from the artwork itself (Brown & Novak-Leonard, 2013; Simmons, 2015). Instrumental value instead describes the value something has as a means to another end – for public art, this can be its use as a tool for achieving 'valuable' goals and reaping other benefits, such as economic development, social

cohesion and inclusion, environmental wellbeing or place regeneration (Matthews & Gadaloff, 2022). These opposing value categories are both lens through which to view the value of public art, as the next few paragraphs will demonstrate.

Differing agendas from governments (as policy directors and funding providers), cultural organisations (as producers) and audiences (as participants and receivers) have created a difficult space for understanding the full spectrum of value of cultural activity, as neo-liberal approaches to governance since the 1990s have commodified the sector and created an environment in which arts organisations seek ways to articulate their impact and express benefits in generally economic or instrumental terms (Walmsley, 2013). Walmsley argues that an industrial approach to considering value, spearheaded by a central and local government focus on evidence-based policy and activity delivery, has limited the cultural sector in actively exploring and understanding the value of its activity.

> "… the arts have increasingly become subject to the benchmarks of incompatible disciplines and practices in order to meet the demands of instrumentalist policy-makers. While business practices can usually be quantified and evaluated in their own terms, sociocultural practices require a more nuanced, subjective understanding."
>
> (Walmsley, 2013)

This disconnect and contrast between economic utilitarian approaches to valuing the arts, and value that includes the emotional, social, personal, or subjective, has notable impacts on public art and its management. Public art, as a form of artistic production, takes place in public, for publics, sometimes by and with publics, and/or using public resources (Cartiere & Zebracki, 2016; Krause Knight & Senie, 2011). Given this context, public art is closely connected to public service bodies such as local authorities and their associated cultural or placemaking institutions – either through direct commissioning of projects, the institutions' management of public spaces, funding of external organisations and projects, or provision of policy covering the production and maintenance of public art (Cohen, 2002; DeShazo & Smith, 2014; Hamilton et al., 2001; Pollock & Paddison, 2010; Pollock & Sharp, 2011). The priorities of local authorities, led by elected councillors and senior managers who are tasked with complex management of public funding for a huge

range of community services, inform the types of value considered important when making the case for public art activity. As Walmsley notes, there is a general expectation in these settings that measurable value is the most compelling form of evidence for decisionmakers, and this is most simply and often understood in economic terms (Walmsley, 2013). In focusing on measuring value in these limited terms, arts organisations risk undervaluing the intrinsic or other instrumental value of their work and in doing so, minimizing the articulation of their overall impact and lessening their capacity to advocate for support (Keaney, 2006).

The relationship of value to power is evident in the ways local authorities decide what is valuable and what is worth supporting with policy. Councils are an institution with the power to legitimize and prescribe value to different activities, including public art, through funding decisions, policy design and community dialogue. While democratically elected, councillors hold a significant sway over funding levers for cultural activity (Belfiore, 2020). Belfiore argues that a lack of critical discourse around the role of power relationships in discourse around cultural authority, in favour of uncritical celebration of the arts, leads to a paucity of understanding of the consequences of cultural activity (Belfiore, 2020). This research project is concerned with how this dynamic works in the highly political sphere of public art production in local government, and the ways local council staff experience this power structure.

Shakaa (2023) uses a Foucauldian framework of power to interpret public art in the context of local government, whereby power is something produced by actors and relative to different influences. These influences include the institutional, and Shakaa demonstrates that the imbalance of power between institutional actors (such as local authorities) and individuals involved in public art production, such as curators and artists, has a substantial influence on the conditions public art is produced under and the value it is intended to provide. Their work shows that, in an Australian context, council-commissioned and controlled public art is strongly instrumentalized in the pursuit of urban strategy, and the institution of local government is in a position to dictate conditions of production to artists, demonstrating power and influence – however, there are also a plurality of ways that power is expressed in public art production by artists, curators and co-creators, which provide a counterpoint to

potentially limiting commissioning conditions imposed by local governments (Shakaa, 2023). This research takes place within an Australian context and focuses on one specific council, and it is anticipated that my own research will exist complementarily with this record, providing understandings of the policymaking conditions and public art working environments in local government organisations in both Aotearoa and England.

Considering the above, the working definition of the value of public art for this research project is the impact, importance, usefulness or benefit that public art has for audiences and participants, for communities served by local authorities. This includes a range of value subcategories and includes both the inherent value of public art and instrumental value of public art in the service of council wider goals. This definition will be interrogated throughout later chapters, in response to the definitions provided by councils during empirical research phases.

The following sections will examine literature on different value subcategories, to understand some of the ways the value of public art is instrumentalised.

2.2.2 Economic value

The full economic impact of public art is difficult to measure and interacts with other forms of value in ways that are difficult to disentangle. Creative industries as a whole contribute over £111 billion a year to the UK economy (Creative Industries Council, 2021) while in Aotearoa the creative industries add approximately $3.5 billion to the country's GDP each year (WeCreate, 2015). However, a dearth of critical literature on public-art-specific economic value measurement provides challenges when substantiating claims about economic benefits. While it is limiting to consider value only in economic terms, it is useful to assist in advocacy for public investment as well as demonstrate the economic contribution of artists and their work (Refki et al., 2020b). The complexity of measuring its economic impact arises from several issues. Firstly, this complexity stems from the fact that the types of activity included in the category 'public art' can range from temporary in nature to permanent, small-scale to massive, and community driven to high profile, the measurement tools required are varied and often expensive. It also involves

relationships between aesthetic value, social identity and the economic activity of the public, with all three areas typically using different languages to discuss issues of value and priorities (Bovaird, 1998; Refki et al., 2020b). Finally, there is a time-lag between when a project is installed or takes place and the demonstration of economic effect, meaning it is difficult to credit particular artworks or programmes with specific results (Usher & Strange, 2011). Individual examples of economic measurement exist, often centred on the more easily definable performance work and public art events (Aharon-Gutman, 2018; Palermo, 2014; Refki et al., 2020b; Tang et al., 2021; Thompson & Day, 2020; Zhou, 2017). However, these all incorporate one-off projects to measure impact rather than an ongoing or long-term programme.

In his 2010 book *The Economics of Cultural Policy*, David Throsby explores the tendency within cultural policymaking towards an overarching economic lens, particularly within the United Kingdom (Throsby, 2010). He notes that early international discussions on cultural policy, led in part by UNESCO, focused on how cultural policymaking could support creative arts practitioners in contributing to their communities, maximizing access to the benefits of artistic engagement and how to improve the quality of arts and culture within education curricula and popular media (Throsby, 2010). However, following a range of changed conditions (including an expansion in what is considered 'culture', and a drastically different economic climate, and the effects of globalisation) he argues that cultural policy has shifted into being a tool to service economic development. Government policy agendas concerning the economic potential of culture include the creative industries as a source of innovation and development (and therefore the driver of technological change), the role of arts and culture as an employment generator and regeneration prospect for towns and cities, the potential of public/private partnerships to support performing and visual arts as well as other aspects of cultural heritage, and also as a space to explore issues around regulation of intellectual property – all of these areas clearly interact with other forms of value, such as social, placemaking and wellbeing (which are examined in later sections in this chapter). Throsby contends, however, that to be perceived as legitimate in the current policymaking environment, cultural policy must focus on asserting the capacity of culture to contribute economically as

sceptics in decision-making roles remain unconvinced by arguments of public good or intrinsic value of the arts – in Throsby's words:

> "In this way the cultural industries agenda can be used as the Trojan Horse, whereby culture is smuggled into the policy chamber where its voice can at least be heard."

(Throsby, 2010, p. 7)

Throsby's definition of value is straightforward – it describes the worth of something (be it a service, a product, or an experience) to an individual person or a group. The assignation of value implies a ranking system where something can be more or less valuable than something else. He makes a distinction between economic value, which in his description reads as a form of instrumental value, and cultural value, which he describes as relating to sets of intrinsic artistic criteria (Throsby, 2010). In doing so, he argues that these two descriptions of value cover the entirety of relevant value priorities for cultural policymakers. He also notes that economic theories of value are expressible in financial terms which can be either measured or estimated using economic evaluation principles (although this is made complex by the ways arts and culture produce value for individuals and communities, in ways that serve both private financial interests and public good outside of conventionally measurable market processes) – and therefore can be understood and compared easily to other programmes of activity within government settings. By contrast, cultural value is framed as without precise or rigorous ways to be measured. For creators of cultural policy, including public art policy, finding a balance between the two is supposedly essential if the public sector is to create policy outcomes compellingly and successfully.

A broad documentation of the economic impacts of public art on a local and a national scale is difficult to locate in academic literature. A 2007 survey of residents of 26 American cities attempted to explore the economic value of public art, finding that aesthetics and perceptions of social openness of a place have a greater impact on whether residents remain and start businesses in a city than perceptions of education or safety (Loflin, 2013). Cities with residents who had high levels of attachment to

their urban environment experienced greater GDP growth than those without significant emotional connection to their city's cultural and public landscape (Loflin, 2013). While this study demonstrates the potential of public art to contribute to economic value in a generalised way, it does so by incorporating public art as just one of many aspects that create attachment to a city.

The economic value of public art as perceived by local audiences can also be used to understand the importance of public art to its publics. In a 2019 study, Tanguy and Kumar used a survey to gather data on the hypothetical willingness of London residents to individually pay to see more public art projects implemented in their local area (Tanguy & Kumar, 2019). Their findings showed that over 83% of respondents were willing to individually financially support the provision of increased public art activity in their local areas (Tanguy & Kumar, 2019). Both studies, however, are limited in their positioning of the economic activity of local audiences as a focus, and do not include the economic benefits that can arise from, for instance, tourism or international perception. To express the full economic value of public art work, multiple tools would need to be used to capture a range of economic impact information.

The tendency to overstate the potential economic impact of public art projects without evidence or plans to collect data can be frustrating to researchers, practitioners, and funders. Farley and Pollock (2020) dispute hyperbolic claims about the economic benefits of large-scale public artworks, opening their criticism of contemporary trends towards gigantism in public art with a fictitious quotation impersonating sculptor Anish Kapoor:

> One only has to look at the impact that Angel of the North has had on the people of Newcastle. Antony is far too modest to repeat this, but the Chief Constable of Northumbria Police assured him that alcohol related crime on Tyneside has gone down by 14% since Angel was erected. Not only that, domestic abuse has decreased by 17% and car theft by 21%; most remarkably of all, employment has risen by an incredible 26% as a direct result of Antony's sculpture. Temenos will be twenty-eight metres taller than Angel; so one can only begin to imagine the effect that it's going to have on the people of Middlesbrough.

Anish Kapoor, The Northern Echo, April 12, 2010.1 (in Scott King's
publication, Scott King Public Art, 2020)

The authors demonstrate how shifts towards monumental sculptures throughout the
UK contribute to corporatisation of public art practice, prioritising potential tourist
income over artistic credibility or local relevance. This approach, which relies on
evaluation to demonstrate the monetary value of these large works, categorises
successful artworks as those which contribute to the economy of a place (Usher and
Strange, 2011). The tension arising when various stakeholders have differing
priorities over what impacts to measure can also cause problems with fully
understanding economic value – for instance, where monetary outcomes are
prioritised by funders over the aesthetic value or socio-cultural value that may be
more important to artists (Usher and Strange, 2011).

2.2.3 Urban regeneration

It is not only economic value that cultural policymaking states as an instrumental
benefit of public art. Pressure to create comparability with other policy arms of local
authorities and justify a return on investment for public funding in an environment of
austerity, can create a disconnect between what practitioners believe the value of
culture to be and what they need to evaluate for. An instrumentalizing of culture is
observed by Newsinger and Green, who in their 2016 article on the politics of
cultural value critique the dominant UK approach of undertaking cultural impact
evaluation that focuses on value accrued through the use of culture and arts as a tool
in service of other social and economic aims (Newsinger & Green, 2016). They then
compare this dominant paradigm with their own qualitative research undertaken with
arts practitioners (predominantly participatory artists) across the East Midlands
region of England in 2013 and 2014, which argued that current culture evaluation
methodologies remove agency and voice from the practitioners, and ignored their
own experiences in conducting project evaluation and the limitations of conventional
or 'official' forms of evaluation, such as questionnaires, self-assessments, or
quantitative methods of media analysis and SROI calculations, where an economic
value is assigned to social and environmental outcomes and uses cost-benefit
analysis calculations to determine social value (Newsinger & Green, 2016).

The conclusion is that, based on their interviews with practitioners, there are publicly acknowledged forms of value and subsequent evaluation that are framed around dominant overarching policy directives. At a practitioner level, there are more hidden or casual approaches to measuring and discussing value that might not reach an official record or reporting sphere – although there is a sophisticated understanding of what evaluation practices must be used to operate under the current environment of competitive funding. However, the authors also note that there are many similarities around understandings of the value culture can provide between the official policy line and the personal practitioner experience. Their ultimate assertion is that the intrinsic-instrumental dichotomy is meaningless to the practitioners with whom they spoke (although prevalent in research literature) and should be abandoned as a false binary of either/or. Instead, evaluation methods and forms of discourse around cultural value should be developed that take into account the complex range and combinations of intrinsic and instrumental values that projects and programmes of work can create, to better reflect the full perspectives of practitioners who intimately understand complex nets of personal, psychological and social impacts (Newsinger & Green, 2016). This thesis project centres on practitioner experience, specifically those involved in council roles with some influence on public art – the findings presented later in Chapter 4 certainly mirror Newsinger and Green's observation of a disconnect between official policy statements of value and personal experience in culture delivery. They also attest to the pressures of working under environments of competitive funding and ever-decreasing council budgets, and the way this informs evaluation methodologies and epistemologies.

Many of the ambitious claims regarding the impacts of public art accompanied an increase in local authority adoption of urban regeneration schemes. Culture-led regeneration describes a process of strategic intervention in cities that centres cultural activity as a catalyst for flow-on economic effects (Farley, 2018). This approach sprung from a neoliberal policy framework that focused on economic revival and required evidence and accountability (Pollock & Sharp, 2011). Strategic culture-led regeneration plans have resulted in investment and planning or legislative conditions intended to create unique public expressions of local identity, develop

cultural tourism offerings, promote social change, and encourage employment (Hall & Robertson, 2001). Despite these intentions, a scarcity of research exists to prove the positive impact of significant, flagship cultural projects on the economic or social wellbeing of local communities (Farley & Pollock, 2020). Instead, the long term outcome of these projects has instead tended towards increased positive city branding on a national or international scale, rather than meaningful positive transformation for existing neighbourhoods and their residents (Ahn, 2014; Blackman, 2014; Farley & Pollock, 2020; Umney & Symon, 2019). This failure to provide substantive change despite stated policy goals has caused a shift in focus to how policy institutions, such as local authorities, attempt to involve communities with urban regeneration activity.

The principles of civic empowerment at a local level have been extended to urban regeneration activity, including public art, whereby local authorities and public art delivery bodies work in partnership with community groups and local populations. However, this approach has come under critique, with community participation often appearing perfunctory – often seeing other project partners given greater influence over a project than community members (Pollock & Sharp, 2011; Zitcer & Almanzar, 2020). In some instances, tension between community desires and governmental cultural strategy can instead damage relationships between local populations and governance institutions – for instance, where significant murals by local graffiti artists were removed to make way for a museum development (Morrison, 2017) or when temporarily available space is offered to the public for creative use and community ownership, then taken away for development after higher value investors were found (Pollock & Sharp, 2011). Observation studies have demonstrated the public's propensity to reinterpret and use public art in their cities in ways far removed from originally intended by artists or commissioning bodies (Kortbek, 2018; Sharp et al., 2005; Zebracki, 2013). Public art can be used as a catalyst for increasing community involvement in the ownership of public spaces, with the levels and forms of involvement sometimes unexpected by those in governing roles (Kortbek, 2018). This overlaps strongly with the concept of placemaking, which will be explored in the next section.

2.2.4 Placemaking

The use of public art as a tool for urban regeneration can contribute to *placemaking.*
Placemaking is part of a suite of strategies used in urban regeneration, unique in its
emphasis on building urban environments that encourage interaction, belonging and
proactive community contribution (Sweeney et al., 2018; Zitcer, 2020). Creative
placemaking positions artists as members of a wider team who develop public
intervention projects, rather than a more traditional public art project which follows
proposal or commissioning processes where key stakeholders are the artist(s) and
review or funding panels (Teder, 2018; Zitcer, 2020). Clearly representing and
connecting communities to their geographic locales is one of the goals of urban
regeneration, and creative placemaking that is designed alongside communities can
achieve exciting and nuanced results in this manner (Hall & Robertson, 2001).
Measuring and evaluating public art projects as part of placemaking and urban
regeneration activity means the tangible outcomes of projects and processes must be
understood, so the results can feed back into planning and programming to respond
to the needs and wants of communities (Sweeney et al., 2018).

Urban regeneration and placemaking attribute public art with a variety of effects,
affects, impacts and valuable outcomes. As discussed earlier, these include the
community values of social cohesion, enhancement of public safety, the provision of
public locations for political and democratic expression, and forums for development
and representation of identity (Cartiere & Tan, 2021; Farley & Pollock, 2020;
Selwood, 1995). Additional claimed benefits include improved education outcomes
and engagement, as well as wellbeing and health (Farley, 2018; Mulvey & Egan,
2014; Pinder, 2008). Finally, the inherent artistic value of this work is considered by
a range of authors (Lehtinen, 2019; Tang et al., 2021; Walmsley, 2013).

Placemaking is part of a suite of strategies used in urban regeneration, unique in its
emphasis on building urban environments that encourage interaction, belonging and
proactive community contribution (Sweeney et al., 2018; Zitcer, 2020). It is also a
site where the loosely defined edges of public art as an artform blend into urban
design, with artists contributing to or creating practical elements of public space like
seating, lighting and wayfinding (Milne & Pojani, 2022). Creative placemaking

positions artists as members of a wider team who develop public intervention projects, rather than a more traditional public art project which follows proposal or commissioning processes where key stakeholders are the artist(s) and review or funding panels (Teder, 2018; Zitcer, 2020). Clearly representing and connecting communities to their geographic locales is one of the goals of urban regeneration, and creative placemaking that is designed alongside communities can achieve this in exciting and nuanced ways (Hall & Robertson, 2001).

2.2.5 Social value

Public art is credited with the potential to address social exclusion in communities. This is through the encouragement of citizens to participate in the wider social life of their urban spaces through engagement with artworks and co-creation processes, the public affirmation and demonstration of diversity, and the outward expression of issues of concern to communities (Hall & Robertson, 2001). The ability of public art to build social cohesion is part of many public art strategies and policies across Aotearoa and England (Auckland Council, 2013; Birmingham City Council, 2015; Bristol City Council, 2017; Wellington City Council, 2012). However, the ability of public art to be read in multiple ways by a variety of audiences does not always equate to universal acceptance or positive response – instead, depending on audience tastes and their own existing contexts and beliefs, reactions can be highly oppositional or antagonistic, in opposition to goals of social cohesion (Palermo, 2014; Schuermans et al., 2012; Sharp et al., 2005). Challenges to audiences are a necessity when addressing complex social issues but the ways in which public art is framed can determine whether audiences feel engaged or silenced (Zitcer & Almanzar, 2020).

While it is possible that public art projects and long-term programmes of activity can influence social inclusion and social justice within communities, it is also true that the gentrification of spaces and economic revival of neighbourhoods can increase social polarisation and exclusion (Pollock & Sharp, 2011). In tackling issues of cultural representation, cities, planners, artists and communities must grapple with how increasingly fraught political landscapes can catalyse around public art projects that become controversial when perceived by communities with strong ideological

responses to works (Senie, 2008; Zitcer & Almanzar, 2020). The ability to measure audience perception throughout public art processes, through tools such as observation, interviews, surveys, social media analysis and focus groups, is key (Zitcer & Almanzar, 2020).

One model for ensuring social inclusion in public art projects is the category of New Genre public art. Evaluating the social value of new genre public art requires nuance from critics and administrators. What tools are available that can holistically assess changes in behaviour, beliefs and attitudes, both during projects and after them (Lacy, 1995)? How do these tools account for the role of the artist and their intentions in creating ethical and political contexts for public artworks with communities (Caldarola, 2019)? How should social outcomes be talked about when assessing the wider value of public art in a policy space, with its inherent political perspective and own strategic goals for communities? This thesis will consider these questions as specific to the context of local authorities.

Case studies that involve participatory action from audiences demonstrate the range of outcomes possible when public art with a focus on social value is created. Across multiple cities in Denmark, a project titled *Placemaking* was spearheaded and funded by eight municipal bodies and guided by national arts policies concerned with the power of the arts to affect social change (Kortbek, 2018). Curators coordinated projects to address social issues within local areas. These projects were intended to be highly collaborative with communities, but the varying approach of curators and artists involved saw many projects come up against issues of who has power over a space (Kortbek, 2018). Interviews and surveys following the project showed that community participants felt only superficially included. The goals of municipal bodies and their ability to dictate the conditions of public space, as well as the artists' control over the produced artworks, meant the projects were sometimes only tokens of democratic processes of creating public art. However, the projects created a range of social encounters, reactions and discussions among both non-artist participants involved in their conception as well as audiences who were not so intimately connected with the projects (Kortbek, 2018).

While set in different contexts, public art projects from outside England and Aotearoa can provide important precedents for understanding potential pitfalls when it comes to community value. Artworks in a Jerusalem neighbourhood demonstrate the charged responses that can arise from well-intentioned but failed attempts to create public artwork when local residents are not involved with project conception (Aharon-Gutman, 2018). A project was built on ideas of exchange, from historic contexts of when the neighbourhood (Aharon-Gutman, 2018). Although the public artwork recognised the commercial histories of encounter, it was rejected due to reflecting social conditions that were contemporarily unacceptable. The complex social backgrounds of multiple communities and the ongoing impacts of settler colonialism meant that the artwork, which was received positively by the wider arts community and critics outside of the neighbourhood, was ultimately rejected by residents for threatening their political realities and present social conditions.

Public art can create forums for marginalised communities to share their experiences in a visible way, fostering greater understanding and building a sense of agency and confidence in participants (Iannelli & Marelli, 2019). Following a decrease in electoral participation and an increase in distrust of formal political institutions in Sardinia, the city used public art as a tool to interrogate the role of formal political administration (Iannelli & Marelli, 2019). In this case study, artists measured the efficacy of their practice by self-assessing how productive the relationships with local groups were, and whether participating audiences and partners felt that the artists' contributions were beneficial to their communities. While a public body may have socially minded goals in increasing engagement with their own political systems through the tool of public art, the artists and communities involved in such projects may value alternative aspects of the social outcomes of this kind of work. Tools to evaluate the social value of public art should be tailored to the contexts they are used in, and inclusive of differing perspectives on what a positive social outcome is.

In describing the value of public art for local communities, many local authorities create policy that continues a narrative of public art as a tool for instrumental value to communities (Auckland Council, 2013; Birmingham City Council, 2015;

Cheltenham Borough Council, 2017; Wellington City Council, 2012). This is to guide their funding and investment in projects and programmes that support these aims. Policy documents typically outline an overarching vision, which is then supported by themes or strands, under which are specific goals and key performance indicators (Howlett & Mukherjee, 2018). The value of interventions and the ways this value will be measured and reported on are also standard in such policies. Councils often strive to create policy alongside their communities, with consultation and public engagement processes throughout planning and formal adoption stages. This is achieved with varying levels of success, and the mechanisms for policy development vary council to council. Therefore, in this thesis, I will examine how the value of public art as stated within policy documents is described and set – this will be an initial exploration in line with Belfiore's provocation (Belfiore, 2015) to understand further the political power contexts in which cultural value is defined.

It is also important to consider the cultural specificities of value. In an Aotearoa context, Māori as the indigenous people of the land hold a set of relationships with place and a particular approach to cultural value that adds additional and culturally-specific layers to understandings of the social value of art. Māori traditions are often expressed in outputs of culture that include the visual, such as whakairo [carving], moko [tattooing] and weaving, as well as performative, such as oratory, kapa haka [dance] and waiata [song] (Hoete, 2020). These artforms communicate identity, history, connections to whenua [land] and wai [water], community relationships and perspectives on contemporary issues. Following colonization and subsequent interaction with Pākehā [New Zealand European settlers and descendants], there is a dedicated movement of both revival of traditional cultural expression and contemporary approaches to traditional creative practice, which provides strong social value (Harvey, 2019; Hoete, 2020). There can be a tension inherent in the politics of public place in Aotearoa, with the ongoing process of colonization seeing institutions of power (such as local government) based on legacies of British influence, and the public expression of culture sanctioned by those institutions as disengaged from indigenous perspectives (Seeto, 2010). Public spaces in Aotearoa, despite of and because of their contestation, are increasingly becoming sites where a multiplicity of stories are told, including Māori perspectives, dominant Pākehā

narratives, and other migrant narratives, in many cases through the medium of public art (Edensor & Sumartojo, 2018; Seeto, 2010). Contested public spaces are complex sites of public art production which can negotiate and interrogate the legacies of settler colonialism (Edensor & Sumartojo, 2023), but there is the potential for public art to address histories of exclusion and domination – although this requires negotiations of institutional power (Ferilli et al., 2016).

2.2.6 Education value

The social value of public art is linked to its role in learning and education (Hall & Robertson, 2001; Lovell, 2020; Taylor & Iroha, 2015; Wildemeersch & Von Kotze, 2014). Public pedagogy describes a tradition of learning that exists outside education settings of classrooms and schools (Biesta, 2012). Public pedagogy can take place in locations physical and ephemeral, such as the internet, pop culture, public urban space, parks and gardens, museums and galleries and commercial locations (Wildemeersch & Von Kotze, 2014), and reinforce dominant narratives and cultural understandings, but can also be critical of the status quo (Zorrilla & Tisdell, 2016). Many public art programmes are accompanied by supplementary education programming or are believed to hold inherent value as educational items (Hall & Robertson, 2001). As tools of public pedagogy, they can also offer ways of learning that differ from those employed in formal education systems (Schuermans et al., 2012).

Hall and Robertson note that local authorities and public art bodies have credited public art programming with teaching audiences new skills, as well as building a sense of identity in neighbourhoods and prompting community discussion (2001). The ways in which public art can prompt greater awareness of someone's context or encourage engagement with themes in the work offers them a way to reflect on their own subjectivities (Zebracki, 2019). Multiple studies are concerned with how meaning is interpreted, or learned, from public artworks (Beinart, 2020; Floyd, 2016; Selwood, 1995). There are also an increasing number of texts interested in the processes of learning prompted by art (Biesta, 2012; Hewitt & Jordan, 2015; Schuermans et al., 2012). Evaluation of the education value of public art is limited, however – enthusiasm of participants is one metric for success (Hall & Robertson,

2001), and the perspective of artists on the educational, social or political impacts of their practice has been measured (Zorrilla & Tisdell, 2016). As public art operates in a non-traditional education setting, the metrics commonly used to assess learning outcomes in formal spaces do not necessarily apply. Without the tools to measure how publics experience education outcomes of public art over time, as well as disagreements over what positive education outcomes should comprise, it is difficult to fully credit public art with significant education value.

2.2.7 Health and wellbeing value
The potential health and wellbeing value of public art has been researched from medical, psychological, art historic, geographic, education and other perspectives (Blackman, 2014; Bosco et al., 2019; Grossi et al., 2019; Innocent & Stevens, 2021; Kelson et al., 2017; Oman, 2020). Wellbeing can be defined as a state of being for individuals or communities that results in a happiness or health, including moral, mental and physical welfare (Blackman, 2014). Wellbeing extends further than material conditions, considering quality of life in areas such as safety of environment, social and cultural health, and physical and psychological welfare (Blackman, 2014). Engagement with the creative arts has been shown to have positive impacts on wellbeing, although this has mainly been restricted to studies on specific short term physiological and health outcomes rather than long term health improvement (Gillam, 2018; Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

Generalisations regarding the power of public art to change health outcomes are made by multiple local authority policy documents (Auckland Council, 2013; Birmingham City Council, 2015; Wellington City Council, 2012) but these do not tend to specify their existing evidence, or future evaluation methods used to collect substantive relevant data. Specific case studies have demonstrated techniques that can be used to design accessible programmes, including participatory art projects that combine women's experiences and community psychology (Mulvey & Egan, 2014), a community crowdsourcing project to design digital artworks that promoted the physical locations of defibrillators (Kilaru et al., 2014; Merchant et al., 2014), public art to prompt community mobilisation to address the stigma around suicide (Mohatt et al., n.d.) and the design of trails to encourage social citizenship of people

with dementia (Kelson et al., 2017). These individual projects all successfully utilised a range of qualitative evaluation methods to assess their wellbeing value, including focus groups, observation, interviews, surveys, and media analysis. There is no known published literature at the time of writing on connecting evaluation methods used by local authorities in their public art practice to potential health outcomes, and nothing to evidence the long-term health benefits of overall public art activity offered by councils.

2.2.8 Intrinsic artistic value

Caldarola argues that alongside the potential above values, public art should be valued for aesthetic reasons and critiqued akin to conceptual art in the wider contemporary arts sphere (2019). Aesthetics here describes a school of philosophy concerned with art, taste and judgement of aesthetic experience (Saito, 2007). Public art collections have unique processes of accrual that distinguish them from traditional art collections in public galleries, with public art projects typically being a mixture of temporary experiences and permanent objects, not guided by collection policies and responsive to the constantly morphing cityscape surrounding them (Farley, 2018). This results in works that are complex to categorise and whose artistic value shifts in line with changes in attitudes of local and external communities, changes in the surroundings of site-specific works, and in the case of long-term artworks susceptibility to poor collection care and vandalism (Farley, 2018).

The aesthetic value as perceived by audiences is significant in shaping experiences of the work, and can potentially dictate levels of access to other intended values – if it is aesthetically appealing, it can lure audiences, resulting in secondary intrinsic values such as the social or the economic (Tang et al., 2021; Thompson & Day, 2020). Alternatively, aesthetically challenging work can engender valuable responses and engagement, but alternatively create conflict with regular users of the local environment (Selwood, 1995; Tang et al., 2021). Tension between public good and 'good' art can lead to projects that privilege one over the other, with wider publics who regularly use artwork locations sometimes in vocal opposition to works deemed to have significant artistic merit (Caldarola, 2019; Morrison, 2017; Selwood, 1995).

In evaluating the artistic value of public artworks, frameworks must be created that draw from existing contemporary artistic criticism practices but also those that consider the unique spatial and time-based qualities of public artworks, and their unique audiences.

2.3 Evaluation, policy, and government

2.3.1 Introduction

My research is concerned with the effect of value measurement on public art policy and activity in England and Aotearoa. Having examined literature on definitions of and approaches to value, the following section explores a history of evaluation theory and practice, including a closer look at methods and tools used, as well as principles underpinning evaluation. It also investigates literature on policy evaluation in local government and examines texts specifically concerned with arts evaluation and cultural policy. This combination allows for reflection on where cultural policy evaluation contains unique aspects distinct from the wider field of policy evaluation, and opportunities for greater understanding on how this applies to public art.

The term 'policy' describes the guidelines and principles that inform decision-making and practice in government departments, including the delivery of public services and partnerships that governments and councils make in order to achieve their strategic goals (Klassen et al., 2016). No single defined policy making process is considered best-practice (Davies et al., 2000). Policies may be entirely new or replace existing but outdated versions. Each service area in local government (such as housing, transport, urban policy, or social work) will likely have particular statutory regulations that influence the types of policy that are created and how it engages with research and the public (Davies et al., 2000; Nutley et al., 2012).

Cultural policy in Aotearoa is guided by the Local Government Act 2002, which outlines the legislative responsibility councils have to promote cultural wellbeing in their communities (DIA, 2002). This does not specify the provision of cultural policy within councils, but does ensure that cultural activity in some capacity is

mandated across all councils (LGNZ, 2020). In England, local authorities are the largest funders of arts and culture across the country (Arts Council England, n.d.-b), and guidance is produced by Arts Council England on how to produce robust cultural strategy and policy (Arts Council England, n.d.-a). White papers produced by government also offer information on the role of councils in cultural activity (The Department for Culture Media and Sport, 2016) and local authorities across the UK connect cultural activity with other obligations in health and wellbeing, social services, and economic growth (Local Government Association & Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association, 2017). Public art falls under the remit of wider cultural activity including administration of libraries, theatres, museums, and community arts. This means that cultural policy is prone to being produced without unified or prescriptive models, instead requiring a localised and tailored process (P. Evans, 1997; Kovacs, 2011).

Each country structures local authorities slightly differently, with England presenting a range of local and regional authorities alongside smaller parish councils. The below diagrams show the variety of structures, as well as how different formats of local government operate underneath central government in each nation:
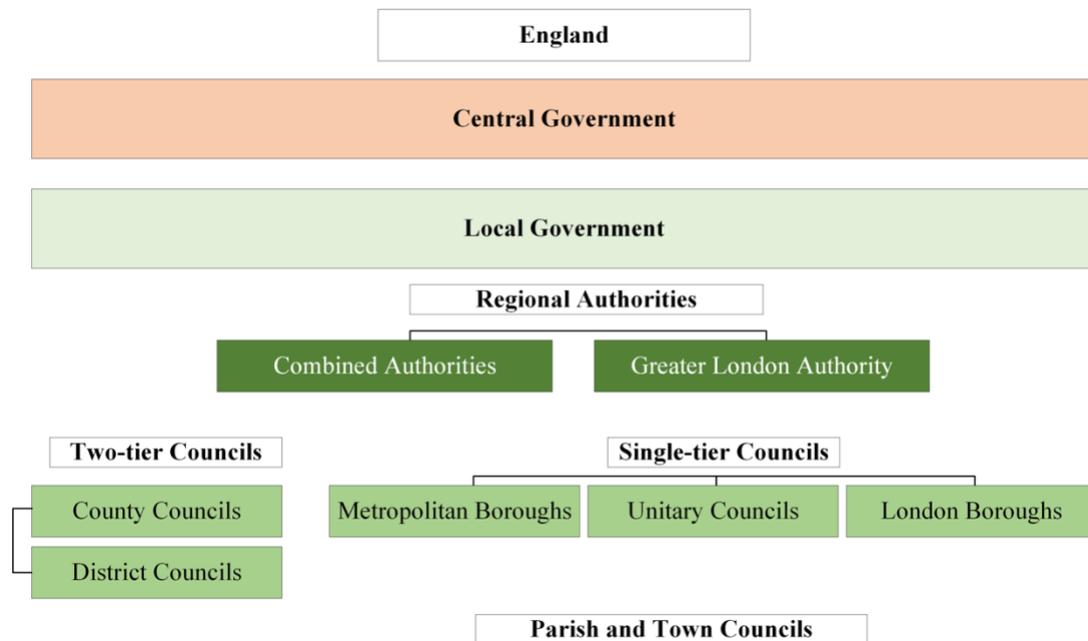
Figure 1: Central and local government structures in England
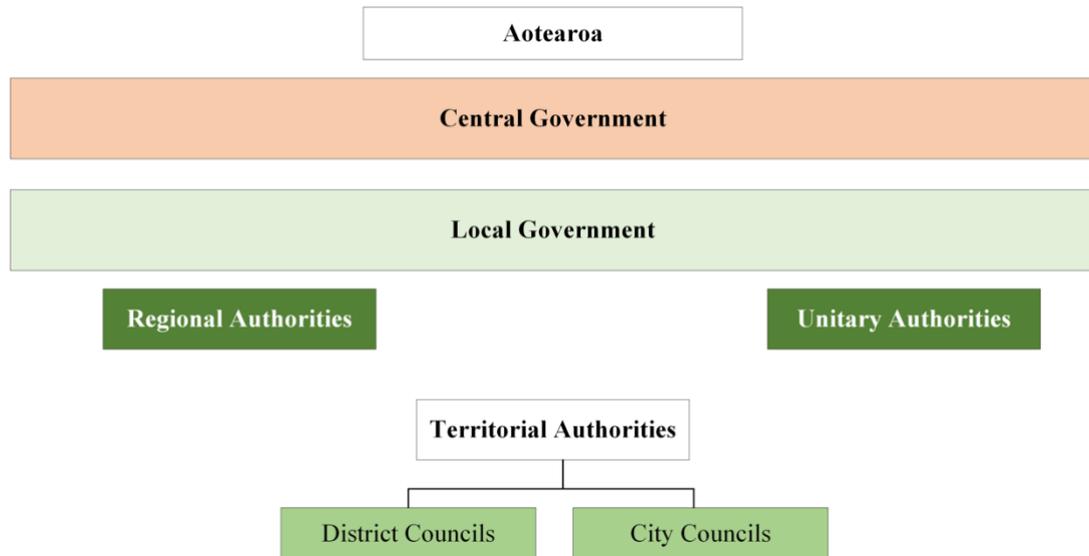
Figure 2: Central and local government structures in Aotearoa

It is worth noting that concerns around the articulation of the full scope of value of the arts in a policy context has been present in academic literature for some time – Keaney's literature review on public value and the arts was released by Arts Council England in 2006, and Caust's article on the rise of market-driven agendas in arts policymaking was published in 2003 (Caust, 2003). Given these texts and the many explorations of the role of value in cultural policymaking, it is interesting to consider that despite changes in government regimes and therefore priorities, many of the same issues are still being raised today in current research. This may indicate a disconnect between theory and practice that has not been bridged in two decades.

Value as defined in cultural policy documents (Auckland Council, 2013; Cambridge City Council, 2010; Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, 2019) determines the specific tools used to measure results of resulting policy interventions. It follows there is then a risk that in stating specific categories of value, unintended or overlooked areas of value will not be captured and therefore the full picture of what culture (specifically for the purposes of this thesis, public art) can do is not able to be effectively communicated to decisionmakers, communities, artists, and organisational colleagues. This has consequential outcomes for compelling advocacy. In reports commissioned by Arts Council England as research resources to

support advocacy for culture, various ways in which the arts provide instrumental value are explored; this includes a report on the contribution of arts and culture to local place-shaping, and therefore positive economic and social outcomes for those communities (Wavehill, 2018); a literature view on the impact of arts and culture on the wider creative economy (as much economic data includes the creative industries, it can be difficult to tease out information that only focusses on arts and culture) (Metro Dynamics, 2020); the role of arts and culture in high street regeneration (BOP Consulting, 2021); regular reports on the contributions of arts and culture to the overall UK economy (Centre for Economics and Business Research, 2019); a literature review on the effects of arts and culture on the brain (Bone & Fancourt, 2022); and others which evaluate specific programmes that Arts Council England have led and funded. These reports reflect a central government focus on using arts and culture as a tool for achieving wider economic, social and health related goals, and indicate a national policy environment where evidence focusing on mostly economic, and some social value is perceived as most useful. This aligns with both Throsby's (2010) as well as Newsinger and Green's (2016) findings above – that instrumental value is currently the main consideration for cultural policymakers.

2.3.2 A brief examination of evaluation theory and methods

Following the above introduction to the statutory and public body research contexts for cultural policy evaluation, this section provides a grounding in evaluation theory which has informed practice over time. Evaluation serves several purposes. Mark, Henry and Julnes (1999) outline four key reasons to evaluate: enabling evaluators to judge merit and worth in the context of project aims, allowing for informed oversight and compliance, feeding back into policy and programme improvement, and assisting in more generalised knowledge development. Social accountability weaves throughout these four purposes, recognising that evaluation allows those delivering interventions to be held accountable through the provision of analysis of success, deficiencies or failure (Alkin, 2013; Rossi et al., 2019). Evaluation can assist in policy development and decision-making by determining whether appropriate goals are set, whether there are methods to accomplish said goals, and whether the outcomes of interventions achieve established aims (Alkin, 2013).

There can be inherent tension in the way evaluation programmes are designed, which can be with more than one of the purposes mentioned above, for example accountability (particularly from funders, communities or special interest groups) as well as learning opportunities for an organisation (Kubera, 2019). This means that by design, evaluation can result in a diminished focus on one purpose over the other, or if instead created with this issue in mind, a rich and robust selection of analyses that contribute to multiple goals (Kubera, 2019). Some evaluators prefer to focus on accountability, particularly in a government context, whereas others create evaluation frameworks that improve overall organisational performance and knowledge (Chelimsky, 2012; Shaw et al., 2012). All well-enacted evaluation contributes to the integrity of policy processes and clearly informs a range of stakeholders about findings (Chelimsky, 2012). Given the above reasons to evaluate, the field of evaluation theory is a useful resource when seeking to understand the impact of evaluation on policy and programming – including where these relate to public art.

Approaches to evaluation, and its relationship with policy and programming, have received attention in multiple academic fields. The work of theorists in this topic area can be generally divided into two categories: the first, prescriptive models, setting out guidelines and frameworks that prescribe how evaluation should be done and what constitutes good practice; the second, descriptive models, are defined as a range of generalised statements predicting or explaining evaluation on a more empirical, theoretical level (Alkin, 2013). The majority of texts fall into the prescriptive category, comprising both how-tos and case study examples, providing examples of foundational research methodologies and practical considerations (Bamberg & Mabry, 2020; A. M. Huberman & Miles, 2002; M. Huberman & Cox, 1990; Rossi et al., 2019) and analysing and critiquing existing evaluation models (Collins et al., 2014; Kirkhart, 2010; Pawson, 2013; Schwandt, 1988; Shadish & Chelimsky, 1997). These theorists speak to issues particular to the methodology they are employing, the ways that collected information is subsequently valued, and the participants who are the subject of the evaluation exercise (Alkin, 2013).

As discussed above, social accountability (whereby those delivering interventions have their work analysed to prove its success or failure) is a key motivator for evaluation and creates legitimacy by connecting data with decision-making. Social enquiry posits that human actions respond to inherent social behavioural dimensions, and therefore the study of these actions requires careful considerations around appropriate methodologies and how they apply to social phenomena (Alkin, 2013). The influence on evaluation studies is clearly seen in guidance on research methods, particularly in efforts to design schemes to obtain rigorous information, and enquiries into how theory, researcher subjectivity and observation interact (Alkin, 2013). Finally, epistemology is concerned with the scope of knowledge, and this provides a framework for evaluation theorists to draw from, including notable areas of thought such as post positivism, constructivism and pragmatism (Alkin, 2013). These areas, and their specific application in public art evaluation, are examined in greater detail in the research design section.

When it comes to enacting evaluation, there are varied practical considerations. These include the choice of what is appropriate out of the many possible techniques and methods available, but also contextual pragmatics around time constraints, budget limits, planning and policy contexts, location, political influence and feasibility of data collection (Chen, 2012; French, 2018; Mark et al., 1999; Wholey et al., 2010). These unique dynamics are pertinent in the evaluation of public art outcomes in councils, where resource constraints around budget and time are ever-present and there is keen interest in results from organisational stakeholders, external parties and the public (Gilmore et al., 2017a; Pollock & Sharp, 2011; Usher & Strange, 2011). Concerns about the efficacy of public art policies, programmes and projects can result in cuts to funding, staffing support, and loss of reputation (DeShazo & Smith, 2014). Alternatively, strong evidence for the value of public art can assist with advocacy efforts, budget discussions and improved relationships with a range of stakeholders, community groups, artists and publics (Pollock & Paddison, 2010b). Therefore, those conducting evaluation in this space need robust and best practice evaluation strategies that respond to their unique contexts and constraints.

The RealWorld Evaluation (RWE) method describes an approach to address the constraints of time, budget, data, organisational structure, management arrangements and political interest (Bamberg & Mabry, 2020). This system, intended to be applied by evaluators in a range of social intervention and development settings (such as local government, international NGOs, and national policy contexts), can be applied when evaluation constraints are evident at the beginning of project planning, or when evaluators are limited towards the end of project or policy development life. Both of these situations seriously impede rigorous evaluation design and are commonplace across cultural policy settings in many countries, including England and Aotearoa (Bamberg & Mabry, 2020; Coy et al., n.d.; G. Evans, n.d.; Kaare Nielsen, 2003; Sargent, 1996; Volkerling, 2001, 2010).

The RWE system uses an approach that finds a practical compromise between theoretically rigorous methods, situational constraints and organisational procedures and structures. It begins with a scoping exercise to understand the evaluation purpose, information required, expectations from stakeholders and limiting pressures. It then establishes what strategies might be possible to address limits to budget, time, data, including techniques such as simplifying design, reducing the amount of data to be gathered, the use of secondary data sources, focusing on key participant groups, and ensuring analysis is efficient (Bamberg & Mabry, 2020). Quantitative approaches such as observation, surveying, and self-reporting methods, as well as qualitative tools like interviews, document analysis and focus groups are useful in the system. While no specific reference is made to public art, the tools outlined, evaluation design discussed, and analysis suggested are transferable when considering what is practical when conducting evaluation in a local government setting. Similarly structured textbooks take a prescriptive approach to outlining practical methods for project and policy evaluation, including detailed methodologies (Rossi et al., 2019; Wholey et al., 2010), potential failings of standard approaches currently in use (Cartwright & Hardie, 2012), ways to enhance the impact of research and evaluation (Nutley et al., 2012) and the ways support networks and professional research bodies can be used to assist evaluators working in the field (Schuster, 2002). Again, these make no specific mention of public art evaluation.

2.3.3 Local, regional, and national government policy evaluation

Policy can be evaluated in several ways and at different points in the development cycle, and how this takes place in councils may differ from evaluations set in a regional or national government context. Given the influence of policy on practice and programming in the public sector, the aim of this research project is to examine the influence of evaluation methods on cultural policy with a public art component; particularly as there is very little literature in this space, despite the prevalence of local authority public art policies.

A feature of government practice throughout the 20th century in England and Aotearoa has been the rise in groups, companies and individuals aiming to influence government action (Davies et al., 2000). This includes think tanks, university researchers, professional bodies, advocacy groups and statutory organisations. A key tool with which to compel governments to a cause is evidence, with governments of the 1980s onwards tending towards 'evidence-based policy' (Davies et al., 2000; Nutley et al., 2012). This occurred in tandem with a growing distrust of public service by voters, as increasingly engaged and educated publics desired proof that taxes were being prudently spent and the ability to scrutinise political agencies (Davies et al., 2000). It also accompanied greater accessibility of data and tools with which to analyse it, including digital technology, as well as a larger research community and a wider focus in both the public and private sphere on increasing productivity and competitive advantage.

Evidence is a tangible way to prove something factual, a means to support a held belief, an observation on an issue or an expert testimony (Nutley et al., 2012). Evidence is research that can be independently observed, with general consensus on the information gathered even if the analysis and interpretation is contested (French, 2018). Evidence can be produced in the policy process both prospectively and retrospectively. This includes methods such as performance indicators, audit and inspection regimes, partnerships with research institutes at universities, expert knowledge testimony, gathering of statistics, re-contextualising existing research,

pilot programme reviews, public consultation and economic and statistical modelling (Davies et al., 2000).

The specific type of evidence used by public arts administrators is generally determined by the context in which it will be read, with quantitative evidence being most preferred for formal reporting, wider organisational communication and performance reviews (Blomkamp, 2014). However, at an everyday level, practitioners sometimes prefer the use of interpersonal feedback and local understanding (Blomkamp, 2014; van den Hoogen, 2014). Creative forms of evidence such as artist-generated narratives, video documentation of events, visual responses to issues and other less formal modes of giving feedback are useful for decision-making and reflect the context that cultural policy serves, but can cause conflict when used in sceptical council environments more accustomed to hard quantitative data, such as statistics and financial records (Blomkamp, 2014; Selwood, 2019). The typical local government statutory framework of performance measurement and regular strategic planning requires officers to interpret the varying forms of data they use every day into outcome measurements easily understood by decisionmakers. Cultural policymakers generally seek evidence that communicates the value of their programming, advocates for arts and creative practice in council processes, and improves the policies used to guide practice (Blomkamp, 2014). This can be at odds with standardised measures of institutional performance used in the wider council organisation that discount ephemeral and informal knowledge (Blomkamp, 2014). The pressure on cultural policymakers in this space is to justify their programming activity through providing proof of efficacy, value for taxpayers, and alignment with agreed policy outcomes. It is therefore critical that arts policies, including those that are public art specific, consider the evaluation of activity as a central component of their policy design.

At a local government level, this is seen in the emergence of auditing regimes and the engagement of individuals and groups in public meetings and formal consultations (Kerley et al., 2018; McCahill et al., 2020). Recent political research elucidates a number of concerns with the evidence-based policy approach, including the practical issue of limited resource with which to analyse gathered information

(Howlett, 2009), the tendency of councils to rely on external contractors whose interests subjectively influence the terms of gathering evidence and the policy process (Dollery, n.d.), and a failure of evidence-based principles to fully account for the complexities of the political environment in which it is used (Downe et al., 2012; French, 2018; Geyer, 2011). Despite this criticism, evidence-based policy remains the supposed fundamental framework under which policy is created in both local and national government settings across both the UK and Aotearoa (although many examples exist where policy direction contradicts the evidence gathered) (Davies et al., 2000).

For public art, this dominant framework sees a focus on evidencing instrumental benefits. Cultural policymaking outlines a range of instrumental benefits of public art. Pressure to create comparability with other policy arms of local authorities and justify a return on investment for public funding in an environment of austerity, can create a disconnect between what practitioners believe the value of culture to be and what they need to evaluate for. An instrumentalizing of culture is observed by Newsinger and Green, who in their 2016 article on the politics of cultural value critique the dominant UK approach of undertaking cultural impact evaluation that focuses on value accrued through the use of culture and arts as a tool in service of other social and economic aims (Newsinger & Green, 2016). They then compare this dominant paradigm with their own qualitative research undertaken with arts practitioners (predominantly participatory artists) across the East Midlands region of England in 2013 and 2014, which argued that current culture evaluation methodologies remove agency and voice from the practitioners, and ignored their own experiences in conducting project evaluation and the limitations of conventional or 'official' forms of evaluation, such as questionnaires, self-assessments, or quantitative methods of media analysis and SROI calculations (Newsinger & Green, 2016).

The conclusion is that, based on their interviews with practitioners, there are publicly acknowledged forms of value and subsequent evaluation that are framed around dominant overarching policy directives. At a practitioner level, there are more hidden or casual approaches to measuring and discussing value that might not reach an

official record or reporting sphere – although there is a sophisticated understanding of what evaluation practices must be used to operate under the current environment of competitive funding. However, the authors also note that there are many similarities around understandings of the value culture can provide between the official policy line and the personal practitioner experience (Newsinger & Green, 2016). These similarities and differences can be seen in case studies of specific public art projects, which the following section will examine.

2.4 Public art evaluation case studies and discussion

2.4.1 Introduction

This section will synthesise those above, through examining a range of globally situated case studies available that specifically examine the evaluation of public art, public art policy development, and the lessons these case studies elicit for this research project. It will explore the evaluation methodologies and theories employed in global analysis of public art practice, which can provide manuals and examples for projects taking place in England and Aotearoa. It will also discuss how these case studies can be read in tandem to help form a more complete picture of current value measurement in the field of public art, as well as the gaps in literature.

2.4.2 Public art evaluation case studies

The following case studies outline and critique different evaluation models and tools that have been applied to public art projects across British, European, American and Asian contexts. This section will critique the efficacy of each example, demonstrating that all tools have inherent limitations in their scope and providing evidence of the complexity of public art evaluation.

2.4.2.1 Social Return on Investment

Many approaches can be useful when designing public art evaluation methods. One of these is the concept of Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology, which has been used to measure non-financial value in both public art and other contexts.

This assigns an economic value to social and environmental outcomes and uses the principles behind cost-benefit analysis to calculate the social value achieved through investments (Refki et al., 2020a). More broadly used in the realm of social services, the controversial technique relies on assumptions about both inherent and added value, which can be enormously difficult to quantify (Refki et al., 2020a). In England, the methodology is used by the Department of Health as a performance measurement metric to compel funded organisations to deliver on social return. The upstate New York-based 'Breathing Lights' public art project was analysed using the SROI methods, in order to establish the social impact of the programme, which comprised temporarily transforming abandoned buildings using lights and projections. The project was funded by philanthropic organisations and involved comprehensive community research before and during the event, as well as the use of community ambassadors to reach out to publics, host walking tours and promote surveys (Refki et al., 2020a). The project aimed to increase awareness of issues around urban blight, as well as share knowledge about home ownership programmes and potential policy changes. It also increased appreciation of public art through positive perceptions of its ability to prompt social change and help viewers appreciate local assets.

The SROI approach considered the financial assessment of impact of the Breathing Lights project. In order to gather data, researchers used data collection methods including focus groups, interviews with visitors, activists and artists, stakeholder conversations, visitor surveys, post-event social media surveys, door-to-door neighbourhood interviews and a policy roundtable survey (Refki et al., 2020a). A range of statistics were also supplied to the evaluation team, including information on land taxes, property values and sale documents. Impact was defined as an outcome more significant than changed perceptions – it was only considered relevant if a system or community experienced tangible change, such as demonstrable increases in community outreach connections or reductions in urban blight. A range of indicators were established before the project commenced and monitored closely during and following. These impacts were then expressed in monetary terms to create a common language for all stakeholders. Using these terms, the project found that over $6 million had been raised to address the identified problem of local urban

blight, and for every \$1 invested, \$1.84 was delivered in social return (Refki et al., 2020a). By expressing the social value of public art outcomes in monetary language, a powerful case was made that justified investment in public art, for its use in social projects and in particular the potential regeneration of abandoned neighbourhoods.

However, the use of SROI does have limitations. The methods used by the researchers did not fully consider the costs to local authorities in managing the abandoned buildings, as this information was not supplied by the municipal administrators. They also noted the intrinsic subjectivity in using stakeholder perspectives to assign value, with the lack of objective benchmarks undermining the perceived rigour of some estimates (Refki et al., 2020a). This method also requires significant data gathering and research, with time and financial resources for analysis that may be unviable for administrators within local authority groups. With that being said, the economic expression of social value does provide opportunities for compelling advocacy and an easily understood expression of intangible values (Bosco et al., 2019).

2.4.2.2 Logic models

Assessing the impact of public art in the service of regional and urban regeneration benefits is complex. The positive contributions of public art to economic, social, and aesthetic renewal are of high interest to national and local government agencies, which require evaluation to support evidence-based policy development. The key difficulty in measuring impact stems from challenges in monitoring an uncontained audience, as typical audiences of public art do not visit at certain times, buy tickets, or register their engagement with an official body. Audiences may experience works intentionally or accidentally. Additionally, there are challenges with the time-sensitive nature of impact assessment (Usher & Strange, 2011). Reactions to long term physical works can be negative to begin with and grow in time to strongly positive, or initial positivity turning to apathy over time. In the North of England, a partnership of regional development agencies known as the Northern Way sought to utilise the region's cultural assets to market themselves to national and international audiences (Usher & Strange, 2011). It undertook a series of public art 'gateway' projects that coincided with synchronised cultural events and attractions in the area.

The public artworks were intended to assist the regional development agencies to raise the positive profile of the North as a modern and culturally significant place, thereby increasing economic wellbeing for local populations.

A logic model describes a graphic depiction of relationships between the tangible processes of a project and the intended outcomes (Funnell & Rogers, 2011). The Welcome to the North (WTTN) public art projects were assessed using a logic model that focused on medium to long term effects (Usher & Strange, 2011). Specifically, the researchers involved used a Theory Approach Logic Model, which outlines how change will be produced with an intervention to achieve the desired outcomes using a pre-determined theory of how this will occur. This process is widely used within government organisations to describe non-financial effects and incorporate a range of different project elements into the overall summative effects (Usher & Strange, 2011). It specifies all impacts, including short, medium, and long term, but views the first two as indicators of the larger effects felt long after the initial intervention, with a ten-year timeframe specified for the ultimate evaluation end point. For three specified objectives concerning placemaking, perception and profile, a range of indicators were determined alongside possible data sources with which to determine their success. The research on this project, published in 2011, came out soon after the installation of the public art projects. It documented the design of the logic model evaluation framework and described the processes of gathering data over a period of ten years, and emphasised the difficulty in evaluating public art outcomes comprehensively without a commitment to long-term monitoring and analysis (Usher & Strange, 2011). By sticking to the agreed framework, the administrators at the regional development programme will be able to present credible arguments regarding the efficacy of public art as a tool of wider regeneration efforts at a regional level.

2.4.4.3 Mixed method approaches

The value of temporary public art sculpture trails can be measured using tools tailored to the aims of the project, with evaluation being useful for understanding individual projects as well as feeding into broader regeneration goals of a locality (Thompson & Day, 2020). In measuring the impact of sculpture trails, the authors

noted that initial evaluations could include visitor numbers, social media analysis, auction sales and event-timed credit card spending data, but that long-term impacts on local economies are much more difficult to quantify – for instance, occasions where the temporary trail draws in a visitor, who then chooses to visit the host city again at a later date to spend additional time and money based on the positive atmosphere generated during the trail's existence. There is also the converse potential, where the trail is well-received and popular initially but not impactful in the longer term (Thompson & Day, 2020). This theme, of evaluation becoming increasingly complex the more long-term its focus, is demonstrated throughout other case studies on public art impact measurement.

The effects of public art and cultural policy on urban regeneration have been explored in a mixed-methods study in Belfast (McManus & Carruthers, 2014). The city's Cathedral Quarter was purposefully redeveloped as a cultural hub over a period of nearly 20 years, with thirty pieces of public art being one aspect of the regeneration process, installed to enhance local identity and foster a sense of place and identity (McManus & Carruthers, 2014). The researchers used multiple methods to explore the role of culture in regeneration schemes, linking the possibilities of cultural sector designation to the prevalence of tourism strategies in cultural policy across the UK (McManus & Carruthers, 2014). They created a quantitative survey exploring the impacts of the Cathedral Quarter regeneration project. They also conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with local stakeholders representing the local government, business owners and regeneration officers. Public art was identified as a key element to bridge the original grassroots arts community desire to preserve and present the heritage of the district with the commercial aspects of regeneration (McManus & Carruthers, 2014). The mixed-methods approach to evaluation of the overall project allowed for a range of information on the role of public art in the wider regeneration context.

2.4.4.4 Interviews
International case studies provide examples of public art's contribution to tourism offerings, which can also potentially be explored in an English or Aotearoa context. In Barcelona, a street art project titled 'Pinacoteca a Cel Obert' was analysed in order

to better understand the possibilities for public art to encourage sustainable tourism practices, aligning the interests of local communities with visitor desires for localised and rewarding experiences (Crespi-Vallbona & Mascarilla-Miró, 2021). The viability of targeted street art projects to encourage sustainable tourism was explored through interviews with stakeholders following the project, including administrators, tour guides and tour participants. Results showed that targeted use of public art in neighbourhoods not typically popular with tourists encouraged greater foot traffic away from areas of high tourist congestion. It was successful in aligning the goals of public administrators, private businesses in the area and local populations to create shared value and a distinctive neighbourhood profile (Crespi-Vallbona & Mascarilla-Miró, 2021).

Understanding the experiences of tourists can provide insight into certain aspects of public art value for non-residents. In Macau, increasing attention is being paid to the potential of public artworks to give tourists a unique cultural offering that takes them outside a gallery, museum or performance (Tang et al., 2021). The immersive potential of public art can connect tourists to a place, and that aesthetic appreciation can be measured by observable indicators and questionnaires of those experiencing a work. Encounters with public artworks were often surprising or emotional, with respondents most positively reacting to works of great size that were sited within well-kept surroundings. Tourists valued the works that created the strongest immersive emotional response (Tang et al., 2021). While this research explored the value perceived by tourists, it did not look into the value provided by tourist interactions with the public artworks – for local populations, for local government groups, for creative communities or other stakeholders.

2.5 Conclusion

This thesis is grounded in reflections on and responses to the above literature and uses these understandings and provocations as a launch point for original research into value measurement of public art in a local government context.

This chapter began with an exploration of existing definitions of value and public art as distinct terms. It considers the theoretical and practical definitions of the term 'value' and resolves that value for this context will describe the range of measurable and intangible outcomes that public art can have. Value is a term negotiated and interpreted in different ways by different groups of people, and the power dynamics and relationships between people and institutions also affect how value is defined. Cultural value is the term used to describe value inherent to and created by cultural activity – for the purpose of this thesis, specifically public art. For public art, definitions are broad, nebulous, and filled with tensions. In some definitions, the focus is on the range of art categories that take place in public, such as sculpture, murals, and performance. In others, public art is expanded to include socially engaged processes of creation, and can be defined by its location, its relationship to publics, its funding mechanism, and its care for by public institutions. Public art is irrevocably connected to its publics.

The application of value to public art is a critical aspect of this research. Different groups (such as local authorities) and individuals (such as artists) have different motivations for creating and supporting public art. This chapter considers the way public art is valued and creates value, through instrumental and intrinsic value frameworks. It notes that in research literature, there is a strong prevalence towards attempts to understand the instrumental value of public art; what can public art do in service of a greater goal. This includes aspects of value such as economic, social, education, wellbeing and placemaking value. It also examines literature on the intrinsic value of public art, finding provocations for critics to interrogate public art as a distinct aesthetic experience, while also noting that this value, built on a subjective individual experience, can also be a gateway to other instrumental values.

Evaluation in a local authority context is tied to policy. The chapter provides a history of evaluation theory and practice, with relation to policymaking and the methods and tools used to conduct value measurement. It focuses on literature with a specific concern for arts evaluation and cultural policy, as well as that which is connected to local government. It reflects on the distinctive nature of cultural policy

evaluation and compares this with the wider field of policy evaluation, demonstrating gaps in literature on public art policy evaluation.

Ultimately, the specificities of the evaluation of public art are what this research project seeks to probe. While a range of case studies are explored at the end of this chapter, there are significant areas where the evaluation of public art is not well understood. The next chapter describes the research methodology this project will employ to address some of these gaps.

3. Methodology

The previous chapter explored literature on public art, value, and policy evaluation, demonstrating gaps that this project aims to address. This chapter will now outline the methodological approach taken during this research project, detailing the application of relevant theoretical frameworks and the subsequent tools used to create and examine strategies used to measure value in public art today. It will examine how local councils in England and Aotearoa are currently utilising evaluation methods to enhance and advocate for the work they do in public art management, and how this is reflected in related policy and ongoing council-led programming.

Incorporating examples from both Aotearoa and England will result in a productive breadth of experience, with both nations sharing similar local government structures and powers but varying in wider social and political contexts. Both nations have minimal existing literature on the topic of public art value measurement. England has been selected from the wider United Kingdom as its local government structures and legislative underpinnings are fairly comparable to Aotearoa examples, and it comprises a large enough sample of councils to provide meaningful results. As noted earlier in the introduction, both nations share a level of devolution of local public service delivery as well as multiple tiers of local council that hold different responsibilities. Additionally, while Aotearoa has around 9% of the population of England (5.1 million as opposed to 57 million) both nations share the existence of a centralised Arts Council that does not provide specific advice around public art (Office for National Statistics 2022; Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa 2024). By including both Aotearoa and England, the project is also able to fit within the PhD project time and resource restrictions.

The research questions outlined in the next section are designed to bring forth multiple different aspects of the issue of public art evaluation in local government,

and in seeking answers this research should result in a practical, conceptual, and constructive record for both future researchers and sector practitioners.

3.1 Research questions

My three research questions are:

> 1. What is meant by 'value' in a local authority public art context, and how is this used and critiqued by different stakeholders involved in council-connected public art activity?
>
> 2. What strategies and tools are currently used to measure the value of public art activity by local government staff in Aotearoa and England, and how is the effectiveness of these tools perceived by those who deploy them?
>
> 3. What impact do value measurement tools have on the provision of public art activity and related policies, from the perspectives of public art staff in local government?

The term 'currently' refers to work that will take place prior to and during the research phase – specifically, from 2010 up to the end of 2022. This range was selected for multiple reasons. The first is that it is also the time period in which austerity principles were applied in the UK, and resulting significant cuts to local authority culture budgets of around a third (Dagdeviren et al., 2019; Musicians Union 2024). Given this, and anecdotal feedback prior to research commencing around council staff restructures and diminishing culture roles, the date range of 2010-2022 was chosen as a period in which respondent council staff would be likely to have insight, with the assumption that most staff responding would have been in their roles for no longer than 12 years. Additionally, it responds to previous literature on public art and culture connected to local government, which provided some insight into attitudes towards this area of activity across multiple councils – namely, Hamilton et. al.'s 2001 survey on Scottish local authority approaches to public art (Hamilton et al., 2001), Evans' survey on UK council arts policies (Evans, 1997), and Pollock and Paddison's exploration into the range of ways public art was embedded in British planning policy by 2010 (Pollock & Paddison, 2010).

'Activity' describes the range of public art activity undertaken by council bodies. This can include, but is not limited to, the management of permanent collections, the commissioning of new work, the provision of funding for public art activity and other support and guidance given to artists and communities producing temporary, semi-permanent and permanent art work in the public realm. 'Policy' describes the guiding principles that inform council work on public art and includes both strategies (higher level documents outlining goals and values) and policies (specific paths of action or descriptions of processes). These may be public art specific or may have aspects of public art incorporated into wider themes, such as cultural or arts policies, parks and recreation policies, or economic development policies.

3.2 Methodological background

This section will firstly examine literature concerning relevant methodological and theoretical considerations and how these connect to existing public art research and practice. It will then detail how this has informed the approach taken in this research project, namely a pragmatic mixed-methods framework, which was employed to investigate the above research questions.

3.1.2 Methodological literature

A range of texts reviewed in Chapter 2, in particular those by Chiaravalloti (2014), Zitcer and Almanzar (2020), Geyer (2011), and Bamberg and Mabry (2020) examined studies of evaluation methods that connected to key theoretical schools. This demonstrated how the range of measurement approaches available to researchers and arts practitioners have been influenced by different theoretical frameworks, which are the structures used to define the theories utilised and key concepts explored. The notable areas of post positivism, constructivism, and pragmatism also guide research methods in a wider academic context, and it is therefore appropriate to determine which of the theoretical underpinnings are relevant for this specific research project, and how this has impacted the methodologies used, data collected, and analysis conducted. Theory, researcher subjectivity and methods of observation all interact within research projects, and the

three theoretical areas all approach these relationships in different ways. The following section will examine the relevance of each of these in the context of public art evaluation research.

Firstly, post positivism posits that an objective reality exists but that due to researcher bias it is unrealistic to expect research results to arrive at an infallible truth (Christie & Fleischer, 2017). Research methods influenced by postpositive frameworks are designed for maximum objectivity, with many specific techniques being drawn from hard sciences. Through recognising bias and its possible effects, a higher level of empiricism can be achieved than if a positivist approach alone is taken (Biddle & Schafft, 2015). Postpositive theory is closely associated with quantitative methods but also includes qualitative methods, all designed with rigour and measurability in mind. Research follows logical steps and values replicability, precision and deductive reasoning (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). It is premised on the belief that a true reality independent of individual human experience exists, but that as this cannot be directly observed there is also a researchable reality that is much more subjective.

The influence of post positivism on public art evaluation can most obviously be seen in the rise of economic performance indicators used to indicate the success of public art projects and programmes. Quantitative measurement tools have primarily been applied to public art in local government across the United Kingdom and the United States since the 1990s, as public administration reforms accompanied greater public oversight of governmental administration spending and its efficiency (P. Evans, 1997). An increase in targets-based budget design, broad sweeping approaches to evaluation and greater accountability to a range of stakeholders (such as voters, government departments, local businesses, arms-length organisations, activist groups, lobby groups and in New Zealand iwi [extended kinship] groups) has seen an growing interest by funders in tools that capture economic value of the arts, including economic impact studies (G. Evans, n.d.; Forte & De Paola, 2019; Pollock & Paddison, 2010; Sterngold, 2004; Thompson & Day, 2020; Walters et al., 2018), standardised measurement programmes across multiple organisations (Gilmore et al., 2017; Gray, 2008; Meyrick & Barnett, 2021), and small-scale tailored methods that

illuminate the financial success of specific projects (Crespi-Vallbona & Mascarilla-Miró, 2021; McManus & Carruthers, 2014; Tanguy & Kumar, 2019; Zhou, 2017). These take place across the globe, and in some cases compare examples internationally (G. Evans, n.d.), but specific literature focused on England demonstrates the weighting on economic impact measurement in local government settings (Gilmore et al., 2017; Gray & Wingfield, 2011; Pollock & Paddison, 2010; Thompson & Day, 2020).

I have been unable to find extant literature specifically on the approach of councils in New Zealand towards public art value measurement, including their attitudes towards economic value. However, this particular focus on demonstrable economic impact, even when presented alongside evidence of other types of value, can be overblown, as something as difficult to measure as the full economic impact of specific public art projects may not be feasible in most local government public art settings (Belfiore, 2009, 2016; Sterngold, 2004; Usher & Strange, 2011). Some of the inherent qualities of a postpositivist approach, such as its focus on 'objective' tools and empirical methods, mean that researchers and practitioners adopting this framework may not be able to capture some of the subtleties of different types of value and the subjectivity of individual or small-scale audience experiences. This is particularly evident when trying to assess a range of public values outside of the economic, which is difficult to define and requires pluralist understandings of different areas of impact including social, political and cultural; these types of value are not well served by quantitative tools (Belfiore, 2015; Meyrick & Barnett, 2021; Srakar & Čopič, 2012; Walmsley, 2013, 2018).

In contrast, constructivism dictates that multiple subjective realities can all exist simultaneously, influenced by an individual observer's unique worldview and experiences. It posits that what someone perceives is determined by their conceptualisations (Kratochwil, 2008). As a school of thought it posits that the relationship between those doing the 'knowing' and the 'knowledge' results in inherently subjective results that will mean different things to different people. The personal value systems and cultural framework of those undertaking research creates bias, which means results are understood to be relative truths rather than objective

ones. Research adopting this framework is most often associated with qualitative methods (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Kratochwil, 2008). In exploring examples from arts evaluation, constructivist approaches can be seen in case studies where it was considered critical to measure the social impact of community arts (Belfiore, 2002; Merli, 2002; Palermo, 2014). These examples utilised a range of qualitative methods, such as interviews, focus groups, qualitative surveying, and observation studies to gain an in-depth understanding of the affects on audiences and participants in community and public art projects, to present a complex range of experiences that support the concept of the arts as beneficial for social wellbeing. Some case studies used research methods that were highly tailored to each context and sought to understand outcomes rather than outputs; for instance, a project to examine public perceptions of existing public art works in Belgium and the Netherlands used a mixed-method case study approach which included observations and a survey which had both graded answers and open ended questions (Zebracki, 2013). In another example, an analysis of the value to arts workers following the Hull City of Culture 2017 programme saw an in depth qualitative interview programme to gather rich understandings of the impact of the programme on their own work as well as the sustainability of the cultural sector in the city (Umney & Symon, 2019) The results were small-scale and, given their individual project characteristics, difficult to replicate or apply more widely.

Finally, pragmatism presents a more holistic option than either post positivism and constructivism, viewing objectivity and subjectivity as ends of a continuum. It posits that a lack of an absolute truth can exist at the same time as multiple explanations of reality, and that the research process is heavily influenced by context, personal experience and societal values (Bacon, 2012; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). Pragmatism is frequently applied to real-world practice, often concerned with practical problem solving (Bacon, 2012). A pragmatic framework is appropriate for this research project due to focus on a plurality of methods (Florczak, 2014). This approach stems from the pragmatic principle that researchers should employ a tailored methodology suited to the specific research question being investigated (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). Pragmatists connect methodology, the tools of the research, and epistemology, the beliefs that determine how and why research is conducted. Pragmatists are also

concerned with distinct cases and contingent generalisations rather than a broad determination of rules to be applied across an entire population(Blatter, 2012)

Pragmatism in public art evaluation research can be seen in the ways some researchers apply pragmatic approaches. This includes authors such as Usher and Strange, who show how logic models can be used to understand long term impacts, and how timescales need to be considered when designing tools that measure public art project effects like resident perception and visitor spend (2011). Pragmatism is often connected to a mixed methods research approach (Biddle & Schafft, 2015; Florczak, 2014). This way of working allows for triangulation of results, increasing the rigour of the research conducted through comparing data collected and analysed (Florczak, 2014; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). In undertaking a mixed methods methodology, the strengths of varied methods can be maximised, while any weaknesses can also be identified and ameliorated.

A mixed methods approach has allowed some authors (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010; Merchant et al., 2014; Trivic et al., 2020) to capture information on public art project impact that considers how this is influenced by context, individual responses and personal experiences of artists, audience and researcher. This pragmatic strategy means specific problems can be explored by evaluators and researchers, such as how an increase in the number and variety of community-based arts projects have impacted specific neighbourhoods (Trivic et al., 2020), while also being useful for understanding how similar initiatives could be applied in other places or on a larger scale (Mccabe et al., 2011; Sweeney et al., 2018).

Pragmatism is the overarching theoretical approach most appropriate for this research project. As my research questions concern a highly practical problem (that of real-world public art evaluation) and are focused on the personal experiences and understandings of local authority staff members, a level of subjectivity is to be expected. The research project is also influenced strongly by my own experiences as a local government arts manager in Aotearoa, and as such my personal context inevitably influences the way this project has been designed. The following section

outlines the ways this approach was put into practice, with an explanation of tools used.

3.1.2 Methodological approach

This section will set out the methodological approach taken in this research project. Given the above grounding literature, a pragmatic mixed-methods qualitative research approach was used to investigate the research questions, which included multiple qualitative approaches as well as a supplementary questionnaire survey.

My research seeks to understand and address a practical problem: how the value measurement strategies used by local government arts managers across Aotearoa and England influence public art policy and programming. In studying what is currently taking place, specifically over the years between 2010 and 2022, and how this impacts council public art activity, the findings are intended to be useful in application by practitioners, providing a greater understanding of the variety of tools used in the field and how these can be used to support advocacy and planning within a local government context. Mixed methods research is well suited to applied projects such as this (Biddle & Schafft, 2015; Bryman, 2016; Florczak, 2014; Morgan, 2017).

As this specific PhD research project was time and resource constrained, the primary focus of this research was on specific qualitative examples from across Aotearoa and England to provide richness of understanding of the complexity of public art evaluation in local government today. Research that takes a deeper look into the questions outlined above in section 3.1, applied to a range of example councils, employed qualitative tools. The focus of qualitative methods is on meaning and understanding, and how experiences are interpreted (Merriam, 2013). Qualitative methods are ideal for exploring new or under-researched areas and elucidating connections between previously unconnected ideas or outcomes (Leavy, 2014). The diversity of qualitative enquiry methods allows for an approach tailored to the goals of the research, and new concepts based on a wide range of inputs and sources (Leavy, 2014). Qualitative tools were appropriate for this dissertation project, as the

research questions seek answers with meaning sourced from interviews and textual analysis.

The qualitative research was informed through also using an initial questionnaire survey, which was primarily quantitative in nature. The focus of quantitative methods is on collecting quantifiable data which can then be analysed statistically to inform study about a particular phenomenon (Osborne, 2011; Singh, 2015). It encompasses a set of methods that are structured and logical and is appropriate for large sample sizes where an objective answer is sought (Brannen, 2018; Singh, 2015). Quantitative results can be used to build an overarching or general picture of a situation or population, which can then be explained in further depth with additional, targeted qualitative research as I have done in this project (Morgan, 2017). As there is very little existing research on public art value measurement in a local government context in either the UK or New Zealand, it was necessary to gather some data to create a baseline understanding of the current state of practice in certain local authority and council organisations, from which further in-depth research could be built upon.

In using qualitative research, supplemented with the questionnaire survey, I have been able to provide rich contextual understanding. In many cases, quantitative methods are considered by those working in public policy as more compelling, potentially due to a perception of scientific rigour and ease of comparison or replicability (Bullock et al., 2018). Including a quantitative element has created a structured grounding of information (Bryman, 2016). Qualitative research has, in contrast, provided a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of the research questions. Of key importance is the concept of impact – specifically, the impact of value measurement strategies on public art policy and programming. This impact can be structural, for instance effects on funding and resource provision, and programming choice. It can also include the impact on the staff delivering the measurement tools, the policy analysis and design, and managing projects and programmes of public art work. Qualitative research has allowed for a greater illumination of types of impact and the connections between these different elements.

This mixed method approach has meant a range of data was collected from a broad cohort of local government organisations. In the UK the responsibility for local government arrangements is different between each devolved nation (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales), with differing responsibilities and election processes for each system (The Institute for Government, 2021). In England alone there are 343 local authorities, comprising two-tier areas where functions are shared between county councils and smaller district councils, and single-tier areas where one authority delivers the entire suite of activity. In Aotearoa there are 78 local, regional, and unitary councils who assign a similar structure of shared responsibilities to that of English local authorities. Across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland there are an additional 65 local authorities, each with their own distinctive approaches to delivering community and local services (The Institute for Government, 2021). While many councils across the entire UK generally hold some responsibility over a range of public art activities in their local area, the differing structures and legislative imperatives mean it would have been extremely complex to produce meaningful comparisons between councils selected across the entire UK as well as Aotearoa. Therefore, given this research project's time and resource restrictions, it is prudent to limit the study to investigations into selected England and Aotearoa councils.

In addition, a qualitative approach would have been enormously time-consuming if applied to all organisations across both countries, so sampling was required to ensure manageability within the scope of the PhD project. A mixed methods approach that began with a questionnaire survey meant a sampling strategy could subsequently be selected and created with criteria based on a greater level of understanding than if the further qualitative work was undertaken on its own without this groundwork. This will be explained in more detail further on in this chapter.

In triangulating the various sources of data, this research project has sought to interpret and understand the practical experiences of practitioners in local governance. It has allowed for a greater understanding of how perspectives can vary, and some of the common practices and assumptions shared by particular types of

local government organisations. Combining the methods of documentary analysis and interviews of staff members has allowed for a richness of comparison to determine whether policy and practice are in alignment in individual councils, before comparing their experience to other organisations (Bowen, 2009; Rapley, 2011a). Previous public art research demonstrates this efficacy, including McManus and Carruther's use of quantitative surveying and qualitative interviewing to gain in-depth understanding of Belfast's Cathedral Quarter regeneration (McManus & Carruthers, 2014). A mixed-method approach therefore suits the scale of this research project.

Other future research could comprise action research exercises, where public art projects are commissioned and undertaken with the aim of exploring the impact of different methods of value measurement, partnered with local authorities, and undertaken over a long term to understand the effect of implementing different evaluation tools. It could also involve collaborations with larger bodies such as Arts Councils and government ministries, to further develop specific tools to support practitioners and connect these to central policy directives. Further opportunities for research in this area, that build upon the results of this study, are noted in Chapter 7.

Given the above, this research has taken the form of a multi-phase project, first comprising a survey of practitioners working in local government public arts administration and management. This was also complemented by documentary analysis of publicly available public art policies. The information gathered from the survey informed the second phase, an analysis of selected examples from both Aotearoa and England with information sourced through documentary analysis and interviews. The next sections will detail the considerations around all research phases and methodologies.

3.3 Survey

The first stage began with a survey of staff members working in councils across Aotearoa and England. Surveys, at their most simple, are a research method where multiple people are asked the same set of questions in order to gather detailed

information about a topic (Denscombe, 2014). Surveys typically take the form of questionnaires or interviews but can also include observation of participants and documentary analysis – however, this is uncommon in small-scale research such as my own. Surveys fall into two potential categories, the first being descriptive, where researchers explore what is happening, and the second being explanatory, where researchers seek to understand why something is happening (Greenfield & Greener, 2016). As a research method, best practice surveys have a number of positive characteristics, including perceptions of empiricism, usefulness in capturing a snapshot of how the topic being investigated is currently understood, and efficiency in capturing a wide range of data (Denscombe, 2014).

The use of questionnaire surveys, as opposed to interview surveys, is appropriate as a research tool when conducted with large numbers of respondents in varying locations and contexts (Denscombe, 2014). The delivery of a questionnaire can take a variety of forms, including postal, face-to-face, telephone, email or web-based, and social networking sites, and each of these have strengths and weaknesses depending on the objectives of the research project, resources available for delivery and data analysis, participant geographic dispersion, response rate and optimal forms of contact with participants, potential disabilities of the respondents and the sensitivity of the subject being covered (Clow & James, 2014; Greenfield & Greener, 2016). This research project utilised web-based surveys, with participants invited to answer a questionnaire hosted on the Online Surveys platform supported by the University of Leeds. Web-based surveys are useful in a research project such as this, as they are time efficient, inexpensive, allow for access by participants widely spread geographically, and reduce the need for travel or paper, thereby minimising environmental impact when compared to in-person or postal questionnaires (Denscombe, 2014). They also speed up the processing of collected data, minimising data entry time by providing easily downloadable data sets.

While web-based questionnaires have strengths, they can also be inaccessible to some respondents, due to lack of internet provision, lack of comfort in using unfamiliar interfaces, or lack of appropriately designed software to allow for particular disabilities; for instance, where surveys are difficult to complete using

screen readers or don't offer plain language options (Clow & James, 2014; Olsen, n.d.; Vannette & Krosnick, 2017). They are also easy to dismiss by respondents if invitations to participate are not tailored or engaging, so response rates can be lower than methods involving face-to-face contact (Denscombe, 2014; McKinley & Rose, 2020). As the respondents to this survey were staff working in local authorities, it was assumed that given the nature of their workplaces they will be competent users of various software and have access to the internet in their workplaces. The questionnaire was designed in line with accessibility standards, ensuring that as many staff as possible would feel comfortable completing it (McKinley & Rose, 2020). Additionally, it was short, to hopefully encourage a useful response rate from staff members who are likely to be busy in their day-to-day work.

Questionnaires have been used by public art researchers and practitioners to establish the impact of specific projects or attitudes towards public art in government institutions. A 2001 study of Scottish local authority perspectives on public art found that while over half of local authorities had some kind of high level strategy that referenced public art, implementation of programmes was fragmented and there was a direct correlation between positive reception (within councils) of public art projects and the coherence of published policies (Hamilton et al., 2001). Pollock and Paddison used an email questionnaire to ground their investigation into the extent of how embedded public art is across all local authorities in the UK, finding an uneven spread of activity and discrepancies across how it is incorporated as a practice into planning (Pollock & Paddison, 2010). Multiple studies of the effect of specific projects on audiences and publics have used questionnaires as a research tool, including those in Denmark (Kortbek, 2018), Belgium and the Netherlands (Zebracki, 2013), Macau (Tang et al., 2021), the United Kingdom (Blackman, 2014; Choudhrey, 2018) and America (DeShazo & Smith, 2014). These surveys, particularly those conducted on local authorities, demonstrate the usefulness of the questionnaire format in capturing big-picture data. They also provide guidance on which departments to send requests to participate to.

As a wide range of public art roles exist within councils across both nations, it was often difficult to determine the most appropriate contact point to try and ensure

maximum engagement. For instance, some local authorities assign public art care to parks departments, while others consider public art part of community arts, culture, economic development or placemaking and planning. Contact information was sourced through council websites and existing professional networks. Where up-to-date information was not available, or it was unclear whether a council organisation had a specific staff member caring for public art activity, customer service staff were approached to direct the invitation to who they determined was most likely to be responsible. This approach had some positive results, with multiple customer service staff confirming they had sent on the invitation to participate and some noting who they had sent it to. Some frontline staff also came back asking for further clarification on what the survey would cover, so that they could attempt to make sure the email ended up in the right place. Legislation in the UK requires English councils to respond to all public requests within 20 working days, which meant that even when councils declined to participate (stating that they were not involved in any public art activity and had no remit over existing local public art collections) some noted why this was the case so I could record it. This legislative framework is not shared by Aotearoa councils, who have no obligation to respond outside of their own internal policies, meaning I did not hear back from many Aotearoa councils and am unable to determine why this might be.

The questionnaire results begin to provide an answer to the first research question, which seeks to establish what tools and methods of value measurement are currently in use. This was not particularly reliant on personal attitudes of responding staff members, ensuring stronger credibility than an opinion-oriented questionnaire might have. Responses to a questionnaire should be straightforward and collatable, so both closed and open-ended questions were designed to allow both unambiguous quantifiable answers as well as responses that provide greater insight to be subsequently coded and collated during analysis (Wolfer, 2007). Closed questions established factual baseline data, including whether there are staff roles dedicated to public art, the existence of relevant policies and strategies, and whether there are existing value measurement tools in use for public art projects. Open-ended questions included those that established types of evaluation tool, the extent of their

use, any suggestions for improved tools, perceived impact of these tools (or their lack), as well as a space for any additional comments.

3.3.1 Survey execution and responses

From June to September 2022, an invitation to participate in an online questionnaire on public art value measurement was sent to all councils across England and Aotearoa – this comprised 404 contacts. It was designed to provide baseline information on respondent councils, to begin to better understand both their specific and shared characteristics, different modes of working in the field of public art and determine which would be interested in participating in future, more in-depth research.

Of the 404 councils surveyed across both nations, 27 fully completed responses were received. This amounts to a 7% response rate. Additionally, 10 councils also responded to the invitation to state that they were not involved in any public art activity so would not be able to complete the survey – if these are also taken as responses (as their answers, while negative, do provide useful information around the context of public art production and management in their regions) this makes a response rate of 9.2%.

The survey population was deliberately large. A list of councils was prepared from databases made available by each country's local government body – the Local Government Association in England, and Local Government New Zealand in Aotearoa. Instead of selecting a representative sample from these lists of councils to approach, I decided to instead invite them all. While this required spending time to prepare a long custom mailing list, as I was sourcing contact information for specific staff at each organisation (where possible), it meant that responses were received from organisations that may not otherwise have been selected as part of a sample.

Surveys as a method often require a target population to be selectively sampled. This is because it is typically impractical to survey an entire set of potential respondents – if a target population is very large, this would be costly to deliver and difficult to analyse efficiently (Kalton, 2011). However, when the pool of potential respondents

is small, it can be possible to survey all members, and this can provide useful or surprising results (Henry, 2014). As I was able to source some basic contact information for all councils across both countries, I was not limited by decision-making around additional criteria for sampling.

Additionally, I began the questionnaire phase with a range of assumptions about the potential answers, and in approaching all councils as potential respondents I was able to counter my own potential implicit bias and open up conversations with staff from councils that were not already either in my own networks or those in my broader contact lists. There is no formal national body in either the UK or Aotearoa for public art workers in local government, and the UK's national organisation for public art (Ixia) is currently inactive. I was also unable to find contact lists or databases for public art workers more broadly, either informally (through those working in the field already) or formally (collated by central government bodies or local government associations). This lack means that there is a dearth of centralised communications potential, and many council public art workers are operating with small informal networks. A lack of large-scale baseline information meant that my own survey was an opportunity to initiate conversations with those who may feel disconnected from their peers nationally and internationally, and access perspectives of those who may not be part of smaller informal networks already.

There are potential negative aspects of 'census sampling', where an entire research population is surveyed. Due to the scale of the number of potential responses, it can be difficult to follow-up on non-responses or encourage greater levels of participation (Henry, 2014). When a sample of a population is surveyed, it can be more manageable to build engagement in the project. This survey's relatively low response rate could potentially be attributed to my lack of capacity to follow-up each non-respondent individually.

3.3.2 Response rate

The overall response rate was at 9.2% (including those who responded with information about why they had declined to participate), but this was not unexpected. As I sent an approach to all councils, the invitation was likely to be unsuitable for

many organisations who do not participate in public art activity – it is often customary that local government bodies have some involvement in public art, but this is not required by either country. As noted above, I received responses from multiple councils stating that they did not do any public art work – in many cases, this was true, such as in the case of regional councils in New Zealand, which have a very specific legislative remit that specifies their responsibility for regional infrastructure (there are 11 regional councils in Aotearoa) (LGNZ, 2020). Others noted in email responses that their local public art collections were managed and maintained by independent charitable bodies or private organisations and did not receive any financial or other support from local government bodies. Additionally, some councils responded that they were too small to have the capacity to manage or contribute to public art activity in their regions, and others that there was simply no public art in their area. With regards to those last respondents, I suspect that there may sometimes be council involvement in public art, but it could be very small-scale and restricted to activities such as community grant funding or planning permissions, and so would not always register as part of day-to-day work with the frontline customer service staff who in some cases received my email invitation.

Additionally, the survey software I used allows for monitoring the numbers of respondents who view or add information to different pages of the survey, but don't submit answers. Interestingly, the first page of the survey (which contained information about the project) had 134 views, indicating that staff received the invitation to participate, viewed the information, and decided to not continue with the survey. While it is not possible to confirm the reasons this might be, it is possible that many of the viewing staff felt that the project was not relevant to them (for instance, if their council was not involved in any public art activity).

Some of the non-responses may also have been caused by the lack of definitions I provided to council respondents, particularly around what constitutes 'public art activity'. I did not include a definitions list within the invitation or survey information page, deciding that respondents would have their own understanding or organisational definition of the term 'public art' and apply it to the survey. I received a response from one participant asking for clarification on the definition of public art

covered by the survey, as they were not sure who had responsibility within their council, and when I provided this, they were then more comfortable completing the questionnaire and able to give detailed information across a range of areas after consulting other staff.

The definition of public art formats that I gave this participant is as follows:

> *"... includes the typical forms of sculpture/memorials/street art, but can also include public creative festivals or events, temporary installations, or community arts activities. It also crosses into urban design and architecture, where this involves artists or designers doing specialised or custom work in the public realm."*

They followed up their survey response to note that given this definition, there was something of a division within their council around responsibility for public art, with long-term physical public artworks generally being part of significant capital projects and where these are council-managed, oversight from elected members and public consultation formed part of the development process. In these cases, capital projects teams or planners were involved in the process too. However, temporary performances, festivals and community arts in public spaces were the remit of an events team and this formed the majority of their council's public art activity.

There were 16 completed questionnaire responses from English councils and nine from New Zealand ones. There were an additional two responses which did not state their country of origin; one is likely to be from New Zealand based on the timestamp of when it was completed, and the other included contact information for an English council. When compared to the size of each nation's overall target study population (333 English councils and 78 in Aotearoa), this meant a slightly higher response rate from New Zealand councils (5% of English councils as opposed to 13% of Aotearoa ones). As a significant reason for conducting the survey was to better understand who would provide useful information in more depth in the case study phase, the fairly low response rate does not mean it was not successful. Instead, I have been

able to better understand respondents' specific perspectives and have built on this later in the research project, as detailed later in this chapter.

The response rate is typical of web-based surveys (Moore & Varghese, 2019; Rindfuss et al., 2015). They are, by nature, successful only when the respondent volunteers their engagement and in target populations such as council staff, invitees are typically time-poor and busy with their day-to-day work, meaning that when a questionnaire appears in their inbox, they may not feel compelled to participate (Moore & Varghese, 2019). A low response rate can also contribute to 'nonresponse error', where those who don't respond are not represented in the data and therefore conclusions reached by researchers through generalising data gathered can be biased or misconstrued (Dutwin & Buskirk, 2017). However, a low response rate does not mean it is not a useful or valid response rate, depending on the conditions and purpose of the research it is part of (Rindfuss et al., 2015). In the case of this research project, the survey provides a range of baseline information which can then be interrogated in more detail further as part of the later phases of research. It also successfully gathered responses from a range of councils willing to participate in this further research, allowing me to pursue a purposive sampling strategy during the next phase.

Most respondents were from Councils serving populations of between 100,000 and 200,000. There were two respondents from 500,000+ population counts, and none from under 10,000.

3.3.3 Questionnaire design

The survey consisted of 17 primary questions, 12 of which gather data on the research topic (the others elicit geographic location and council population size information or contact details). A full list of questions contained within the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2, and full analysis of responses can be found in later chapters. However, it is worth noting some of the decisions made around question design in this section.

Of particular importance is the set of questions around value. This point of enquiry was designed to begin to answer my first research question:

1. What strategies and tools are currently used to measure the value of public art activity by local government arts managers in Aotearoa and England?

This questionnaire at this point did not define the types of value that were measured, or what was considered 'valuable', instead requiring a simple yes or no. The questionnaire was intended to be simple and quick to fill in, to maximise response rate. As it was unlikely to receive a high response rate, and results were not intended to be generalised, I deliberately chose to limit wordiness and detailed explanations of terms to encourage participation and completion of the survey. This meant I did not explain that value measurement could include informal and anecdotal value measurement (for instance, conversational reflections on projects or council staff reading comments on social media but not recording them formally). This was deliberate, as these issues were intended to be discussed in greater depth in subsequent phases of this research, with more nuance than there was room for in the questionnaire.

The next question asked those who answered positively to the previous question, exactly which values are currently measured. The list of values was prepared following an initial literature review, which looked at existing research to determine what value types are of interest to researchers and practitioners, and then categorised these into five classifications of value – economic, social, education, health and wellbeing, and inherent artistic value. My literature research noted that many of these are expansive categories, and most are interconnected, but to simplify this questionnaire the categories were defined as such and then examples were provided to demonstrate what is meant by these categorisations:

- Economic value: tourism growth, economic output (such as increased housing prices, higher local sales turnover, hospitality spend), employment, return on investment, poverty statistics, sustainability, urban regeneration

- Social value: short- and long-term community development, social inclusion, political engagement, crime and public safety, personal development, access to resources and facilities, placemaking

- Education value: public pedagogy, formal and informal education, engagement with the education system, engagement with civic identity and local community heritage, effects on education outcomes, enhanced visual literacy

- Health and wellbeing value: accessibility, contribution to positive mental and physical health outcomes

- Inherent artistic value: conceptual rigour, aesthetic enjoyment, critical reception, innovation, technical expertise

Respondents were also given the opportunity to add a category if they determined this list did not include another type of value. One respondent stated that they considered 'cultural value' sat outside of this framework and should form its own category, aligning with literature that describes the specificity of Māori cultural value (Harvey, 2019; Heta-Lensen & Wrightson, 2019). They described cultural value as being measured through results of engagement with iwi [large Māori extended family unit] partners, which saw increased visibility and participation in Māori creative practice.

3.3.4 Limitations

The questionnaire was designed to be short to encourage participation by busy council staff. As such, it did not go into great detail or examine key terms in depth. This has meant that the nuances of what different councils understand by the term 'value' as it applies to their public art work may not all have been captured. This was partly mediated through a preliminary review of various council public art policies before the questionnaire was designed, so that language and stated values could be included in descriptions of categories of value, and a subsequent review of further public art policies that are publicly available following the questionnaire. However, it was understood that the data captured on definitions of value would be broader in this phase of the research – instead, in the latter research phase, one-on-one interviews allowed me to interrogate what council staff understood by 'value' and in

their own words describe what public art does and means to them in their working contexts. In the analysis, this has been compared with, where they are available, descriptions of value in public art and broader cultural policy documents. While this research project has made ample use of the data gathered in this stage, which has provided useful opportunities to both triangulate other data and purposively select case studies to participate in subsequent stages, there are opportunities in future research to change the method of approach to local authorities to build a more significant quantitative data set on public art in local government today. This would complement and update research undertaken by Hamilton et al. in the early 2000s on Scottish local authority approaches to public art practice, providing a practical contemporary understanding of attitudes and challenges in the field.

3.3.5 Ethics

Ethical approval for this phase of the research project was sought through and provided by the School of Business, Environment and Social Services (AREA) Committee at the University of Leeds. This application took place before any contact was made with potential participants.

For the questionnaire phase, a plain language statement was presented to all participants alongside their invitation to take part, which detailed the purpose of the research, the methodology, and potential risks with being involved in the project. Informed consent was obtained from individuals, and this also confirmed that they are authorised to share information by their council workplaces and were participating willingly and voluntarily. At this stage, the benefits of participation involved in the research were also presented, which aligns with best practice questionnaire delivery (Denscombe, 2014). The time and effort given by respondents should be rewarded by a useful presentation of research that benefits the practitioners involved through sharing of experiences, tools, and other relevant outputs.

Participants were informed that while it is assumed that this research topic and line of enquiry would not risk their wellbeing, there was the possibility that even innocuous questions could cause questionnaire responders to feel strong emotions. Given this, the questions were designed to elicit factual, public information on public

art value measurement used within each organisation. Participants were not likely to be from vulnerable groups, and the questions did not cover sensitive topics or be deceptive or involve confidential information (Denscombe, 2014). However, there is a small risk that the publication of findings may have repercussions for respondents if the data shows something embarrassing for their wider organisation or if they reveal information which was meant to be for internal release only. To ameliorate these concerns, it was made clear that data collected at this stage will be presented anonymously in the final written output. By removing identifying data, any information that could potentially damage the reputation of individual councils would not be attached to specific institutions.

At this stage I also provided a statement on my own positionality as a researcher. This acknowledged my connection to the University of Leeds, my status as being funded by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, and my own background as both a researcher and a practitioner in the field of local government public art management. It did not note my social characteristics, as a Pākeha [New Zealand European] woman, as for this phase of research this level of detail would have been unlikely to provide useful context for respondents.

Existing public art scholarship has informed the above ethical considerations. In particular, the work of Meyrick and Barnett, who interrogate new approaches to public art and value in the face of a range of crises within the arts sector, guided a research design that sought to capture not only the current utility of value in a local government setting, but also the political and ethical considerations that capturing value holds (Meyrick & Barnett, 2021). In creating a questionnaire for councils, the work of Hamilton et. al. has helped inform the ethical design of questions, providing an existing example of appropriate content and a barometer for what local government staff consider appropriate to answer (Hamilton et al., 2001).

3.4 Public art policy analysis

To complement the questionnaire, documentary analysis was conducted on a range of publicly accessible public art policies from across Aotearoa and England. This

included documents linked by questionnaire participants, where applicable, but also comprised policy documents sourced from council websites from non-participating councils.

The purpose of this was twofold. Firstly, as the questionnaire method had a limited response rate, I was aware that there were some notable gaps in respondent qualities – for instance, some councils with a strong reputation for public art had not responded, and there was fairly low representation from large sized councils. In sourcing additional public art policies, I was able to partially address these gaps by analysing policies to extrapolate out information that aligned with the questions asked in the survey, particularly around public art definitions and approaches to value. Additionally, by accessing public art policies from a selection of additional councils, I was able to build a greater picture of how councils across both nations understood and operationalised public art value, as this was typically outlined in their policy documentation.

This review of policy documents constitutes documentary analysis. Analysis of documentary research allows for appraisal of large amounts of data (Denscombe, 2014). It also provides researchers with an opportunity to become familiar with an organisation prior to further detailed investigations, such as interviews or focus groups. The term 'document' can describe any form of written and visual documents intended to be read (Rapley, 2011a). In analysing documents, it is important to focus not only on what is stated and how this is developed, but also what is omitted from a text (Rapley, 2011b). How documents are structured and how the authors have organised content also provides important context for understanding (Lichtman, 2017). Documents may provide only a fragmentary understanding of an issue, as not all things are recorded and not all documents are accessible or comprehensive (Prior, 2008). Readers also bring their own bias and understanding when reading a text, including researchers (Bowen, 2009). Therefore, it is necessary to utilise documentary research as a method in conjunction with other forms of enquiry, mediating its potential weaknesses by incorporating analysis into a wider understanding of an issue as opposed to simply examining content (Bowen, 2009; Lichtman, 2017). In this project, this phase of documentary analysis directly

complements the questionnaire approach, allowing for analysis of both sets of information.

3.4.1 Sampling

The publicly available policies were selected in a non-random, purposive way. Purposive sampling describes a non-probabilistic method where participants are selected based on the potential richness of information that can be gathered from their involvement, tying their selection to the central purpose of the research (Denscombe, 2014; Guest et al., 2017). It is a successful sampling method when a researcher has existing knowledge about the population to be studied, and is therefore able to select participants based on who will provide valuable data (Guest et al., 2017). Purposive sampling requires researchers to develop selection criteria for inclusion or exclusion (Daniel, 2014). In previous public art scholarship, purposive sampling has allowed researchers to select subjects who can provide rich data, be it in the case of interviews or focus groups to understand audience experiences (Morea, 2020; Zebracki, 2012) or to select interviewees from key local businesses to understand the impact of regeneration funding (McManus & Carruthers, 2014). In this instance, it allowed me to select publicly available policies from councils that, despite colloquial reputations for strength in public art activity, had not participated in the questionnaire. It also allowed me to capture a broader sample of different policy document types, including developer guidance notes, arts and culture strategies, and dedicated public art policies.

In total, I analysed 29 public art policy documents – 12 from Aotearoa, and 17 from England. This included both those that had been linked to in the questionnaire responses, where applicable, as well as those from non-respondents to the questionnaire. Additional policy documents were also reviewed informally throughout the research process, comprising an additional two from Aotearoa and 12 from England (which were out of date and no longer in use by their respective councils), as well as others from UK devolved nations, Canada, and Australia, which did not fall into the contemporary scope of this study but added to my understanding of trends in public art policy.

Actual analysis methods are detailed in the following 'Analysis' subsection later in this chapter.

3.4.2 Ethics

This research method did not involve any direct contact with human participants. As such, it did not require ethical approval from the university.

The inclusion of public art policies from both those that did and didn't complete the questionnaire had the additional benefit of assisting in anonymising research participants, as excerpts from all policies are from those that are publicly available, and I have made it clear that their policy inclusion in this project does not mean that they participated in the other empirical research phases.

Following the initial analysis of questionnaire responses, and corresponding analysis of publicly available public art policy documents, I then proceeded to the case study phase. The next section will outline the design of this research.

3.5 Case studies

At the broadest definitional level, case studies are an empirical research method that seek to examine the real world presentation or application of a problem or theory (Scholz & Tietje, 2002). They are made up of an examination of a small number of cases (one or more, but not large scale), which are observed in depth to draw out new understandings about the empirical results and their consequent relationship with abstract conceptual theories (Blatter, 2012). For the purposes of this research, a case study is understood in the same terms described by Cresswell, who states:

> "Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audio-visual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes."

<div align="right">(Cresswell, 2013, p. 97)</div>

The following sections outline the different data collection methods used underneath the umbrella of the qualitative case study approach. It outlines how the specific cases were selected, how interviews and documentary analysis were conducted, and discusses the ethical review process.

3.5.1 Sampling

As noted in the introduction to this section, case studies allow for in-depth exploration of processes and interconnected complexities in a specific example (Somekh and Lewin, 2011). Case studies must focus on a self-contained entity that has a distinctive identity which can be clearly defined (Denscombe, 2014). The detail allowed for in case study research means the complexities of a research enquiry can be unravelled and better understood than research providing oversight of many different contexts (Denscombe, 2014; Yin, 2014). In selecting case studies, this nature of case studies as a methodological approach must be considered, as the selection of cases is critical for its success.

Using the results of the first survey stage, case studies from respondents across Aotearoa and England were selected using purposive sampling, and formally approached for their permission to take part. As noted in the above section on public art policy analysis, purposive sampling has several benefits. In the case of my own research project, it allowed for flexibility to determine which case studies were most appropriate based on the results of the initial survey, which provided baseline information on which local authorities were likely to provide the greatest depth of information, as well as determining which would be amenable to being involved in further research.

There were three case participant councils chosen from each country. This number was determined by opportunities discovered during the survey, schedule constraints, and the volume of data available. The use of multiple case studies, as opposed to singular, allows for a rich source of data that demonstrates both individual, unique experiences as well as a dialogue between cases. It can also provide a compelling argument in the results, as in-depth information about a topic from multiple sources is able to be robustly evidenced (Simons, 2014; Yin, 2014). Multiple case studies can

be selected in various ways, but must all be connected by a singular concept. In this instance, each council is connected through their work in public art value measurement, and by exploring the different relationships each organisation has with evaluation, and how this influences their work, this research project presents an understanding of how this impacts public art activity in multiple local government contexts (Stake, 2006). As such, it was most useful to include case studies that have a range of approaches to evaluation, as well as case studies that have other differing characteristics such as organisational size, budget, cultural context, and legislative environment. This informed my purposive sampling strategy outlined above.

Case studies do have some potential disadvantages. As single case studies can be difficult to produce generalisations from, multiple case studies can be used to create comparative richness that increases the credibility of conclusions reached (Denscombe, 2014). This project seeks to provide a range of perspectives and examples of public art evaluation in local government settings, and therefore the use of a single study would be limiting so multiple case studies will be utilised. However, researchers must be clear in demonstrating the limitations of any generalisations reached and what boundaries were considered. It can also be difficult to negotiate access to case study examples, which in this instance was local authorities and councils across Aotearoa and England. As these are public organisations, often with time-poor staff, ensuring permissions were given and access to people and material was not a burden was carefully considered in all elements of the research design and approach to participants.

3.5.2 Documentary analysis

The case study phase began with documentary analysis, to inform me as a researcher on the specific context of each case prior to later interview stages. As in the previous research phase, documentary analysis was the method chosen to both appraise the range of written information available from councils around the subject of public art and value. It also allowed me to build a level of understanding of the council prior to interviews with staff members. As documents may only provide a partial understanding of the issue at hand (Prior, 2008), this method was undertaken both prior to the interview phase (to ensure that interviews would be most productive,

through addressing questions that arose upon review of documents) as well as following (with documents provided to me after interviews took place).

In this research project, a range of document types were analysed to provide data for each case study. These included official documents such as policy documentation, council reports, web pages, and social media, and informal material such as emails or those created during workshops, such as notes or charts (Coffey, 2020). Much of this information is publicly available, given local governance organisations' adherence to relevant laws concerning official information. The availability of online documentation concerning value measurement tools, policy development and project records was limited in some locations, with hard copy records not always digitised. Hard copy records were subsequently accessed through working alongside public art management staff during in-person visits.

3.5.3 Interviews

As part of the case study approach, I conducted nine interviews with ten public art managers, administrators, and elected members at six selected council organisations. Interviews allow researchers to investigate core issues in depth, probing the motivations of interviewees, asking follow-up questions efficiently, and uncovering greater detail than that which might be achieved through other methods (Simons, 2014). While documentary analysis relies on understanding what has been written or recorded, interviews rely on what people tell researchers (Denscombe, 2014). In combining the two methods, a rich comparison can be made between what is formally published as well as nuanced understanding of how decisions have been made. This means they are appropriate for capturing what individuals say they do and believe, as well as their understood experiences of wider phenomena – in the case of this research project, their understanding of how particular evaluation tools have evolved, been used, and how this has influenced wider programmes of public art activity and public art policy within their organisations. Transcripts of interviews can be analysed following the original conversation and can also prompt further reflections by interviewees (Simons, 2014). Interviews are also useful for gaining insight into complex issues, including how factors are connected and how particular contexts influence the viability of certain assumptions (Denscombe, 2014).

Interviews allow for a significant body of pertinent information to be gathered over a short period of time. However, interviews are typically an expensive research method, often requiring travel costs when participants are located in various cities or countries, and are time-consuming to conduct and analyse (Denscombe, 2014). During this research project, interviews took place either over video conference or in person, depending on the status of coronavirus restrictions which impacted in-person meetings and opportunities to travel, as well as the preferences of participating staff. Digital fieldwork was conducted in the United Kingdom (where, at the time, participants were working mostly from home), and in-person fieldwork in Aotearoa (where participants were working in central council offices).

In contrast to the initial questionnaire phase of this research, interviews employed the use of open-ended questions. A semi-structured approach was utilised, which meant that a list of topics and questions were prepared before the interview but that there was also flexibility in terms of their order and the scope of what the interviewee chose to share (Denscombe, 2014; Simons, 2014). These questions were designed following the initial documentary analysis stage, which meant that questions were relevant and tailored to each situation, while still capturing consistent themes such as the types of tools used, the impact this has on policy and programming, perceived gaps in information, the types of value important to staff and councils, and any pressures that are preventing practitioners from implementing their desired evaluation strategies. This allowed the participants to elaborate on ideas and issues, as well as providing me with opportunities to probe particular points that were unexpected (Stake, 2006). Combined with documentary analysis, particular examples were then examined during analysis to gain a richness of understanding. The results of this analysis will be outlined in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

3.5.4 Ethics

Similarly to the questionnaire phase, ethical approval for both the documentary analysis section and the interview phase was sought through the School of Business, Environment and Social Services (AREA) Committee at the University of Leeds prior to any contact with participants. Participants were provided with information

sheets outlining the scope of the research project, my position as a researcher, details on anonymity and consent, and how the research data will be stored. They were also provided with a consent form to fill in, ensuring that permission to take part was received from both the individual staff members involved as well as their wider workplaces.

As case study participants were selected from the respondents to the original questionnaire, there was an existing familiarity with the research project and its aims and background. However, as this phase required a significantly more in-depth commitment from participants, it was essential that they receive benefits from taking part in this subsequent phase. I therefore made sure they were aware that I would share analysed results once they are published. There may also have been positive feelings that arose from the ability to share experiences and views, as well as the chance to contribute to the wider field of studies in public art evaluation. One participant noted that having the opportunity to discuss this part of their work was a welcome opportunity for reflection that is not always possible during the pressures of day-to-day work.

Some participants shared data that could make them easily identifiable in the published output, such as the defining characteristics of projects or local authority organisations (such as geographical location, size, or well-known projects where evaluation has played a key role). During the writing up phase I have endeavoured to ensure that anonymity is maintained, but did also include this potentiality in the participant information sheet so they are aware of its possibility before they consented to interviews (Byrne, 2016). Unlike the first questionnaire phase, where data was easily anonymised, this required a tailored approach and meant that some of the specific details of information shared cannot be included in the results chapters.

When meeting in person for interviews, careful consideration was given to ensuring this takes place in locations that are safe, ensure the privacy of the participant is respected, and comfortable (McKinley & Rose, 2020). In-person interviews all took place at council offices, or in council facilities. For some interviewees, their

individual council Covid-19 restrictions meant in-person meetings at council buildings were not possible – in these cases, we pivoted to video meetings instead.

When conducting interviews or analysing internal organisational documents, it is important to recognise the potential effect of the identity of the researcher on the information gathered. Respondents may behave or communicate differently depending on how they perceive the interviewer, for instance their perceptions around age, sex, academic standing or potential biases (Denscombe, 2014). This is less critical when the subject being discussed is not personal or sensitive, as was the case in this research project (Anderson & Corneli, 2020). To ameliorate potential reluctance to share personal insights by staff members from participating case study organisations, I ensured I use a professional tone, communicated the institutional and academic context of the research project, and shared my own professional background to demonstrate understanding of challenges inherent within the process of evaluating public art in the field.

All original data was protected and backed up, as it is irreplaceable. The backups have been stored separately to the originals, in a safe location. A full data management plan was produced and submitted alongside my application for ethical approval. This was informed by guidance from the University of Leeds Library (n.d.) and best practice principles outlined by Denscombe (2014), LEARN (2017) and Clare et al. (2011). Electronic data has been stored on the University of Leeds SAN (Storage Area Network), which comprises enterprise level disk storage and file servers located in physically secure data centres with appropriate fire suppression equipment.

Audio recordings from interviews required transcription and annotation. For the first interview stage of the research the raw data took the form of an audio or video recording, depending on whether interviews took place in-person or over video call, as well as what participants consented to. These were then transcribed. Both the recordings and transcriptions have been backed up securely. For data analysis of these interviews, I used a full verbatim transcript of the session.

3.6 Analysis

Analysis of data collected during all research phases was informed by a grounded theory approach. This form of analysis builds up new understandings based on the collection of empirical research, with conclusions emerging from data rather than data being collected to support a previously defined theory. It focuses on generating results rather than testing theories, and as such connects assumptions made by researchers to practical, real-world situations (Denscombe, 2014). It is appropriate for research that is qualitative, exploratory, small-scale and that involves fieldwork elements (Denscombe, 2014). The outputs developed should be practical in nature and useful for practitioners, which closely aligns with the overarching concept of pragmatism identified earlier in this chapter. Critically, a grounded theory approach is strongly associated with qualitative data analysis. Previous public art and cultural value researchers have utilised grounded theory analysis, including Zebracki (2012), Walmsley (2018), Farley (2018), and Blackman (2014), resulting in research that elucidates new understandings supported by rich data. Crucially, this thesis is empirically informed and grounded in the experiences of real-world practitioners.

Denscombe writes that qualitative data analysis "can take a number of forms, reflecting the particular kind of data being used and the particular purposes for which they are being studied" (2010, 272). As such, there is no straightforward approach to the process of analysis. A general principle is that the analysis is an iterative exercise, where data collection and analysis phases occur together, and can help inform one another. The analysis is also inductive, whereby it moves from the particulars and individual pieces of data to more generalised statements around the topic. Finally, qualitative data analysis is researcher-centred, as the values and experiences of the researcher inform and influence the analysis. As such, my positionality as a researcher is clearly stated early in this thesis, and I have reflected on my own positionality throughout conducting the analysis.

By triangulating multiple sources of data, namely the initial survey results, documentary analysis and interviews, underneath the case study research approach, a valid and robust collection of information has been conducted. This project utilised a

systematic coding process that categorised information gathered from various documentation (Reed et al., 2021). Initially, it was first important to become familiar with the data collected. This included questionnaire responses, interview transcripts, field notes and documentary texts. Once a researcher is familiar with all data gathered, they can begin to identify emergent themes (Denscombe, 2014). As these themes are refined and further subcategories and emergent possibilities discovered, it is important to note these developments down to understand the process of conclusions reached and how analysis decisions have been made. Once these themes were identified, data was coded – first by identifying what size units will be coded (in this project, this meant individual words, phrases and larger chunks of information), then initial codes were assigned and categorised into typologies, allowing responses to be linked within and across case studies (Denscombe, 2014). This process was reiterated and refined, eventually resulting in the emergence of key concepts which are the foundation of arguments and theories in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

A grounded theory approach can be complex, and it is important to be explicit that the conclusions I have reached are abstracted from the data and limited case studies of investigation. I have not sought to produce broad generalisations.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodological approach I have taken for this research project. It outlines the pragmatic, mixed-methods framework with which I investigated the research questions, and the grounded theory approach taken to guide analysis and generate new understandings. It justifies the decisions made to settle upon these research methods and notes why these were determined to be most appropriate in comparison to other available methods and theoretical paradigms.

The following chapters will present my findings from the research conducted.

4. Appreciating value: local authorities and perceptions of the value of public art

This chapter investigates the meaning of 'value' for local government staff in their work with public art. It argues that there is no unified, universal practical working definition of the value of public art among the examples examined across England and Aotearoa. Instead, each council typically identifies a range of instrumental values that public art can serve in their communities, including economic growth, community development, enhanced wellbeing for local populations, and education offerings. Council staff feel strongly about the value public art holds for communities, but they operate in challenging political and management environments that don't always reflect their personal convictions. This aligns with wider trends in cultural policymaking, noted in Chapter 2, towards the use of arts and culture as an instrumental tool for change in areas such as community or economic development (Belfiore, 2020; Newsinger & Green, 2016; Walmsley, 2013). While enriching existing literature on cultural policy and value through providing specific information on the value of public art, this chapter also creates a new and nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities in creating public art value through the lens of local government – most significantly, that the value interests of multiple stakeholders are juggled by council staff in their approaches to evaluation, and that a wide range of instrumental values are incorporated into council policy documents.

To answer the research questions for this project it is necessary to refer to explorations in Chapter 2 of what is theoretically and practically meant by the term 'value'. Value is a difficult and slippery term and as such can mean different things in different contexts (Meyrick & Barnett, 2021). This is certainly true for its use in arts and culture (Brown & Novak-Leonard, 2013; Matthews & Gadaloff, 2022), as well as local authorities (Shakaa, 2023). This chapter will therefore interrogate the connections between theoretical concepts of value and public art, as noted in the literature review, and the practical realities of work in this space for council staff and

how this affects their, and their organisations', understandings of the value of public art. The results of the empirical research in this chapter document real-world, practical perceptions and understandings of public art value by practitioners in local authority settings. This will then lead into further chapters that examine value measurement tools and strategies, and the impact of value on public art activity and wider cultural policy development.

A two-nation questionnaire of local authorities provides an initial overview of attitudes towards types of value, whether there are formally ratified or agreed documents to support these definitions within respondent councils, and some of the challenges staff experience in working in a council public art context when communicating value. These challenges include lack of resources to support evaluation, lack of training, and lack of management support for public art activity.

A set of six case studies, comprising three councils from both England and Aotearoa, provides more in-depth data on how public art professionals in local government perceive the value of public art, as well as the different 'types' of value that they and their organisations ascribe to public art. These case studies demonstrate a range of both commonalities and differences in approaches to public art value between councils and begin to show trends in the ways councils perceive and use value within their policymaking context and how this is operationalised.

This chapter begins to examine the results of the questionnaire, documentary analysis, and interviews with council public art staff. Firstly, results of the questionnaire of local authorities across Aotearoa and England are interrogated, where specific questions gather information on value as it relates to public art work undertaken by and with councils. Secondly, it also examines the value of public art as perceived by councils, where interviews with key staff and examinations of documentary evidence have informed a more nuanced understanding of public art's value in those unique case study contexts. It will synthesize the outputs of these two research approaches, providing insight into trends around the value of public art in a council setting and connecting these to the wider context of theoretical and practical cultural value measurement.

4.1 Introduction to Council Approaches to Public Art Value

This section argues that local authorities perceive the value of public art in layered, instrumental ways. In drawing on the results of a two-nation questionnaire, alongside publicly available public art policies, it demonstrates that councils use public art as a tool to achieve value for their communities in areas such as economic value, social value, education value, environmental value, health and wellbeing value. In their answers, participants also recognise the inherent value of public art.

The first section of this part of the chapter will provide detail on the questionnaire results. The following will add to this via analysis of public art policies to form an understanding of typologies of and definitions value, as described by councils for their work in public art.

4.1.1 Background

As noted in Chapter 2, existing baseline research information on council attitudes towards public art value is limited. To address this, this section analyses questionnaire responses around the subject of public art value. The following analysis of the survey questions specifically concerns value and its interpretation by respondent council staff members. It also includes cross-references with publicly available public art and cultural policy documents from a range of councils across both England and Aotearoa (not only those who responded to the questionnaire). This section argues that a range of instrumental values for public art are identified by council staff in both practice and policy. These identified values demonstrate a broad understanding of the potential value of public art and show that public art practitioners in a local government setting have identified public art as a possible tool for achieving broader council aims.

Change in broader policy emphasis across government departments since the 1990s has seen greater direction from central government towards local authorities in regards to areas such as education outcomes, social cohesion, and access, which has provided opportunities for arts and culture to demonstrate their contributions to these

policy aims (Belfiore, 2016; Davies, 2001; Throsby, 2010). This shift towards a focus on instrumental value, and the general trends in both central and local government cultural policy towards using the arts to further a broader agenda, has informed the structure of these findings. The ways public art is used in service to create value for other policy directives is what will be examined in the below sections, providing new insights into the use of public art that ultimately align with broader research on the value of culture for governmental policymakers.

Specific survey design considerations were previously given in Chapter 3. In this section, responses to questions concerning understandings of value and how this applies to public art in a council setting are highlighted and analysed.

The first question in the survey to begin gathering data on the topic of public art value was:

- Do you currently measure the value of public art projects or programmes supported by your Council?

This questionnaire at this point did not define value as a term, introduce categories of value, or what was considered 'valuable', instead requiring a simple yes or no. Results showed that eight councils currently measure the value of public art, while 19 do not currently measure the value of public art.

Of the respondents that did not currently measure the value of public art, 10 had in place some kind of public art policy. These included councils with public art policies from the 1990s and first years of the 2000s, who noted that their policies were old but still in use, as well as councils with broader arts and culture plans of which public art formed a small component. For one council, their arts and culture strategy was newly adopted when the questionnaire was completed, meaning they had not yet enacted the specific evaluation regime outlined in the policy (however, this did not include specific measures around public art, so even once this was put in place, they would not have specific public art monitoring and measurement being done). For another, their policy covered both community and public art and while it outlined aspirations for public art in its region, it did not include specific mechanisms for

ensuring these outcomes – rather, it provided a framework for decision-making should public art opportunities arise. This did not include a measuring or monitoring framework. Two of the documents provided by respondents were guidance notes for developers and as such outlined the council's expectations for public art and its understandings of value, but did not include value measurement tools, perhaps because they were not the deliverers of the work. What these questionnaire results do not elucidate is the reasoning behind why evaluation is not currently taking place. However, all these documents include descriptions of the value of public art for councils, and demonstrate that their councils, at least at the time the policy was ratified, expected to be involved in the management and production of public artwork in their regions.

The respondents that confirmed they do measure the value of public art were from councils that serve populations from 50,000 people up to those that represent up to 500,000 people. Only three of the respondents overall were from councils smaller or larger than this range. This size range is also associated with large differences in funding. Councils in England are funded through a mixture of council tax (applied to those living in properties in their districts), business rates (which are applied to businesses operating in their districts) and central government grants (which have fallen markedly as a total percentage of overall council income since 2010, in particular for more deprived local authorities) (Atkins & Hoddinott, 2020). Given this, the budgets of the respondent councils vary dramatically and therefore their ability to resource public art activity, including undertaking value measurement. These contrasts will be explored further in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

4.1.2 Types of value
The next question expanded on different types of value and provided examples of tools and methodologies that might form part of existing toolkits used by council staff.

- Economic value: tourism growth, economic output (such as increased housing prices, higher local sales turnover, hospitality spend), employment, return on investment, poverty statistics, sustainability, urban regeneration

- Social value: short- and long-term community development, social inclusion, political engagement, crime and public safety, personal development, access to resources and facilities, placemaking

- Education value: public pedagogy, formal and informal education, engagement with the education system, engagement with civic identity and local community heritage, effects on education outcomes, enhanced visual literacy.

- Health and wellbeing value: accessibility, contribution to positive mental and physical health outcomes

- Inherent artistic value: conceptual rigour, aesthetic enjoyment, critical reception, innovation, technical expertise

Respondents were also given the opportunity to add a category if they determined this list did not include another type of value. One Aotearoa-based respondent stated that they considered 'cultural value' sat outside of this set of examples and should form its own category. They described cultural value as something specific to Māori, that could be measured through results of engagement with iwi [tribal group] partners, which would see increased visibility and participation in Māori creative practice. This is aligned with literature on the specificities of Māori cultural and artistic practice, which clearly defines the significance of Māori cultural values (Ellis, 2016; Gentry, 2015; Harvey, 2019; Heta-Lensen & Wrightson, 2019).

Of those eight responding councils who do currently measure value, two answered that they measure all the stated value typologies. One of these respondents was from Aotearoa, while one was from England. This is a wide range of instrumental values, presenting the types of value ascribed to public art typically through existing public art policies (Auckland Council, 2013; Birmingham City Council, 2015; Cheltenham Borough Council, 2017; Creative Process, 2009; Wellington City Council, 2012) as well as research literature (Arts Council England, 2015; Belfiore, 2015; Bosco et al., 2019; Gillam, 2018; Selwood, 1995). It is notable that these respondents include

measures for inherent value – many of the reviewed public art policy documents include mention of ambitions for high quality public art, often connecting it to the potential benefit for communities in having access to public art that is technically and conceptually rigorous. As explored in the literature review and earlier in the introduction to this chapter, there is not necessarily a practical distinction between inherent and instrumental value for public art in a council setting. Ways that council staff articulate the nuances of public art value will be examined further in the case study section, where interviews allowed for more in-depth discussions around types of value.

Of the types of value listed, the most regularly occurring value types were social value (seven respondents measure this in some way), education value (again, seven respondents included this value type), health and wellbeing value (a different set of seven respondents included this value) and economic value (five respondents currently measure this). This aligns with my review of a wider range of 29 public art policies from both England and Aotearoa, where all describe the potential social and community development value of public art, many describe its importance for children's education and lifelong learning for adults, and some note its potential contribution to economic development. These are analysed in more detail in the following section.

4.1.3 Public art policies and definitions of value

In addition to the above two questions specifically concerning the topic of value, I also gathered a range of publicly available public art policies (or where these weren't available, arts and cultural policies that mentioned public art). These included some of the respondents to the survey, as well as multiple policies from non-respondent councils that were retrievable from their websites. Each of these documents contained a section that described the council's perception of the value of public art – while this was sometimes expressed as potential impacts, or specific goals, each of the documents is presented in a way that describes the desired value of councils supporting public art activity in their communities. As described in Chapter 3, analysis of these documents was undertaken using a grounded theory approach to generate codes from information in the policy documents. This was then iteratively

examined against codes generated from data gathered in the survey, which has created connections and demonstrated common concepts which are examined below.

All the reviewed documents refer to some kind of anticipated social value that will be achieved through supporting public art activity in their regions. This is articulated in different ways, but ultimately demonstrate that councils have a strong impetus to deliver community development and social development, and that public art is considered by councillors and staff in these organisations as a useful tool for achieving these goals.

> "We want to allow public art's transformative nature to reach its full potential, challenging perceptions and enabling people to better understand the world they live in along the way… those involved with arts tend to be more active as volunteers and contribute more to social capital and community cohesion."
>
> Birmingham Public Art Strategy 2015-2019

> "… art and culture helps to create attractive, vibrant settlements enabling people to get the right encouragement and opportunities to experience and participate in society throughout their lives."
>
> Cheltenham Public Art Strategy

> *"Creating a strong sense of local identity and community pride"*
> Maidstone Borough Council Public Art Guide

> "It is about uplifting and empowering communities and transforming how people feel, behave or interact with each other."
>
> Southampton Public Art Strategy

> "Art in public places will promote New Plymouth District's sense of community, civic pride and distinctive identity."
>
> New Plymouth Art in Public Spaces Strategy

> "Public art can help shape identity – creating a sense of belonging and improving the look and feel of our public places."

These public art policies align with the questionnaire results, which showed that most councils that do measure value incorporate some measure of the social value of public art. This similarly supports existing research on the value of arts and culture for delivering against governmental social aims – in particular, that this is a priority aim for councils and that cultural policy is viewed as a tool for delivering in this area of community development (Arts Council England, 2015; Belfiore, 2015; Edmonds & Roberts, 2021; Palermo, 2014; Selwood, 1995; Taylor, 2021; Thompson & Day, 2020; Throsby, 2010; Walters et al., 2019). While researchers have also noted the complexity in fully measuring and expressing the potential social value of arts and culture (Campbell & Cox, 2017; Evans, 2005; Isett et al., 2017; Reeves, 2002), there is also scepticism about the evidence base for claims about the potential for arts and culture to deliver social value (Belfiore, 2009; Meyrick & Barnett, 2021; Walmsley, 2013). The policies collected show that most councils with freely available public art policies across both Aotearoa and England believe that public art delivers social value. This may indicate that councils aspire to using public art as a tool to achieve instrumental value, but the research and evidence to support this aim is not necessarily available or robust. Without this evidence and appropriate measurement strategies in place, it is difficult to determine whether social value is an outcome of public art projects for each council.

Economic value is regularly cited by councils as a potential outcome of supporting public art. In the questionnaire responses, around half of the councils that measured value confirmed in their responses that they employ some kind economic evaluation. In reviewing public art policies, it was clear that economic development was a stated outcome for councils in their provision or management of public art.

> "Public art will contribute significantly to the development of cultural tourism to the district."

<div align="right">New Plymouth Art in Public Places Strategy</div>

> "Culture better supports the growth of the local economy and creates more opportunities to earn a living."

<div align="right">Cultural Strategy for Shropshire</div>

"… arts and culture boost the economy through attracting visitors, creating jobs and developing skills, attracting and retaining business, revitalising places and developing talent... Public art can help unlock and rejuvenate underused spaces and buildings."

Birmingham Public Art Strategy 2015-2019

"Public art is a very visible part of cultural regeneration - the practice of using culture as the vanguard of improvement to places, economically, socially and environmentally… Public art, whether temporary or long-lived, has its own economic impacts, for example for cultural tourism… Direct investment in public art generates wider economic benefits for local economies."

Cheltenham Public Art Strategy

Economic impact measures vary widely depending on the type of project being measured, the length of time the impact is being measured for, the form of economic impact that is targeted, and the capacity of an organisation to undertake this work. Specific measurement tools currently used to understand economic value will be interrogated in Chapter 5, but existing research demonstrates that there are a multitude of options, including return-on-investment frameworks (Srakar & Čopič, 2012; Usher & Strange, 2011; Walters et al., 2019), measuring hypothetical public willingness to fund public art (Tanguy & Kumar, 2019), compiling information on developer contributions (Cheltenham Borough Council, 2017), and economic impact assessment (Arts Council England, 2015). While these all provide a range of data sets that can contribute to an understanding of the economic impact of public art, the excerpts from policies above show that economic benefits are intended to be broad, and therefore collecting information on their possible wide impact is likely to be complex.

The possible health and wellbeing value of public art is also highlighted in some of the collected public art policies. This was a popular value actively measured by questionnaire respondents too, with seven participants noting this formed part of their value measurement practice. Within the public art policy documents, possible health and wellbeing value is identified as a desirable outcome for public art policy

interventions from some councils, although this is less prevalent ~~that~~ previously described value outcomes.

> "We know that health, wellbeing, culture and place are strongly connected, for example people who have attended cultural places or events in the previous 12 months are almost 60 per cent more likely to report good health… arts and culture can be used to address child poverty, community safety, difference in health and life chances, early intervention and prevention, educational attainment, good mental health and emotional wellbeing, homelessness, learning disabilities, obesity, physical inactivity, safeguarding children & young people, safeguarding vulnerable adults, smoking cessation, social isolation, substance misuse, supporting families with multiple problems, transition of children into adult services, unemployment and welfare benefits and youth unemployment."
>
> Cheltenham Public Art Strategy

> "Using culture to support people to be active, happy, healthy and connected."
>
> Cultural Strategy for Shropshire

> "… [public art] enhances how people experience a place, contributing to its mood, safety and accessibility."
>
> Auckland Council Public Art Policy

These documents do not all describe the full scope of what is meant by health or wellbeing (although the Cheltenham Public Art Strategy provides links to research on the possible specific impacts of public art on a range of health issues) but allude to public art's capacity to encourage movement and activity, community connection to encourage stronger mental health, and access to arts and culture in public spaces. Given the complex range of possible desired outcomes around health and wellbeing, it is difficult to create and implement measurement tools to capture information on the possible health effects of public art interventions. As the public art policy documents do not mention specific health and wellbeing outcomes as their desired goal (instead focusing on overall improved health and wellbeing for their local populations), they also do not identify commensurate measurement tools. Data on improved health outcomes may be available through other agencies, such as the NHS in England, the Ministry of Health in Aotearoa, universities, or NGOs with access to

health research. This is, however, unlikely to be specific or relevant to programmes of public art activity delivered by individual councils.

4.1.4 Conclusion

This section has examined the results from the first part of the empirical research undertaken for this research project – a questionnaire phase, supported by review of publicly available public art policies. The results show that while a minority of respondent councils currently measure the value of their public art work, they (and others who do not currently measure value) have identified a range of possible ways that public art can provide value for their communities and their organisations. These include social and community value, health and wellbeing value, education value, economic value, inherent artistic value, and cultural value. However, without being able to support the provision of public art with evidence against these anticipated values, there is a risk that these values are understood to be theoretical and not practical. Subsequent chapters will examine strategies and tools currently used by councils to collect evidence of value across this range of value typologies.

This section has provided a grounding in how a multitude of councils consider public art value. The following section will expand further on the above to create a more in-depth understanding of council perspectives on the value of public art, through interviews with local authority staff members and supporting documentation.

4.2 The experience of local authority public art staff

This section presents the findings from the case study phase of this research, which provides a greater level of detail around council staff perspectives on the value of public art. The results of this empirical research demonstrate that, in line with existing research on cultural value discussed in Chapter 2, there is no singular working definition of value when it comes to council public art – instead, each organization makes connections both to existing policy and research on possible value that public art can provide, as well as identifying public art as a tool to achieve specific council goals in other areas.

For each case an interview was arranged with at least one staff member from the participating council. This was always the person who had completed the initial questionnaire, but also sometimes included other staff from within the council, suggested by the original participant, who could bring additional perspectives. The interviews were supported, where possible, by a range of documentary sources. These were predominantly provided by interviewees but also included documents available on council websites, social media records of individual projects, and formal media releases.

The case studies provide greater contextualization and a deeper understanding of current practice, challenges in delivering and advocating for local authority public art activity, and how council staff approach issues of public art and its value within their specific roles. The rest of this chapter will examine conversations with staff and supporting documentary records that touch on the issue of value, in particular its definition and how public art is viewed and used within the respondent councils. Ultimately, it argues that the value of public art for councils is its capacity to serve wider goals for the organisation. While public art staff may have personal beliefs in this space that are more expansive than those defined and supported by their workplaces, they are also beholden to the nature of council as an organisation that balances a huge range of competing priorities. This tension means that value measurement and resulting evidence is critical for ensuring ongoing sustainability of public art programmes or arguing for increased support from decisionmakers.

4.2.1 Defining the value of public art

Each of the interviewees described the value of public art in different ways. While most mentioned its capacity for a range of instrumental values, such as economic development, social and community development, placemaking and wellbeing, each had a different focus, and each used different terminology. This did not always reflect the official terminology or focus outlined in official public art policy or wider cultural strategy.

Some interviewees were reflective on this difference, describing in essence a binary between their considerations around public art's value (often intrinsic, or about its

capacity for social engagement as an instrumental value) and the different types of value considered compelling to decisionmakers or funders (frequently economic, regularly connected to placemaking and regeneration efforts, sometimes social).

> "I think when it's pushed through avenues that seem to have a function, you know, then it's seen as a value. Rather than a standalone public artwork."
>
> Case Study 3.2

This identification of artworks that are tied to wider aims and programmes of activity as being the most compelling for elected members reflects the wider policy environment where culture is perceived as a tool in service of 'greater' aims. Arnaud critiques the approach of councils in Leeds and London where cultural performance from ethnic minority groups become tools for local community and economic development (Arnaud, 2008). Sacco et. al. propose that local authorities, when planning for cultural districts, should engage with a policy framework that maximises connections between cultural products and other aims for a city such as economic growth or area regeneration (Sacco et al., 2009). In the case of this respondent council, several recent new public artworks were connected to a local regeneration programme as well as various public transport infrastructure developments. These were contrasted with singular artworks funded through a dedicated grant scheme, which received significantly less funding overall than the artworks which formed part of the broader programmes of activity but was perceived by staff to have greater scrutiny put upon its results. This case demonstrates the potential for public art to contribute to and play a part in larger policy interventions by councils, but also that projects which are art focused may be less well received by decision-makers and communities.

When asked about what made public art valuable to them, multiple interviewees articulated layered groupings of different subsets of value. Some reflected on how individual artworks might prove their value in their sited contexts – this was a common thread in the two councils interviewed where activity mainly took place through developer contributions (so without significant involvement from councils outside of public art plan approval).

"Does it make a difference? Does it make people feel better about where they live? Does it make them feel more kindly disposed? Does it improve their, you know, mental wellbeing just because? Does it help them orientate around the site? Those sorts, you know… does it have whatever the impacts are? Does it have a positive impact?"

Case Study 4.1

This quotation demonstrates the desire the interviewee at an English peri-urban council has, to be able to understand the possible value of public artwork for people living in their communities, and in particular, the specific impacts they hope public art projects can have in new developments. These potential impacts of public art are difficult to measure when a council's involvement in a project is as the planning and consenting agency. Where developers provide the funding and the project leadership, it is difficult to enforce evaluation to capture the above desired information. Both council staff members who work in this context expressed frustration at the gaps between their aspirations for public art and the willingness of developers to support work that could fulfil these. Both were clear that their expectations for developers were that artworks forming part of a development would need to be created against a plan that outlined the site specificity of any intervention, and its intended value for the communities that would live or work there. The staff members were able to encourage this through discussions about signing off public art plans from developers – this was their only lever with which to influence the majority of new public artworks in their areas.

Others commented that they had a specific role of overseeing and monitoring value of all public art in their regions, at a long-term level, to ensure delivery on policy aims.

"I'm not really thinking about individual sculptures, that doesn't personally really interest me, although I can enjoy sculpture. But when I think about it, especially in my role, it's much more about something that's more integrated and holistic and works with the buildings, the hard infrastructure, it amalgamates storytelling, music, you know... I think that, for me is what really works about [specific project] is its integration. The public transport is integrated with bike stands, next to musical instruments that are there for people to play, next to painted artwork. For me that that is where public art is most effective - when it's part of a holistic approach to space. It's part of a

design-led problem solving for a space, rather than just sticking 'that' in a spot."

<div align="right">Case Study 3.1</div>

This Aotearoa-based approach mirrors the experience of the interviewee above, who also found that public artworks were considered valuable by more people if they were integrated into the wider fabric of communities and provided opportunities to experience public artwork grounded in a site alongside other public amenity and urban design elements.

Creating connections between agencies and groups was personally and professionally valuable to interviewed council participants, alongside value delivered for their organisations. One English local authority staff member in a major city noted that public art was a valuable tool to use to connect with other groups, both within and outside councils, and that there was additional value in building up those working relationships.

"If we deliver a range of projects, as well as some in partnership with sports, libraries, ecosystems, then we are reaching a lot more of the community. And we can speak to a lot more of those values that are written into our policy but are genuinely our values."

<div align="right">Case Study 6.1</div>

The capacity to create connections between people and groups through public art is regularly cited as an anticipated value in multiple public art policies (Auckland Council, 2013; Birmingham City Council, 2015; New Plymouth District Council, 2008). Relationship building between the council and community groups, cultural organisations and researchers can enhance not only the work that they all do but provide greater value for communities through the sharing of audiences; encouraging greater access to education, leisure and culture; and growing understandings of community wants and needs. Public art can be a touchpoint to connect councils with external groups, and in the case of this participating council, provided a successful central project around which to foster new connections.

One interviewee commented on the capacity of public art to have changing values over time, particularly in developing a sense of place and influencing movement through and around the artwork.

> "… for example, the collaboration with [government agency] ... It was kind of the instant value you achieved from the community or participating together. And then it flows on to the values and all the benefits you might see elsewhere in terms of slowing down the streets, getting more people together out there, perhaps where they weren't before. And then there are the longer-term benefits that you see for public art where it becomes a wayfinding mechanism for the city."

Case Study 2.1

The relationship between types of values and changes over time is not well explored in cultural policymaking literature. Public art is a unique category of artform in its ability to provide value in the short term (for instance, during installation or production events for permanent works and street art, which can be significant drawcards for audiences to an area) as well as the medium and long term (for instance, with how projects impact perceptions of a place for local populations and visitors, contribute to an artist's career over time, or affect footfall or traffic). The interviewed staff member above specified how one project provided a range of values over its lifetime – community connection during the production phase, then over time contributions to public safety around traffic and encouraging active transport, as well as contributing to the overall urban design fabric of the city as a place-making and wayfinding device. I would argue that to prove these layers of value, all require different evaluation strategies at different points during the project's existence.

One council, currently in the process of developing a public art policy, recently held workshops with community members to co-create a set of shared values and understanding about what public art does for their region. When describing why public art matters, responses included that it evokes emotion, can be aspirational and democratising of and for urban space, that it is highly accessible, fosters community connection, is a public display of civic pride and local identity, and creates opportunities for collaboration in its production and activation. Value was described with themes like identity, communication, public identity and builds community

relationships being shared. The list of described value of public art for their city also included its capacity to encourage visitors and tourism, its ability to humanise urban environments, its capacity to show public support for artists and local creative practice, and its potential to create employment opportunities and promote education.

This section demonstrates the many varied approaches to considering and communicating the value of public art by council staff working in this area. It describes the challenge for public art managers in balancing competing expectations about potential values from various stakeholders, awareness by interviewees of the possible breadth of values that public art can create, and the ways public art can enhance the value of other larger projects within a council policy intervention context. The next section will move on from definitions of value to how value is utilised and applied by council staff in their day-to-day work.

4.2.2 How is value used in advocacy?

Councils use the value of public art in various ways. There are multiple reasons to collect value, interpret value and share value, and for each of the councils interviewed this is specific to their context. This section looks at value, which for the purposes of this project (as described in Chapter 2) constitutes the range of measurable and intangible outcomes or significances (positive, neutral and negative) that public art can have. Specifically, it examines how value is and isn't used for practical advocacy, with elected politicians, internal colleagues, communities, and funders.

For participant councils, advocacy was a primary reason to try and understand the value of public art work. All council interviewees spoke about the importance of advocacy in their roles. They noted that, under an environment of competition for budget with other departments, it was vital to be able to make a case for public art using compelling arguments about its value to achieve the aims of council as specified by decisionmakers in both public art policy documents and in overall long-term plans.

> "Why should it be different to any other type of activity? You know, you need to present evidence, if we were bidding for funding, we have to

produce evidence, we have to make a compelling case why we think this will work, this will have an impact. Why should it be different for public art? And because I think people just see it as it's so incredibly subjective and, and it can't be measured. But if you can find a way of measuring that impact, that's incredible. So valuable to people like me, who is an advocate, but can't define its impact."

<div align="right">Case Study 5.1</div>

This is a sentiment shared among key informants in five of the cases, across both Aotearoa and England, who all operate in political environments with the expectation that their elected members will need comparable information and advice in order to make effective and fair decisions about funding. While there was some acknowledgement that other areas of council operation were more well-resourced to undertake evaluation and monitoring, there was no expectation from staff that public art, or arts and culture more broadly, should be exempt from evidence-based policy expectations. While researchers have demonstrated the added complexity of value measurement in the arts (Belfiore, 2015; Blomkamp, 2014; Matthews & Gadaloff, 2022), and at the same time identified opportunities for improving policy-making by changing expectations of evidence in the arts (Belfiore & Bennett, 2010; Meyrick & Barnett, 2021; Walmsley, 2013), this has not filtered into daily practice for council staff. Instead, as budgetary pressures increase, council staff are hyper-aware that public art needs to demonstrate its value more than ever in the face of squeezed resources.

> "The Head of Development, who I've worked with for years and I really respect, he responded by saying, "I'll ask, but public art is way down. It's shifted way down the priority list". And that's him just being honest. And it's true. So that's why, you know, making the case for it without evidence is so hard."

<div align="right">Case Study 5.1</div>

The pragmatic realities of working in a council while advocating for public art show that despite interviewees' personal belief in the value of public art and support for increased funding and increasing published literature on the shortfalls of evidence-based policymaking and the complexity of valuing the arts, their ability to affect change is dependent on the availability of strong evidence. As such, I believe that until there are more widespread shifts in elected member and senior management

attitudes towards creating an alternative policy development environment, there will be an obligation on staff to prove the value of their work.

There was an acknowledgement that it was not only important to advocate for public art to elected members and senior decisionmakers, but that there was also work to be done in communicating the value of public art (and why councils should be involved in it) to communities of ratepayers and council taxpayers.

> "We don't value the arts here [New Zealand], we really don't… And I think the more we value it as a council, the more the community start to value because they see it looking looked after, you know… When, because council is taking it seriously, and looking after it, the community become much more engaged in it. And then the stories will be able to be told."
>
> Case Study 1.1

Understanding public perception of public art is connected to understanding and changing the views of elected members. As regularly elected politicians, their roles are contingent on public approval. This means that their policy aims should align with members of the local community and their values. If community value of public art is low, then it is less likely that council work in this space will receive support from representative councillors.

> "I think it would just change the perception of us as a local authority in terms of what we can actually do. Rather than just do the basic functionality that we have to do by law, you know, there's more to us as an authority, there's a creative element to it, there's public engagement side of it. And rather than just do it, ad hoc, when we've got a development coming along, we might do a consultation and say 'this, we're going to do this thing, just a series of events and cultural events and public art exhibitions'. I've seen the value of it, whenever, whenever we've done it, you know, when the opportunity comes along, once or twice in less than years, the value is just immense. We should be doing that four or five times a year in all our town centres, and you know, settlements, I think it will just have a huge impact on people's lives. I genuinely do. But we just don't have the opportunity."
>
> Case Study 5.1

This quotation, from an England-based council staff member, demonstrates the possibilities for public art in shifting perceptions of councils as entire organisations. While there are some legislative obligations in both England and Aotearoa that

compel councils to have some level of involvement in arts and culture provision, these do not specify public art in any way. The interviewee at this council identified the potential of using public art to create a stronger relationship between communities and the local authority, but also to build creativity into the day-to-day expectations of council work.

> "We used the opportunity to talk about public art, artworks as well as talking to someone about what kind of public art they'd like. And they said, I don't think taxpayer money should, as a ratepayer, I don't think should actually even be done by councils. Like, there's much more important things like infrastructure that I'd rather my money go towards, like building better roads, and housing, than an artwork. And, you know, it's that sort of thinking - of like a scarcity mentality. And something that's very real, like I completely understand the need for talking about very important issues like housing in [city], and how do we... how do we serve that but also, think about how we could do it creatively and enhance townscapes to make it a much more liveable space. Like, there's more to housing than just a house?"
>
> Case Study 3.2

All interviewees expressed their optimism for a council work environment that respected the role of arts and culture in not only creating value in itself, but also how it could contribute to enhanced practice across other local authority activity which might traditionally be thought of as more valuable or a core service. This ambitious vision connects to the previous section, where council staff commented that in their experience, the most valuable public art projects for them and for the people they spoke with were those that were incorporated into broader projects and were connected to other ambitions for their communities. In these instances, public art can be a powerful tool, and its value is enhanced by its association with the 'functional' elements of infrastructure, housing, regeneration, or transport projects.

The relevance of speaking about value for enhanced advocacy is demonstrated above, as well as how different audiences can dictate the types of value that are considered important for council public art staff. The next section will analyse further the ways that public art can hold differing values for a range of audiences, and how public art staff utilize their understanding of this.

4.2.3 Tailoring value to audiences

A common thread among interviewees was that they recognized public art had different value for different stakeholders. They spoke about the importance of understanding how different people involved in the production of public art, be that through funding, planning, or creating, would receive value from projects, as this was key to being able to advocate effectively. In some cases, council public art staff saw themselves as interpreters, working between multiple different parties to identify the levers that would ensure a project was able to take place. In being able to articulate multiple types of value, it also shows the complexity of the role of local government public art workers and their need to be able to capture information and evidence in multiple ways. It also shows the pressure they are under and the ways they, in some cases, must respond to external inputs rather than being the expert generators of shared understandings of value.

> "You know, I work quite strategically within my little world, because I understand politicians, and I understand how people think so, you know, I've done things where I know, and this is what I hate about it, because it is really hard to quantify… because it's about people's experience. So, I know that the mayor values this establishment and she values me and my role, because everything here makes her look good. So, you know, it's about how do you measure that?"

Case Study 1.1

As well as operational delivery, the council staff I spoke to (excepting the one elected member) all have a specific role in supporting councillors to make decisions on policy, budget, and public engagement. This is done through reporting on project and policy outcomes, budget, and other key performance indicators, and also through policy development and public engagement processes. It also comes with a certain level of education and upskilling – no councillor can be expected to be an expert in all areas of council, and due to the nature of short election cycles, new councillors regularly come on board and require resources to understand the opportunities more comprehensively for public art in their regions.

> "Although they know the benefits of community value, they all focus on community value [in their rhetoric], they only see that bottom line."

Case Study 1.1

> "As officers, if we can't communicate in a way that is understandable to our council, the value of public art, how can our councillors be expected to communicate back to the public? Why are they spending money doing this thing instead of that thing? Or why they prioritise this over that? Choose one, not the other?"
>
> Case Study 2.2

Councils are highly public organisations and receive plenty of feedback from residents on the decisions they make around use of public funds. More than one interviewee noted that members of the public would criticise the decision of their local council to spend any money on public art, no matter the size of the budget. Indeed, there were some examples of misconceptions about how public art funding was sourced and managed, how public artwork was commissioned, and what legislative obligations councils were under in their management of cultural activity in their regions. While some interviewees recounted positive feedback from public art interventions, they also spoke about how this public goodwill could be tested or lost through the creation of more progressive public artworks.

> "You will never get a local politician, you know, canvasing on public art. You just, it's never ever an issue for them - it is how many bins have you emptied this year? You know, we don't charge for car parking in our town centres. It's those type of things. It's your appeal to voters."
>
> Case Study 5.1

> "People look at something and they're looking for something very literal, something that that that feels very comfortable to them and, you know that they're looking for something that's aesthetically pleasing or that they can relate to and probably a bit more conservative. So that's, I guess where we're at…. I think we do get you know, there's that subtle wanting more. But you know, it's not top of the list."
>
> Case Study 3.3

Only one informant, from an Aotearoa council, spoke about the literal monetary value of their public art collection, and the implications this also had for working through issues of value with other colleagues and elected members. They spoke about using the stated insurance value of public art to leverage funding for maintenance, conservation, and commensurate support – but also that this becomes a

risk when public art assets can then be used as part of overall collateral for council debt.

> "I think technically a council can use the value of its public art to leverage its loans and things against... this now, one went from $1 million, which was originally this was the insurance value, got up to 8 million. So, I think that that would have affected councils bottom line summary. As assets, they aren't depreciating, they are appreciating assets."

> Case Study 2.1

The ways values are set and perpetuated is something of particular concern to those councils going through a process of public art policy development or renewal. The political nature of describing how public art is valued in a community was discussed earlier in this chapter, and staff I spoke to articulated how the policy development process is both a mixture of top-down direction from councillors or overarching council plans, as well as community-sourced during the public engagement phase.

> "So, for all of our policies, the values are sort of set out in the kind of the preface of every policy where it's got the policy… the 'why they're doing it', the policy direction… every bit of policy or regulation we implement as officers of the council is intended to move us closer towards achieving this in whatever way that is… And those are the values that are, of course, set by council every three years. Every three years, they reconsider what they value for the next three years, and what the community values for the next three years and how they're going to get there. So, in terms of the specific public art policy, it references the documents, the strategies and the plans, and then it has the sort of underlying direction of council particular to public art… When we sort of discussed very early on in the piece about the development of the public art policy, we segued into what we want the policy to deliver for us… going back to how the work that's already been done in the city around public art has, I think, really lifted the level of engagement people have with it, their understanding of it, and generally their kind of education around public art. So, there is a higher level of interest and an expectation of participation."

> Case Study 2.2

The process of building in greater community engagement to a policy design process means that there is likely to be stronger interest in resulting policy interventions once a policy is adopted. As this interviewee demonstrates, there can be a perceived relationship between the level of public art already present in a place and the level of interest publics take in the development of policy that directs future interventions.

There is a balance to be struck between the broader values of council, which the policy is designed to support, and the values expressed by interested and engaged community members – in some cases these can be aligned, but in others they may be at odds. Best practice policy design includes strong levels of community engagement (Howlett & Mukherjee, 2018), and the increased provision of public art contributes to a policy development cycle where publics are more engaged, more educated and more informed.

Being able to influence public perception, through advocacy and education of the public, could allow council public art staff to foster stronger support at a decision-making level for their work. A quotation from one interviewee noted how councillors may be decisionmakers, but that they are also connected to the voting local public, and this can impact on their direction:

> "Public perceptions affect Councillors who affect our workstreams…
> unfortunately."
>
> Case Study 3.2

As mentioned in the previous section, the connection between elected members and the public creates an environment where public perception, or *councillor perception* of public perception, can strongly influence their decisions. Public art can be a contentious topic with high levels of visibility and media interest, and therefore attitudes towards it by elected members can sway depending on their understanding of what people in the community value.

The practical support that council staff offer to producers of public art also connects with how stated policy values influence the type of work made and funded.

> "But I think like you were saying it does actually help, probably, the artists themselves to think about that stuff as well. Like, what do councils actually think is valuable to measure? Because it helps them also key in to what funders are looking for in things and right now, this seems to be a lot about wellbeing and more social impacts with art."
>
> Case Study 3.2

Artists are a significant relationship for council public art staff to build, and the value that artists can receive from being involved with council public art projects can be varied – it can include professional development and career success, economic value, and enjoyment of potentially new or different ways of working that contrast with a typical studio or traditional performance-based practice. These values are sometimes expressed in policy documents (Birmingham City Council, 2015; Kāpiti Coast District Council, 2013), and also contribute to a range of other broader goals in areas such as economic development, education and inherent artistic value.

This section has investigated council staff approaches to using their understanding of the range of values relevant for different stakeholders to effectively advocate for their work and the development of public art in their regions. The next sections will examine specific types of value in closer detail, to further understand how council staff might approach measuring them, but also to assess trends in popularity of different value types and what this says about the state of public art policy making at the point of this research project.

4.2.4 Economic value

Economic value is significant for all public art staff, although the ways public art is connected to economic value differs between each council context. All interviewees spoke about the prevalence of the argument that public art has the power to enhance economic development. This was through a range of mechanisms such as the creation of jobs for artists and manufacturers, enhancing tourism, creating a more desirable public space, and enhancing foot traffic to brick-and-mortar businesses. The potential contributions of public art to economic development were outlined in all public art policies available, and most interviewees commented that economic data were most compelling when they were advocating to councils and senior management staff.

> "We know as much as some of our councillors just love seeing lovely festivals and things, a lot of them are also focused on how much money does it actually bring into the city? So, having that kind of economic impact data is really useful when you're trying to convince council to fund you more or fund them more."

> Case Study 2.1

The economic objectives of cultural policy are well documented in existing research, as are the difficulties in measuring economic outcomes of public art. Public art's broad definition, as published by councils in public art policies, includes work that can be temporary or permanent (Brighton & Hove District Council, 2021), small-scale to large (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, 2019), and community-driven (Maidstone Borough Council, 2017) to high profile (Whanganui District Council, 2019). The point in time at which to measure economic impact is also difficult – immediately following an event or installation may have different outcomes than years following, and value attributable to a specific public art project can become more difficult to ascribe over time (Usher & Strange, 2011). The quoted interviewee begins to demonstrate how significant economic management is as a priority for elected politicians. While economic value can be separated from other forms of value such as the cultural, the social, education and inherent artistic value, all of these have relationships to the economic, and it is therefore important for public art staff to have ways of expressing public art's relationship to economic value in their regions.

> "I think that the hardcore economic data is always going to be of value to an Economic Development Agency. But I would say that here, you know, we have been in a process of expanding what that means, what that looks like."
>
> Case Study 3.1

This Aotearoa-based interviewee goes on to describe that within their region's economic development policy there is no mention of culture and its role or potential contribution. However, other policy documents within their council note the current and possible economic impacts of the arts in their region, and work is underway to develop a more rigorous working definition of economic value that integrates not only the typical measures of GDP, employment statistics and spend in the district, but also greater understandings of what these mean for local communities. For public art, this affirms that expressing value in economic terms is still considered very compelling for management and elected members. Economic impact reporting is therefore still essential for public art council staff, but there is room to use public art

as a tool to help expand definitions of economic value from the traditional to the holistic.

As mentioned in the previous section, one council also spoke about the monetary value of their public art collection for insurance purposes. This touches on how councils can apply an economic figure to permanent artworks as assets and opens the potential for communicating the significance of specific pieces, and the costs associated with potential care or replacement.

Councils have a role in setting standards for the type of value that is considered significant and therefore necessary to measure. As funding providers, they set goals and reporting requirements, and these regularly require a demonstration of economic impact from funded projects, groups and activities. This is sometimes asked for in conjunction with other types of instrumental value.

> "Economic value is something that a lot of our organisations are coming to terms with now. And we're trying to assist them by developing easier measures that they can use. Because it's that range of value that they do have to now provide in arguing for more funding, they need to show how they're contributing across the board in the city. And everyone, I think, is more interested in that full range. It's not just the health and wellbeing, it is economic value and education value and environmental impact, and whether or not things are done sustainably."
>
> Case Study 2.1

One council describes perceiving economic development as a form of community development, and therefore needing evidence that public art builds economic sustainability, enhances small businesses, and ensures that profit resulting from specific projects returns to its local community. This aligns with a local government policy movement in Aotearoa towards aligning with central government foci on individual and collective wellbeing.

> "With respect to economic development, it is community development, it's not business development."
>
> Case Study 2.2

This similarly connects to the second quotation in this section, where the interviewee noted their organisation's work to expand their internal working definition of economic value. Within published cases, the social return on investment framework is one tool used by cultural organizations to connect their efforts in community and social growth to economic returns (Reeves, 2002; Refki et al., 2020; Walters et al., 2019). These types of tools could support council staff to express community development and other social outcomes in economic terms, which could allow for comparability with other areas of council activity – this could help with advocacy efforts and enhance public art support within local authorities. However, there are also opportunities to better communicate the existing local economic value of the arts, as the interviewee commented that their existing measures for understanding impacts of public art on small businesses, how culture contributes locally to economic sustainability and the earmarking of profits for specific community use are insufficient.

The value of public art for building artist careers is not currently being formally measured at any of the interviewed councils. One interviewee, from a large English city, also spoke about the role they have in supporting artists towards career development and upskilling in public art, and how this can have economic ramifications for individuals as they increase their artistic success through delivering highly visible and often large-scale public artworks.

> "I think we're not measuring enough the value that we have to artists, because obviously, we can assume the kind of equity we might provide, or the kind of like administrative evaluation, audience information support that we can provide. But I think there's not enough data… Economically, I think, you know, with every project, we look at how we can create creative jobs, or creative placements for young people."
>
> Case Study 6.1

No councils were using longitudinal tools that measured the impacts of specific local public art projects on artist career outcomes. Research has demonstrated the impact of artist encounters with institutional organisations, such as councils, as being greater exposure and access to useful networks (Fillis et al., 2022; Gerber, 2017). The value of council public art projects for artists is not well understood, but three interviewees

noted their potential to contribute to professional and career developments for artists and how this could have a resulting economic impact. This would require the creation of, and ongoing support for, new tools to capture this information outside of the anecdotal. The relationship between this aspect of value and tools will be examined in the next chapter in greater depth – however, this quotation and other interviews demonstrate a cognizance that engagement with artists can create a value that is not currently being communicated with decision-making stakeholders.

For public art staff there are frustrations in a perceived focus by elected members on economic measures as decision-making drivers. One interviewee, from an Aotearoa rural council, felt that there was huge risk inherent in trying to measure economic impact of the arts, including public art. Their focus, instead, was on educating decision-makers to consider value outside of an economic framework and how these alternative values still justify funding allocations.

> "We've got to be careful, with the minute you mix economic development with arts. And it means you run into a world of pain… even this morning, one of the team said something about 'oh, you know, council needs to understand more the economic development that the arts offer'. And I'm like no, no, no, I don't want to go there because actually that's the narrative we have to change. Trying to convince them that art brings in money - that's just a waste of time. You know, how many bed nights for this show… Like, fuck off. That's not why we do what we do. That's not meaningful. It doesn't mean anything to the politicians at all. Like, 'We had seven bed nights because Jimmy Carr's here' or whatever, you know, it's... they go 'people loved it, laughed and had a good time'. And the town was busy. And everyone was around, and it looked like Melbourne down the laneways. That's what they love. So why should we keep trying to convince ourselves that it's more than that?"

> Case Study 1.1

These efforts were in their infancy, so efficacy in creating a new focus for decision-makers was yet to be seen. However, this approach is reflected in criticisms of the current policy focus on economic impact within culture, which argue that expressing the value of culture in economic terms is inappropriate and unwieldy (Belfiore & Bennett, 2010; Walmsley, 2013). This council's efforts to create new perceptions of value and change the dominant economic evidence focused status quo may already

reflect the desires of some elected members to have different frameworks with which to make decisions and will be interesting subjects for future research.

This section has argued that while council staff recognise a current focus by councillors on the economic value of public art, there are a range of ways this is expressed and how this can be measured and communicated. Council staff also spoke about the limitations of economic valuation to capture a full picture of the impact of public art on their communities. As such, the following section will examine the other major impact articulated by interviewees – the social value of public art.

4.3.5 Social value

Social value is the most significant form of instrumental value for participants in this project. Interviewees were enthusiastic when speaking about the way public art was socially valuable, enhancing local communities through creating civic identity, sharing cultural stories, prompting debate and discussion, connecting local community members through co-creation, and creating ways to explore histories and ambitions of residents, past and present.

> "We're seeing a greater range of the community more than ever actually getting involved with public art which is really amazing. And I think it's all come because we're able to prove that this stuff really does have value and that there really is impact, and the council has been amazing at being able to support these groups do this."
>
> Case Study 2.1

> "If you have ambitious public art projects in the town centre, it does project a positive image for me, you know – it's forward looking."
>
> Case Study 5.1

> "What is the story that we want to tell? What is the story that we want our children to tell their children about our city through art?"
>
> Case Study 1.1

These examples show that, for council staff, the narrative and social value of public art is an essential part of their own working understandings of its overall value. Public art's capacity to act as a focal point for community connection, through both

its processes of production and its presentation of stories in public spaces, is considered by many interviewees to be the most important potential instrumental value it can form. Researchers have commented on the possibility that wider rhetoric around the social impact of the arts can create an environment where desired values are claimed as actual benefits (Belfiore, 2009, 2015) – it is vital then that rigorous evaluation can support the goals of public art staff in demonstrating their actual social impact.

Public art policies were also firm in their assertion that public art has great social value. This was often complementing other specific values such as economic value and mental wellbeing - sometimes in the same sentence. Social value as described in these policies is interwoven with other instrumental values, and public art is again used a tool to achieve greater council goals for their communities.

> "Public art can creatively engage our communities with the development process and deliver outcomes that promote social value and wellbeing. We see public art as having a particularly powerful role in democratising culture to support communities' economic and social wellbeing. We believe that investing money and time in people (artists, producers and communities) creates a legacy of local empowerment, ownership and identity."

> South Gloucestershire Public Art Advice Note

This quotation comes from an advice note given to property developers when they receive a public art planning condition. It outlines the council's expectations for externally produced public art, with a focus both on local social and economic development. The inclusion of both types of value mirrors the prevailing attitude of interview respondents that, within their work, there was the expectation that they demonstrate the contribution of public art towards these two overarching meta-aims for their local authority.

A focus on community development is outlined in the below quotation from a different council's culture strategy.

> "Public art helps to enhance and enliven our experience of public space. It contributes to a sense of pride and belonging in our city, supports thriving communities and showcases the creativity of our artists. Public art also celebrates what is unique about Tāmaki Makaurau: our Māori culture,

exceptional natural environment, our heritage and history, the character of our built environment and our diverse communities. It helps tell our stories, reflecting our region's character and culture."

Ngā Kaupapa here Toi Tūmatanui: Auckland Council Public Art Policy

This quotation showcases the ways councils perceive public art as a tool to enhance social value in their regions. Through its siting in a public space, it is understood to build community connection and showcase diverse stories relevant to the history of people and nature across the region. This council also notes the telling of stories as a large part of the reason for public art, which mirrors the experience of other councils currently in the process of developing their public art policies – their local communities, engaged with during the development process, were positive about public art's role in civic spaces to share stories about cultural and natural history, as well as contemporary issues and people. Public art can provide a powerful space for communal and collaborative storytelling (Edensor & Sumartojo, 2018; Ferilli et al., 2016; Ralls, 2009). These policies show awareness of this potential value, but do not guarantee it as an outcome – instead, public art with community development benefits is an aim with which to guide decision-making at a policy and practice level.

The measure of control that council staff have over the public art commissioned in their area determined their capacity to encourage specific types of public artwork that could provide great social value. In the case of councils where the vast majority of new public artwork was funded through developer contributions or Section 106 funds (two of the English case studies), much of the decision-making about the type of public art created to fulfil those conditions was outsourced to property development companies. Their focus is primarily on profit - although at a surface level most have some form of community outreach, this was viewed by council staff as frequently tokenistic and without much impact on the social cohesion of new communities created by their housing provision.

> "They have all got some community outreach, sort of programmes. So, if they can kind of go, oh, look, we tick that box too, happy days, you know... but yeah, they don't really care about bonding communities, and, you know, getting the residents to be all be happy together. They are just there to sell the houses."

This frustration with the difference between desired value from council staff, and the desired values of property developers, demonstrates the challenges inherent in operating under a council environment that only has this one funding mechanism to support new public art. Without projects led by council, there are major limits on the council's capacity to influence the design and focus of projects within their regions. For staff, this balance meant that opportunities to provide social value for their communities were being missed.

It is worth noting that most interviewed council staff presented as white women (eight out of nine interviewees), and this positionality may have consciously or subconsciously influenced the range of values and reflections on their own power in determining what constitutes social value in a public body context. While neither the survey nor the interview involved questions that gathered ethnicity or gender data, this was offered by some interviewees unprompted, and is typical of the make-up of culture sector workforces (Brook et al., 2020). It was notable that interview participants did not generally share comments that involved broad reflections on the power and politics of public space as pertaining to race and their own role as decisionmakers, policy enactors and sometimes commissioners. While all council respondents in Aotearoa noted the significance of relationships with local Māori hapū [subtribe, or extended family groups], and spoke about an increasing desire personally and within their councils to tell a range of cultural stories in their public realms, none specifically mentioned obligations under te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi), the foundational document of Aotearoa that outlined the terms under which British settlers would partner with Māori to govern Aotearoa, and which guides law and governance today (Ruru & Kohu-Morris, 2020). For interviewees from an English council context, it was also notable that none touched on public conversations pertinent to public art and race relations, such as the Black Lives Matter movement and the ways public monuments and memorial sculptures are flash points for protests around ongoing inequalities (Choksey, 2021). These issues may have been deemed too controversial for interviewees to address, but are also important considerations when considering the social value of public art.

Despite these gaps in discussion, the social value of public art clearly forms a significant identified value type for interviewed council staff. Its ability to create and present public narratives about communities and places is vital, both for staff and within ratified council documents. However, the ability of public art to actually deliver social value results is not necessarily captured comprehensively by councils, which aligns with wider research on the contrast between the aims of governments for utilizing the social value of culture, and the limits of actual evidence to prove efficacy in this space. The next section will move into a discussion on the perceived health and wellbeing value of public art – this connects to social value, particularly around the wellbeing benefits of community connection, but also provides opportunity for distinctive value outcomes.

4.2.6 Health and wellbeing value

The potential of public art to contribute to local community health and wellbeing was not a focus for all council participants, but for those who signalled it as a potential in their public art policies, it was difficult to track the impact of public art on health outcomes. Arts and culture's capacity to contribute to better mental and physical health, as well as other types of wellbeing, is documented and examined in more detail in this thesis' earlier literature review. The contribution of public art to health is also popular with some local authorities, with policies outlining the potential for using it as a tool to promote better health for their local communities - particularly viewing public art as a highly accessible subset of culture:

> "We will find better ways for culture to support the borough's public health prevention and promotion strategies, community mental health and tackle health inequalities."
>
> Culture Richmond

> "Efforts have been made to make arts facilities and experiences more inclusive and accessible for people by removing financial, social and physical barriers."
>
> Palmerston North Arts and Heritage Plan

> "The opportunity to participate in the arts contributes to all aspects of health; te whare tapa whā. [the four cornerstones of Māori health – physical, spiritual, family and mental health]"

Palmerston North Creative and Liveable Cities Plan

> "The arts play a valuable role in enabling social cohesion, health, education and economic prosperity. In order to sustain and grow the creative sector locally, and make the most of the associated wellbeing outcomes, it is important to be able to champion the value of the arts."

Whanganui District Council Arts and Culture Strategic Plan

These policy documents show official support for the potential health value of culture, and more specifically, public art. However, targeted health and wellbeing outcomes are not specified in resulting action plans or policy key performance indicators. Instead, a generalised contribution towards improved wellbeing is noted as an overall goal, which makes understanding the actual contributions of specific policy interventions towards health and wellbeing goals very difficult.

One interviewee, from a peri-urban English council, was passionate about the capacity public art interventions might have to improve mental wellbeing for residents, through using public art to improve representation, foster pride in place, and create connection with others:

> "Does it make a difference? Does it make people feel better about where they live? Does it make them feel more kindly disposed? Does it improve their mental wellbeing?"

Case Study 4.1

This focus on the feelings and mental health impacts of engagement with public art is explored in wider literature, with some cases demonstrating that there were clear and tangible positive outcomes for participants and audiences in interacting with and producing public art (Blackman, 2014; Gillam, 2018; Grossi et al., 2019; Kelson et al., 2017). In each of these cases, specific projects were researched with a focus on specific types of health or wellbeing outcome – the tools used by researchers to understand this value could be adapted for use by council public art staff, to add additional layers to their picture of public art impacts.

In Aotearoa, central government budget policy is structured around the Living Standards Framework, which matches budget goals to higher standards of living. A

focus on different aspects of wellbeing means broader social policy goals are considered alongside more traditional economic measures when analysing the country's performance, and the central government Treasury department can provide advice that balances drivers of wellbeing for residents with drivers of economic growth (Te Tai Ohanga The Treasury, 2021). This change in overall economic focus was also mirrored in the Local Government (Community Well-being) Amendment Act in 2019, where the remit of local authorities to enhance community wellbeing across a variety of areas was made central to their roles. This specifies the obligation councils have in particular to social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of local communities (New Zealand Government, 2019). In particular, cultural wellbeing covers the provision of arts and heritage support.

> "I think the Local Government Act, as a whole, looks much more for a focus on the well-beings - which is something that councils now have to focus on."

Case Study 2.1

The potential health and wellbeing value of public art is well documented in existing case study literature and aligns strongly with policy directives from the New Zealand Government to include wellbeing as a key factor in decision-making and monitoring. Capturing information on how specific projects contribute to wellbeing goals could allow councils to enhance their contributions to communities, create stronger relationships with central government, and target specific health and wellbeing concerns in their local regions. The next section will examine how public art can contribute to an aspect of policy activity that is also highly relevant for central and local government at the point of this research project – environmental value.

4.2.7 Environmental value

Public art has the potential to contribute to council goals around addressing their responsibilities to the environment, as well as provide opportunities for local communities to engage in conversations and positive action around the climate crisis. Many council interviewees were excited about public artworks in their communities that explored issues concerning environmentalism. They mentioned that these artworks were a great way to tie into wider council aims around ecological

sustainability and expand community perceptions about what art can be and do from static sculptures to something more active:

> "Because that was all about creating a green space that was usable (not just for the community) because it was just a barren field. Some people would just park their cars on it. Like… that was all it was used for. There were a few trees, but nothing substantial. [The artwork] was a well-being piece for the neighbourhood, but it also provided a canopy for birds and other fauna to actually rest. And so, it had a lot of value."

<div align="right">Case Study 3.2</div>

In this Aotearoa case, public art was a tool that connected local communities with action around environmental sustainability in their local neighbourhood, while also contributing to council green space development and demonstrating the potential for creative interventions in the management of parks and nature environments.

For the below interviewee, they connected developer priorities around enhancing their ecological contributions and new public artworks with a focus on ecology and sustainability. For developers, this was a value that public art could provide in service of their wider goals to balance their environmental impact with positive ecological contributions.

> "Because of the climate emergency and because developers quite like it (because it ticks their box) there's a few more projects come through in recent years that link to the ecology of sites. I think we've got more projects that people are kind of going, okay, well, we're looking at habitats, or we're looking at flora and fauna, or we're looking at those kind of things. So, I think there's a there's a bit of a focus on those sorts of projects."

<div align="right">Case Study 4.1</div>

While this could be viewed cynically as developers using public art to create token contributions towards environmental sustainability to enhance their reputation or add to their environmental impact reporting statistics, it could also be seen as a positive way for public art to contribute more broadly to environmental conversations and climate action in local neighbourhoods. The ability of certain public artworks to influence positive changes in behaviour around environmental sustainability is covered by some research (Woodward, 2019), as is its contribution to popular

dialogues around climate change (Tello & Fisher, 2016). The conditions of an artwork's production may influence its ultimate design, but the agency of involved artists and participants can create value that is independent of the funding environment in which it is commissioned.

Artworks that explore climate change and environmental imperatives also allow councils, artists, and communities to connect and collaborate with research groups and scientists working in the field:

> "We're working on quite a lot of that and measuring that through the engagement with scientific groups who are focused on climate change, as well, and seeing how much more our audiences will engage with those groups in that project."

<div align="right">Case Study 6.1</div>

The urgency of climate action is a prevalent concern for public artists, who in some cases have worked alongside scientists to produce work designed to elicit public action through engagement with public psychology and activist art (Sommer et al., 2019), encourage dialogue around issues of sustainability (Tello & Fisher, 2016), and create creative opportunities for didactic messaging and public education (Cadieux et al., 2019; Lee, 2021). Collaboration with scientists provides additional perspectives for publics and greater opportunities to share and connect over research and can create strong calls to action around issues such as climate change.

Some council public art plans and policies also mention the significance of making work that aligns with their environmental aims. One had specific key performance indicators to measure the range of council investments in culture that advance their environmental aims. Another leverages the opportunity of public art delivered by developers to achieve wider council goals to deliver on broader commitments to responding to the climate emergency:

> "We then got to priorities on that council plan, that we will lead the response to the climate emergency and deliver our deliver on our commitments. And so, it's like, okay, so how can programmes or public art contribute to environmental and social sustainability?"

<div align="right">Case Study 4.1</div>

> "We will lead the response to the climate emergency and deliver on our commitments. Sustainability: In developing public art, we will seek programmes of work that contribute to environmental and social sustainability."

<div align="right">South Gloucestershire Public Art Advice Note</div>

For these councils, supporting specific projects that create environmental and ecological value are another way that public art can be utilised as a tool in the service of larger goals. However, it also provides opportunities for artists with a conceptual interest in environmental issues a highly public platform in which to share their perspectives, generate debate and connect with publics on issues that are also important to them.

In producing new art work that examines relationships with nature and the changing climate, there is a risk that the work will not be taken seriously by council colleagues or not understood as a public art intervention:

> "It was a really lovely conceptual work that involved nature and the community. Different schools came and did a planting, and there was a karakia [prayer], that [local kaumatua (senior or elder leader)] led, and that had a huge sort of community coming together in a neighbourhood that isn't usually well served in terms of its arts. Then there was a comment about it - whether it was actually an artwork, because it was trees. And this is from someone within council. So, it's like, even within the organisation that we're in, there are perceptions of what public art is. And so, it's a constant sort of advocacy piece, I think, and just working with people."

<div align="right">Case Study 3.2</div>

This example demonstrates the difficulties in using contemporary conceptual public art as a tool that supports council aims for the environment when there is not yet a shared understanding within council organisations of what is included in the definition of public art.

This section has examined some of the ways council respondents perceive the environmental and ecological value of public art, both as a potential impact and in projects that are already extant. It shows that for councils, the possible ways public art can contribute to broader environmental goals are a useful alignment and as such

are outlined as a desired value in public art policy. For other councils, there are challenges in proving the role of public art as a tool for impact on sustainability outcomes for regions. These both demonstrate that being able to measure and communicate this form of value is vital for effective project evaluation but also advocacy.

Local environments are intimately tied to local senses of place. The next section will examine how council public art staff and policy approach the ways public art can contribute to placemaking.

4.2.8 Place and public art

Placemaking as a term, and its relationship to public art, is examined in detail in the literature review in Chapter 2. For council public art staff, place is inherently connected to public art, including in references to site-specificity, urban regeneration, and local community representation.

All interviewees spoke about the power of public art to enhance and define places. This was through its capacity to represent local identity and aspirations, enhance streetscapes and contribute to urban design projects, tell stories in public space, demonstrate a council's commitment to its creative communities, and encourage greater appreciation for built environments.

> "I think the value of public art that is it's the bit you see, everything else is so invisible, you know, it's people working in studios. workshops or at home on their kitchen table. It doesn't have a presence. A lot of creative industries as a shop, it's not necessarily highly visible. The public art is where it really intersects with people and people can see it and feel it. And because it's that visual element of walking around the city and feeling that the city is creative, that kind of speaks to all the other creative endeavours that are going on back of house."

<div align="right">Case Study 3.1</div>

Using public art as an ambassador or spokes-artform for other forms of creative practice and industry is one way public art can demonstrate its value for placemaking. In other cases, the ways it can create a new understanding of a place or encourage feelings about a locale also provide a placemaking value.

"Probably the big thing is a sense of adventure in a way that you know, you're walking down the street, and suddenly you see something that's quite quirky… it's those surprises that, I suppose you almost then don't see… because it's lifting you to a different level of appreciation for what you've got here. Yeah, and then it is that sense of place."

Case Study 3.3

"I think one thing it can help with… particularly with town centres, if we're talking about public art, is identity, and image. You know, if you have ambitious public art programmes in the town centre, it does project a positive image for me - it's forward looking."

Case Study 5.1

For these respondents, the role of public art in creating a sense of identity for a place or community is critical to its success. This ties into earlier discussions with other council interviewees on forms of social value, where public storytelling was a significant focus for their understanding of the value of public art in a council context. Using public art to create positive representations of identity is one way councils can foster community connections and build social cohesion. The intersections of public art and issues of identity are complex and nuanced (Zebracki & Palmer, 2017), and as the quotations above show, the placemaking potential for public art includes layers of different identities within projects and overall public art programmes – artists, councils, participants, communities, and audiences are all potentially represented during interactions with public art.

However, there is a risk in using public art as a tool for the purpose of developing social cohesion, as is demonstrated in Aharon-Gutman's analysis of a Jerusalem-based public art project, intended to bridge community differences in an area changed by settler colonialism (Aharon-Gutman, 2018). This research clearly showcases the difficulties in dealing with contested histories and present social tensions despite the best of intentions. Participants involved in this thesis project all work in political contexts similarly influenced by the legacies of empire and colonisation, and the effects this has had on personal and community identity over time. Additionally, councils represent a bureaucratic power structure that may be off-putting to marginalised communities, and public art policy directed from this dominant power structure may not effectively or sensitively include these identities

(Cooke & Kothari, 2001). As contemporary issues around the disposal of and protests about monuments and memorials demonstrate, the ways that art in public spaces act as sites of struggle over community histories and social identity mean that they can be both sites where existing political dominance is reinforced, but also as focal points and rallying points where dominant narratives are critiqued and disrupted (Rose-Redwood et al., 2022).

For some, the goal of placemaking was to encourage activation of spaces, in particular town centres or urban areas that were targeted for revitalization. Public art was identified as a key lever for achieving placemaking aims, and often described as such in formal regeneration plans for specific areas.

> "So, they're our ambitions and our objectives, to get more people into town centres… rather than just create something and then it does nothing."
>
> Case Study 5.1

> "That creating connection is important to ensure that well-being, all aspects of it. And public art is identified as an important building block towards getting to get sense of whole city connection, becoming a one city approach."
>
> Case Study 2.2

> "So, one of the key priorities in that council plan is we will promote clean, affordable, high-quality design of new and existing communities. And so, I kind of go 'Ha, well, that links to placemaking, and quality urban design and public art, I absolutely can deliver on that.'"
>
> Case Study 4.1

> "Public art has the potential to transform places. It can form an integral part of the public realm, helping to create an increased sense of civic pride and, through the involvement of the local community, public art projects have the potential to create a sense of shared identity across the 14 villages of the borough."
>
> Richmond 2015-2019

These quotations all indicate that both the working and formal understandings of public art within councils contain expectations of its contributions to regeneration efforts. While some councils have formal regeneration plans for town centres and neighbourhoods that specifically mention public art, others instead have a more

generalised approach to how public art performs a regenerative function and delivers value against specific goals for councils in areas such as business enhancement, pride in place, the public expression of identity and connecting communities.

This section has argued that placemaking forms a distinctive value category for public art professionals within local authorities. While placemaking contributes to a range of previously identified values, such as economic development and community cohesion, interviewed staff were clear that the process of placemaking was a priority for their councils and in some cases, regeneration efforts were major sources of funding for public art projects. The role of public art in placemaking is significant for these respondents and can provide opportunities to demonstrate to elected members and communities the broad range of instrumental values that public art can offer. The next section will explore how value measurement is used by council staff, and why this area of activity is essential for public art's ongoing sustainability within local authorities.

4.2.9 The purpose of value measurement

The previous sections have examined definitions and subsets of value as described by council interviewees and in their public policy documentation. Once the value of public art is defined, and policy or guidance created to dictate interventions that create this value, being able to measure efficacy is vital for effective advocacy – to decisionmakers within councils, to communities and to funders.

> "You need to present evidence. If we are bidding for funding, we have to produce evidence, we have to make a compelling case why we think this will work, or this will have an impact. Why should it be different for public art? And because I think people just see it as so incredibly subjective and, and that it can't be measured. But if you can find a way of measuring that impact, that's incredible. So valuable to people like me, who are an advocate, but can't define its impact."

> Case Study 5.1

> "I think that local government and central government is so evidence based, and it should be really, as much as I think that ideas are great. Like, I should just get paid money to do them. I mean, really, I think, you know, we should

be responsible with ratepayers' money. And so, things *should* be evidence based. It's just that we haven't really all the tools, especially in economic development - all the tools have been set up for widgets. There haven't been those tools that value qualitative data, for example."

<div align="right">Case Study 3.1</div>

It is immensely challenging to effectively and comprehensively communicate the value of public art. While the respondents operate in a context where there is an expectation that evidence of value will support decision-making, these quotations show that there is a lack of tools with which to collect information on value and impact. Public art is similar to other cultural fields in that the potential breadth of expected impacts is wide, but the resourcing available to produce tools that effectively capture value is severely limited and as such the field suffers from an inability to deliver proof to decision-makers (Street, 2011). Staff are conscious of operating in an environment of scarcity, which can create anxiety around sustainable ongoing organisational support for public art (Belfiore, 2015). Practically, this means that public art staff are on a back foot when operating in an organization where other areas of work have in place effective value measurement tools that present more compelling evidence to elected members and senior managers. While this is not necessarily a fair situation, it is the practical on-the-ground sentiment among respondents.

A deficit in value measurement tools, particularly at a local level, leaves public art vulnerable to funding cuts in a council context.

> "If I had to make the case for a public art officer, now, I wouldn't know where to start. I wouldn't know where to talk about the value of public art. And, you know, other than from a very subjective perspective, and give some examples. But I don't think I would have a very convincing case."

<div align="right">Case Study 5.1</div>

When speaking to elected members, particularly when asking for new investment and support for initiatives, being able to clearly articulate the value proposition of that offering is necessary for ensuring both short term and long-term resourcing:

> "For us at the policy end, the data was so useful when we take it to council with a value proposition to them. Because we're up there, with every aspect of council's business, trying to tout for different things in saying, perhaps, yes, there is an immediacy to this. But if this isn't addressed now, then there will be ongoing knock-on effects. So it is that kind of, really, it's that we want to do it now. And we also want to do it on the long term. We understand you also have competing priorities; they also want to do it now. And they want to do long term as well. So, certainly increasing the pot so that you were going to have just a little bit more for over a longer period of time, would be great. And value management tools that would inform the decision making at council would be, I think, just fantastic and improving what we have more."

<div align="right">Case Study 3.2</div>

This part of the standard policy development process again demonstrates that arts and culture, including public art, is set up within council organisations to compete for funding against other areas of work. Comparability, as well as distinctiveness, is therefore a focus for staff when developing or using value measurement strategies, as being able to demonstrate value in a range of areas specific to public art allows council staff to advocate for why it should be supported to provide both unique outcomes and support for other wider programmes of council activity.

As other arms of council activity already have a range of value measurement tools currently in place, public art is on the back foot in not being able to fulsomely articulate its delivery against goals and how it comparably delivers value:

> "We have a lot of monitoring and reporting on the council's core services. For lack of a better phrase, the water, roads. Those sorts of things. The amount of data we have on that is astronomical. And council uses all that data when it makes its decisions and choices, and to have something comparable for public art would be, I think, game changing."

<div align="right">Case Study 3.2</div>

Comparability is therefore a compelling aspect of why value measurement is considered so important by council public art staff. The precarity of this work can be seen in the anecdotal reflections of some interviewees about the diminishing support for public art officer roles in councils across both England and Aotearoa, as well as funding cut evidence to programmes over time. Operating in this unsure environment

means that council staff are compelled to work within the overall context of evidence-based policymaking, as opposed to being in a strong position to critique this dominant mode of thinking within their organisations or apply different value frameworks to their work.

The previous sections have all interrogated what council staff working on public art understand the value of public art to be, and why this is important for their work. The next chapters will examine the tools that councils are currently using to measure the value of public art, and as such show major gaps between the ambitions of councils and their staff for the value public art can provide, and the tools available to collect information about how effective their programming is against these goals.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has revealed the working definitions of value being used in local authorities across Aotearoa and England, and the ways public art value is used, tailored to specific stakeholders, and described in policy. Some major themes emerged from this phase of research. Firstly, there is clearly no universal definition of the value of public art for council staff across England and Aotearoa. Instead, each staff member and council describe a different set of instrumental values, emotional qualities and artistic merits that can be achieved through local government support for public art. Secondly, it is evident that public art staff within councils believe firmly in the value of public art for their communities, particularly around its capacity to enhance social outcomes and develop connections and public conversations. Thirdly, while the staff I spoke with were passionate and ardent in their support for public art, this was not always the case for wider organizational management or elected officials, which causes tension when advocating for increased support for public art.

For each council, a range of values are identified through policy, guidance documents, and personal understanding from staff that create varying ranges of ways in which public art can create value through serving in their communities. This chapter contributes an exploration of attitudes towards the value of public art in a

local authority context. It finds that councils across Aotearoa and England hope to use public art as a tool to achieve instrumental economic, social, environmental, wellbeing and educational values for their communities. This expands on existing research on the value of cultural policy by giving new layers of insight, particularly into the perceptions of council public art staff of value – specifically, that the value of public art is uniquely difficult to measure due to its broad definition and its relationship to time.

Examples from other literature on cultural policymaking demonstrates documentation of a trend towards prioritizing instrumental values (in particular, social and economic value) as the dominant potential value to be derived from arts and culture. While there have been critical shifts away from this standard neo-liberal discourse (Belfiore, 2009, 2015; Hartley, 2018; Walmsley, 2018), in practice this still appears as the most compelling practical argument for why local authorities should invest in culture. This form of value is not described by staff or policy documents as 'instrumental' – this term was not present in any of the discussions I had with staff members in a variety of roles, council sizes and geographic localities. However, the common thread in discussions held was that public art was a tool to achieve other policy aims for council organisations. This makes sense, as local authorities are political delivery arms and hold responsibility for a broad swathe of community ambitions across multiple sectors, and councils use multiple tools to achieve their goals (Meyrick & Barnett, 2021). Each interviewee connected public art to what it can do for community development, social connection, and individual wellbeing, or how it could form part of artist career development, placemaking initiatives and town centre regeneration.

Published policies and guidance documents for developers (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, 2019; Maidstone Borough Council, 2017; South Gloucestershire Council, 2019) outline a range of anticipated values to be derived from supporting public art aside from the economic. They describe its potential to contribute social value, health and wellbeing value, environmental value and placemaking value. Value is sometimes referred to in policy documents when councils describe how they will measure the results of their interventions. This connects the policies to other

overarching council plans and aims and ensures consistency in language with other arms of council activity. Some interviewees reflected on the ways public art could make them and residents feel, and they also tied its capacity to prompt discussion and sometimes controversy as useful ways to build community. The language used to articulate what public art can do does not always include the word value, but the described outcomes or desired impacts are synonymous with ideas of value expressed in research literature and other policy documents. This indicates a working definition of public art for staff that may differ to officially recorded documents designed to express an agreed understanding of the impacts of public art. This was notably the case for organisations that produced guidance notes for property developers, as opposed to larger-scale public art policies, where staff had limited abilities to influence the commissioning and active management – their own personal concepts of public art value were more expansive than their guidance documents might otherwise indicate.

While public art council staff were broad in their understanding about the value of public art, they were also practical about the necessity to tailor their advocacy for their work to specific audiences. When speaking with decisionmakers like senior managers and elected members, many noted that economic data and quantitative statistics were, despite their own personal beliefs in more expansive value, the most compelling argument for shoring up support. This was considered to particularly be the case in councils where there is currently no public art policy. In these cases, being able to educate communities and senior staff about public art was another justification for improving value measurement. Evaluation takes place in political environments and is designed around political policy prerogatives (Meyrick & Barnett, 2021). To grow and develop public art capacity, it is critical to have support from a wide range of colleagues, elected members, outside community groups and residents, and a shared understanding of what public art is and what it can do.

Staff also spoke about the power of placemaking to convince decisionmakers of public support for public art interventions. Often tied into wider infrastructure or regeneration projects, public art in places that were also receiving wider programmes of development was generally positively received by voting publics, and this fed

back to elected members. Additionally, being able to incorporate public art into 'practical' redevelopment was also one way to convince some decisionmakers to support specific projects – where it was part of streetscaping, new bus shelters, traffic calming measures or enhanced lighting, it was considered 'useful' and therefore worthy of funding.

Being able to demonstrate public art's value is critical for effective advocacy for council staff, and with greater evidence of this value there would be opportunities to grow public art support. The earlier part of this chapter examined the different values public art can hold for those making policy and funding decisions (sometimes council elected members, sometimes senior management, and sometimes external funding agencies) and those making or receiving resulting public artwork. Interviews and reflections on policy documents in the case study councils demonstrate that this power struggle is an everyday reality for staff, who acknowledge challenges in being able to fully describe the value of their work and projects they contribute to. While academic research is shifting to be rightfully critical of the current cultural value paradigm (Belfiore, 2015; Caust, 2003; Fleming & Rhodes, 2018; Goodrum, 2015), there is a disconnect between what staff feel is important to consider around issues of public art value, and what they feel is practical in their working environments. This research project has provided empirical evidence that adds depth and weight to existing claims by Walmsley, Newsinger and Green, and Belfiore's arguments explored earlier in this chapter – namely, that the prevailing focus on economic and quantifiable measures of cultural value are still dominant and still limiting. It also enriches understandings of how certain conceptions of value are constraining by demonstrating practice-based examples of the consequences of limiting value foci.

To more critically examine this issue, the next chapter will discuss tools and value measurement methodologies currently used by councils, and how this connects to the ranges of value discussed above.

5. Tools of the trade: how effective are the methods councils currently use to measure the value of public art?

5.1 Introduction

How value is measured informs the type of information that can be collected on a topic. While the previous chapter examined the ways different values (including social, economic, wellbeing and environmental) are described and ascribed to public art by councils, this one instead examines the ways data on value are collected by Aotearoa- and England-based council staff in their work on public art, current to the time of writing. This chapter will use two of my research questions to examine the topic of value measurement tools in a council public art setting:

- What strategies and tools are currently used to measure the value of public art activity by local government arts managers in Aotearoa and England?
- How can tools for measuring the value of public art be improved?

The chapter first begins with an examination of the range of tools currently used by respondent councils in their public art evaluation activity. It then examines the ways that tools differ depending on the type of value that is sought to be understood, as well as the influence of time on evaluation and then the challenges in measuring value in a local authority public art context. Taken together, this chapter builds a picture of how councils conduct public art evaluation, and the implications of this on their work. It provides new layers of understanding specific to public art within the context of cultural value measurement and situates public art as a uniquely challenging activity to evaluate in a local government context.

Evaluation serves several purposes for local government organisations. Mark, Henry and Julnes (1999) outline four key reasons to evaluate: enabling evaluators to judge merit and worth in the context of project aims, allowing for informed oversight and

compliance, feeding back into policy and programme improvement, and assisting in more generalised knowledge development; all of these apply to public art in a council setting, through its delivery against policy, which is monitored and acted upon as new knowledge accrues. Social accountability weaves throughout these four purposes, recognising that evaluation allows those delivering interventions to be held accountable through the provision of analysis of success, deficiencies or failure (Alkin, 2013; Rossi et al., 2019). Evaluation tools also assist in policy development and decision-making by determining whether appropriate goals are set, whether there are methods to accomplish said goals, and whether the outcomes of interventions achieve established aims (Alkin, 2013).

There can be inherent tension in the way evaluation programmes are designed, which can be with more than one of the purposes mentioned above, for example accountability (for public art, this is seen particularly from funders, communities or special interest groups) as well as learning opportunities for an organisation (Kubera, 2019). This means that by design, evaluation can result in a diminished focus on one purpose over the other, or if instead created with this issue in mind, a rich and robust selection of analyses that contribute to multiple goals (Kubera, 2019). This research project demonstrates that for public art workers within councils, appropriate evaluation tools are directly created in response to the purpose of the evaluation activity and the anticipated politically-motivated scrutiny of elected members and senior managers – but within major sets of constraints that, for participating councils, result in evaluation that does not capture the range of data truly desired by council public art staff.

To measure the value of public art, council staff need to be able to access a range of tools and methods appropriate to the value they are trying to achieve with public art provision. The findings from this research demonstrate that council public art workers currently use a wide range of tools to measure value, but that many of these tools are insufficient to achieve the levels of insight that interviewed participants desire. Currently used tools are accordingly examined in detail, as are the impacts of their use and opportunities for enhancement.

Firstly, it is important to establish a record of tools currently in use. The first part of this chapter will draw on information gathered from respondents in both the survey and case study phases on tools used by staff to inform their decision making around public art and will begin to demonstrate trends in public art value measurement tools as well as potential gaps or challenges. Tools used will be described and connected to the types of information they can be used to gather. Each of these tools is examined in context with research literature on their use, either in similar public art or cultural evaluation contexts as well as wider research method theories. These comparisons demonstrate that the range of tools currently used by councils is generally insufficient for their ideal evaluation purposes, and that there are significant opportunities for more well-developed tools. It also highlights the desires of council public art staff to have tools that produce data to assist advocacy, as a more prevalent need than evaluation of programmes that focus on gaining critical genuine insight into their public art programming.

The influence of time on value measurement tools will subsequently be analysed, including the prevalence of short term over long term measurement tools, the appropriateness of specific tools for analysing projects or events as opposed to multi-year programmes of activity, and the capacity of council staff to spend time on measuring the value of public art.

The influence of different anticipated values on the types of tools used, such as surveys, ticket information, informal conversations, economic impact data, observational studies, and community engagement work, will also be discussed, with comparisons made between the stated value in official council documents and the practical ways these values can be measured. This will also connect to the previous chapter, where types of value were interrogated, and draw specific links between types of value and appropriate tools currently used to measure this – as well as information that is being gathered that does not necessarily relate to values stated in guiding policy documents.

Finally, the last section of this chapter will interrogate what opportunities exist for improved value measurement in council settings, and what some of the challenges are to accessing tools and approaches.

5.2 Types of tools

During both the questionnaire phase of this research and the more in-depth case study interviews, participants shared the range of tools they currently use to measure the value of their public art work. The following section examines these tools under category subheadings, as the tools can be grouped into distinct types. While the survey answers did not go into detail about the specific ways each tool was used, the interviewed staff for the case study councils were able to speak about the different qualities and implications of certain tools and the impact their use has on their work and their advocacy.

The evidence base that has informed this discussion is small-scale, comprising interviews with staff from and documentary analysis of six councils across Aotearoa and England, as well as reviewing the results of survey research conducted across both countries. Accordingly, results do not necessarily reflect the experience of all public art workers in councils across England and Aotearoa. The participating case study councils have some significant differences in size, location, contextual setting and overall priorities, but potentially do not constitute the full breadth of large and small councils, those with large and tiny budgets, or those with long histories of providing public art support. However, they do provide rich insight into the tools used in a range of settings by staff in a variety of public-art-associated roles, and the survey results provide additional layers of understanding about what respondent councils consider their evaluation tools to be. The following descriptions of tools should therefore be understood as an in-depth analysis of data gathered from multiple experiences that can provide a base for future, larger-scale research to build upon.

5.2.1 Surveys

A very common tool used to measure value was the survey format. Four case study councils utilized surveys in some way, and in addition to these another four survey respondents specified using surveys to capture information around their public art projects.

Surveys in this context are a questionnaire of any length that can be sent to a wide range of participants at a particular point in time, to gather new information about the research enquiry (Denscombe, 2014). While surveys in social research are considered an approach rather than a specific tool, in all case studies the participants were clear that for their purposes 'survey' was shorthand for a specific style of widespread questionnaire. The surveys used by participants in this research vary greatly in their delivery style, time at which they are employed, intended respondent and whether they focus on qualitative or quantitative data collection.

The first contrast is whether the survey takes place on a national scale or at a local level. Two councils in Aotearoa utilised information gathered from the yearly Creative New Zealand (the national arts development agency, a crown entity) nationwide survey of arts audiences which compares trends in audience data over time (Creative New Zealand 2023). This longitudinal survey is conducted every three years since 2005, with the most recent report (at time of writing) being released in 2020. This was a fully online questionnaire, conducted by Colmar Brunton using a sample from its existing database of 100,000 respondents, taking place over the space of one month – in the 2020 report, this was between 2 October and 2 November 2020 (Creative New Zealand, 2020). In this survey, the researchers ask questions on attendance, attitudes, and participation to over 6,000 New Zealanders living across the country, including specific data gathered from participants local to the regions of the councils using the report. While the purpose of this is to track national information over time, it is also possible to break survey data down by region and city. Both councils spoken to review this information, use it to track changes in community behaviour over time, and compare results with their own local surveys.

One noted that there was a large discrepancy between their own local survey result data on arts participation by local population and the results achieved by the national survey. The local survey was also conducted entirely online by a third-party research company, and had a response rate of around 500 people, comprising around 300 from the research panel run by the company, and around 200 from social media links shared by the council. It was an overwhelmingly male respondent group, with 380 participants identifying as men, compared to 125 women and under five as non-binary. Respondents were also disproportionately Pākehā, with 400 identifying as NZ European heritage, compared to 54 as Māori; 80% Pākehā to just over 10% Māori, whereas in the census results from 2018 the population is closer to 80% Pākehā and 25% Māori. This sample was a greater total size than the regional subset of the national CNZ survey (Creative New Zealand, 2020). The national survey stated that arts participation in their region was around the average compared to national levels of participation. However, their local community population survey (conducted yearly by the council to understand community views on all areas of council activity) found that arts participation levels were significantly lower than that found in the national one.

> "I think that's because in terms of how it frames up interactions, it does so in a very kind of high-end way. It sort of particularly talks about the [opera and theatre venue] … You know, it is a very white middle-class lens on what art engagement is. And I think that's not capturing a huge amount of the art engagement that is happening in the city."

Case Study 3.1

For this Aotearoa-based interviewee at a council covering both urban and rural areas, the significant differences in survey design between the national and local community attitudes questionnaires show how important it is to tailor evaluation methods to specific needs and values to get a result with information that they can usefully interpret in their day-to-day work, as well as ensure that those involved in delivering and using the evaluation data are also the ones informing evaluation design. For this staff member the council-run survey was insufficient and shallow due to its question design and framing of their area of expertise – anecdotally, they knew that other forms of arts engagement (such as engagement with permanent

public art, attendance at live music in bars, worked in a creative role, or engaged with creative activity in an educational setting or in the home) were taking place that weren't included in the survey question, but they were not able to effect a change in the question design despite this. In contrast, the national survey was more comprehensive and inclusive in its language, incorporating questions that explore more inclusive attitudes towards arts engagement that include attendance as well as participation from audiences, and more prompts for participants to encourage broader thinking about what constitutes engagement with the arts. However, it did not provide enough locally specific information to be of use for evaluating specific programmes of activity. For the interviewee above, it was problematic in that it aggregated data with the neighbouring large city as a regional perspective.

Fowler and Cosenza (2009) note that effective survey design is reliant on effective survey question design, and how improving survey question design to create a consistent and robust survey ensures minimal errors in survey outcomes as described above. Clear objectives for a survey are vital for ensuring useful data collection (Brace, 2013) and these flow into effective question design (Denscombe, 2014; Fowler & Cosenza, 2009). Both questionnaires above show that for the purposes of evaluating public art programmes, the generalized surveys produced by both the local council and the central governmental arts council do not suit the objectives of the interviewees. In doing so, they also demonstrate how being able to tailor or create their own surveys as an evaluation tool is likely to be more useful for public art staff. It also shows how the perspective of local government public art workers is also not considered in surveys that examine wider subject areas (in this case, all council activity, or all cultural activity across the country).

The other council was able to engage Creative New Zealand to separate out information on their city. They regularly use this data to help understand their localized arts participation levels and attitudes of residents to the arts, which in turn informs their cultural policy development and resultant programming. However, the questions asked are all those used in the nationwide survey – the report produced only pulls together comparative information to the national levels of activity rather

than tailoring questions to their local context. It also doesn't specifically ask about public art as a category of artform.

> "The Creative New Zealand survey, for example… although they do some [location] based questioning, we could get even an even larger range of questions. And I sometimes think, I wish we had a bit more money, to be able to get that wider range of questions to be able to inform our policy team."
>
> Case Study 2.1

Again, this demonstrates the discrepancy between the available tool for evaluation and the desired outcomes of those doing public art evaluation. This interviewee was not able to pull out information on specific programmes of funded activity, changing attitudes to particular public art interventions over time, or other locally relevant issues. They noted the limitations in available funding to support getting this information or developing the evaluation tool further.

Local surveys can include yearly community views surveys, as noted above, which are not specific to public art but instead include a question or multiple questions on public art activity and levels of engagement with the arts in general. They also include surveys specifically designed to measure community arts perceptions and participation. One large English council uses a survey developed for them by an external agency, which is conducted once a year and provides locally specific audience segmentation which can then be tracked over time to establish the demographic qualities of local arts audiences, the artforms most or least engaged with, the impact of that engagement on the respondents, and where there are opportunities to increase the reach of certain artforms to people who might not currently have access. This information can then be used in conjunction with individual project reporting and analysis:

> "We normally do wash up, once a year, we sort of look at those figures. But also, after every project, if there were specific kind of things for the evaluation for that specific project, then we use those. We also get project specific feedback from the entire team, but also pick out the comments from those surveys or events or, you know, anything and put them in a separate spreadsheet that we then use to write our evaluation for individual projects."
>
> Case Study 6.1

This was the only council spoken with that commissioned a third-party evaluator to create customized evaluation tools specifically for its arts service. Evaluators (who form membership of the American Evaluation Association) spoken with in other research literature note that involving relevant stakeholders in evaluation design is essential (Fleischer & Christie, 2009). However, they also felt that the role of evaluators should not be as advocates for the programme or policy intervention being evaluated, and that distance from the subject of evaluation is essential for perceptions of rigour and credibility (Fleischer & Christie, 2009). The quoted council above is using evaluation tools produced by an external evaluator, but is conducting and analysing the responses themselves, meaning there is a blurring between the role of evaluator and advocate. There are practical difficulties in resourcing a full programme of evaluation with an external contractor, as this can be expensive and also require management which takes time away from other internal activity, but it is worth noting that in research conducted on the perspectives of professional evaluators, they felt best practice required a level of impartiality or less bias afforded by distance from the subject of evaluation (Alkin, 2013), that may be difficult to achieve within the low-resource environment of public art in councils.

Much of the other surveying in use by councils comprises post-event or post-project surveying specific to public art. Two councils spoke about how they conducted their own post-project surveys immediately following completion of the public art activity. One used post-event surveys from school groups who would attend programming around its public art collection. Two spoke about surveys completed by project partners or funded organisations once their activities were complete. For all, these were surveys developed by the council staff and were consistent in their formatting, which allows for comparability between projects. One council staff member noted, however, that this meant some questions that were relevant to certain projects was not relevant for others, and the generalizability of the project completion surveys did limit the data collected.

> "If you don't have a question about, say, environmental ecological impact, it might not pertain to a [local figure] statue, but it would definitely be

relevant to [ecologically focused artwork] because that was all about creating a green space that was usable."

<div align="right">Case Study 3.2</div>

If a questionnaire is intended to create comparability between different projects against a unifying set of goals, a customized form is not necessary. However, as the quotation above demonstrates, being able to capture complex ranges of values of different projects is something that respondent council desires, and therefore they would ideally ensure that their survey question design is expansive enough to capture all potential useful information, while maintaining a level of comparability at the same time. This is achievable with simple changes to question design that focus on the objectives of the evaluation (Brace, 2013). This could also allow council public art staff to begin to create comparability with outcomes from different council services, with questions about what instrumental value that public art delivers stemming from the potential range of values that other service areas also provide (such as community wellbeing, which in the above respondent council is measured in their community survey but is also part of detailed reporting on parks).

The surveys councils are using are mostly designed to gather information about audiences (who receive a work), participants (who are included in the production of the work) and community members (who are local to their region and may not necessarily actively engage with arts offerings). Of the four councils spoken to who conduct surveys, only one council mentioned surveying their funded organisations regularly. The others used the range of surveys noted above that collected data on levels of engagement, participant or audience demographics, and attitudes and perceptions of projects and public art programming more generally. The surveys that case study councils use are a mixture of those conducted by internal teams or external organisations, and in each case are designed to get broad picture snapshots that also include some level of opportunity to give qualitative answers that can illuminate how the participant felt about specific projects.

> "I think a lot of the comments that we get are really valuable actually, in terms of the qualitative data, because people are saying, we need more of this, or, you know, this is really effective. I wish this was here two years ago, right? So, things like that are really good, to put as quotes in reports."

This research has shown that councils do utilize survey methods when evaluating public art. However, the range of survey approaches used by participant councils is wide and non-uniform. Each council that uses survey methods approaches them differently, with internally developed tools that are both specific to public art projects and more focused on wider areas of council activity. For those that use externally developed tools, there is a gradient of ways that these are customized to suit the needs of the case study councils; for the above case, their survey programme has several templates that suit different types of activity but can also be compiled to understand different groups of activity using a dashboarding tool. For another, all their post-project surveying to groups that have received funding is the same form, which allows them to compare results using simpler software. Therefore, at one end is complete customization as the commissioning stakeholder, and the other being able to access the results of research undertaken by a larger organization that does not allow for input by the council. This variability contributes to a range of experiences and frustrations by interviewees with the results of questionnaires. None of the above survey methods captured data in its entirety in a way that satisfied the interviewee and achieved all their aims for evaluation.

5.2.2 Visitor data, ticketing, and footfall

There are a range of technology-based tools that allow councils to measure and track quantitative data about the interactions between publics and art. This information includes visitor numbers to specific exhibitions or locations (two councils noted their use of this tool), ticketing information for events and exhibitions (three councils collected ticketing information around public art), and footfall data gathered through data shared by mobile phone companies (one council used this method).

Door counters are a popular tool for measuring visitor numbers to galleries. While for most councils, public art was considered art outside of a gallery or exhibition space, one noted that a measure of the value of some artworks and exhibitions was their capacity to draw people into a gallery from an outside space – they were able to track visitor numbers on entry to an exterior park space, and then compare that with

numbers that came through the gallery doors. One exhibition was deemed to do this particularly well, as it had a bright and inviting presence in a highly visible window. The park space also contains several changing and permanent artworks on display.

For another council, located in Aotearoa and covering a predominantly rural area, the door counter tool was deemed somewhat uninformative. While it allowed them to track visitor numbers to their gallery over time and formed part of their reporting dashboard to their councillors, it did nothing to provide council staff with data about the reasons for visitor entry into the gallery, the quality of their visit or the impact of their experience in the space. Notably, it was not sophisticated enough to determine individuals entering the space more than once – each time someone entered the building it counted as a unique visitor, while in practice this could be someone returning multiple times for multiple reasons.

> "I'm actually trying to change that slowly, by saying, actually, the value of experience is more important to us as a community than the fact that a kid has walked through the door 15 times and makes us count 15 different people. Do you know what I mean? What's the value of the experience of people in our community?"
>
> Case Study 1.1

This articulates the pitfalls of reliance on simple statistical tools for measuring value in cultural settings. When the evaluator wants to explore the quality of an experience, reasons for participation or other subjective outcomes, the use of a door counter or similar tool does not suit the aims of the evaluation exercise. Instead, a pluralistic approach to evaluation would provide more context and more meaningful data against the aims of the evaluator and their council. For Gilmore et al., the use of the digital evaluation platform Culture Counts is one way this can take place, as the platform provides a central space to gather information about different types of activity in both a quantitative and qualitative format (Gilmore et al., 2017). A similar approach or tool could provide greater context for councils working on public art. The staff member quoted above used their example of door counters to illustrate the potential pitfalls of certain data collection methods as they begin to develop sets of tools to measure the value of future public art activity. While much public art is sited outside of a gallery space, making door counters irrelevant, tools that focus on

collecting this type of data in other ways may not provide compelling information for their elected member decisionmakers, or informative data for council staff working on public art.

While that may be the case for that council, in some contexts the ability to understand changes in visitor behaviour over time can be a useful baseline when combined with other forms of data collection when it comes to understanding the impact of specific projects. One English rural council, which did not have a budget for public art or a related policy, utilised money from a high street regeneration project to hold a multi-day light art projection artwork and associated suite of activity, including music and street food. Using this funding, they were also able to purchase access to mobile phone data, collected and reported on by a third-party organization that was able to analyse footfall data over time and compare different years, days and times – demonstrating that local people attended the evening event in significant numbers on all days it took place, and that there was great potential to use temporary public arts programming to encourage greater activity in areas targeted for regeneration.

> "We looked at footfall in the days leading up to it, and the days after and during, and there was a massive spike in footfall during this event. So, I did a report and shoved that under the noses of all the politicians here and said, "Look, this is the value! This is the value of public art". This is the value of holding this type of event in our town centres. I got very little feedback, but it's there and it's recorded. There's a clear, absolutely definitive example. I mean, I was in there anywhere in town anyway, I witnessed it over the nights. But we've got that measured, literally, you know, in terms of number of people - we brought 2000 people in over three nights, and for a small town that's quite fantastic."

Case Study 5.1

It is unclear from this example whether the use of this tool and the data is collects has been compelling for councillors and senior management at the council involved. In this instance, as a one-off exercise, the interviewee felt it was important to create formal documentation of the statistical evidence they gathered, to begin to address a dearth of locally specific evidence around public art.

The difference in approaches to quantitative attendance records demonstrate the need to tailor data collected for its intended purpose. For the first case, their goal was to expand the understanding of their decisionmakers of the value of the arts and shift away from a focus on audience quantity to one of participant quality. For the second case, their context of lower support for the arts by decisionmakers more generally meant that this baseline quantitative information was considered most compelling, as it was comparable to other areas of council activity where similar evidence is commonplace when staff are creating a case for resourcing.

5.2.3 Informal conversations and formal interviews

By far the most commonplace method to gather information on the value of public art for councils was ad-hoc conversations – informal, unplanned conversations with a range of people. All six case study councils mentioned that projects were reflected on in an informal and opportunistic way with colleagues, members of the public, elected politicians, participating artists or organisations, and in some cases, property developers. In the survey of all councils this was not noted as a common form of tool for measuring value – when speaking with case study participants, they remarked that until prompted in the interview, they had not considered this as a way that information on value was collected. The informality of it as a tool, and its lack of applicability to traditional reporting standards, meant that it was instead viewed as a less valid method to collect data on public art project value than the other tools noted in the rest of this chapter.

Ad hoc conversations with the public took place across all interviewed councils, no matter the role of the interviewee (which spanned from council arts officer to urban designer to elected member). All councils who participated in the case study portion were informed in some way by informal conversations with members of the public. These conversations, which comprised feedback on both specific projects as well as councils' overall approach to supporting public art, took place in a variety of settings – during breaks at formal consultation events or public engagement opportunities, while council staff were out and about in their everyday lives, with friends, with family, and during day-to-day work activity. One interviewee stated:

"They said '… as a ratepayer, I don't think there should even be [public art] done by councils. Like, there's much more important things like infrastructure that I'd rather my money go towards, like building better roads, and housing, than an artwork'. And, you know, it's that sort of thinking – of a scarcity mentality."

Case Study 3.2

This style of feedback mirrored other interviewees' experience of hearing negative feedback from the public via informal conversation. They noted that it was much more common to hear when a project was not appreciated than when it was valued:

"You don't hear about the good, but you only hear when it's negative!"

Case Study 4.1

There is little research available on the role of informal conversation evaluation in local government settings. The above quotations demonstrate that conversations between staff and members of the public can provide feedback on projects or entire programmes of activity, and this can be informative for staff (although is typically negative). Within the realm of qualitative research methods there is a growing literature base on the role of informal conversations as a method within themselves, as well as a complement to other research methodologies (Swain & King, 2022). Not to be confused with policy research on evaluation at a state level, which makes the distinction between formal and informal methods as state-led and society/third-party-led (Schoenefeld & Jordan, 2017), the qualitative research methods perspective instead looks at *informal conversations* as their own distinct way to gather information – other terms, such as 'natural conversations' and 'unstructured interviews' are also used (Swain & King, 2022). For the above councils, and others more broadly, this research could provide a mechanism by which to legitimise their informal conversations as a source of evidence for reporting. As a tool for research, it has typically been used in ethnography to complement observations, but it can also serve as a rigorous research method in its own right, as well as complement other verbal methods including formal interviews, focus groups and action research.

One council spoke about a project which focused on formal interviews as a primary method of research, but that was also informed by informal conversations with

relevant stakeholders. The council received funding targeted at evaluating the impact of its intervention in the streetscape, which relied heavily on public art commissions and integrated urban design elements to encourage greater use of the street by pedestrians and encourage engagement with businesses. The evaluation tool began with a series of interviews of business owners in the street before it received a range of public art commissions, alongside other regeneration interventions, and the ambition was to continue these interviews once the project was complete and then at regular points in the future, to gather both immediate responses as well as longer term impacts on the experience of those business owners:

> "There were a whole lot of interviews done with business owners along [street] before the project went in. And the intention was that that data collection would continue, so that there could be some actual qualitative, and hopefully quantitative data on how the street has evolved for those business owners. You know, what impact it's had on their own personal businesses in terms of sales, but also how they see people using the street pallets, change, how visitation has changed…"

<div align="right">Case Study 3.1</div>

Unfortunately, in 2022 the regeneration programme was restructured and subsequently put on hold due to overall council budget challenges, and it is yet to be determined if the ongoing data collection will take place. This highlights some of the challenges in creating long-term evaluation tools to measure the impact of public art – evaluation itself requires adequate resourcing and some interviewed staff felt that it is often not seen as a priority in budget decisions. However, the evaluating staff member continues informal conversations with those businesses, and while there is no system yet for using this information in a structured way to advocate for the project, it does ensure relationships are maintained, the staff member is aware of anecdotal perspectives, and they are able to continue oversight of the effects of the project in a way that does not require budgetary support.

At other times, informal conversational feedback can be useful to provide a balance to council staff perceptions about quality and value. For one interviewee, their personal tastes tended towards contemporary fine art and socially engaged practice, but when speaking with residents while out and about, they heard about work that

was more traditionally craft-based, which many community members resonated with:

> "[There is] a chainsaw sculpture. There's a lovely guy who works in [suburb] who is the nicest man you will ever meet and can do some nice quality work. But most of it for me is a bit rustic... But every time anyone talks to me about public art I've got 'Oh, the one by the [local location]' and it's always his work, and they always love it. They love it. And so, quality is a really interesting one because I think they'd say that's really high quality, accessible, gorgeous art. I'd go it's nice, but it doesn't say much to me."

Case Study 4.1

This showcases the role that informal conversations can have in influencing council staff approaches to considerations of quality and prestige. The interviewee was responsible for approving public art plans and ensuring they met a desired level of 'quality', alongside a range of other requirements set by the council for property developers. Their own perception of public art quality was balanced, in part, by the results of conversations with members of the public and other staff, meaning their decisions around approving public art plans were tempered by informally expressed opinions. This approach is aligned with Swain and King's approach of conducting informal interviews to inform future policy and process changes (2022).

Informal conversations with property or building developers are one of the only ways some councils have capacity to gather feedback about public art that has been commissioned through planning conditions or section 106 agreements. Two English council staff noted that this form of public art commissioning was most of the public art activity they were involved in, through working with developers to come up with and implement public art plans over the course of their development. As small components of much larger projects, the public art aspect was regularly viewed by developers as a hindrance to progress of their commercial activity, rather than an opportunity to add value, and given this there was little appetite for providing extensive formal post-installation information to councils. Instead, the council officers with responsibility for public art would have conversations (wherever possible) to gauge community reaction to the works when installed. Both positive and negative reactions to public artwork were shared by developers, with one

example of negative feedback demonstrating the challenges of councils bearing some responsibility for work produced in this way:

> "Sometimes you get negative stories back. You know, we did a really lovely big oak sharing table for an allotment patch in a development and the developers, after a while went 'Yeah, actually that didn't go down so well, because the people who bought the three-quarters-of-a-million-pound house that is opposite were a bit like, what's that doing opposite us'… I think quite often developers are poor at keeping people who are buying their houses informed of what's going to be there and what it's going to look like, and then people get a bit like 'oh, didn't really know that was there'."

<div align="right">Case Study 4.1</div>

One of the advantages of using informal conversations in research is their capacity to elicit natural, relaxed perspectives from participants (Swain & King, 2022). Informal conversations can take place anywhere and at any time, which can contribute to a lessening of the power imbalance between researcher and subject. For the staff member above, they were able to gather this information from the developers in an informal setting, who had also received the feedback from residents interacting with staff informally on the site – this was a discussion about value that took place outside of the setting of a survey, interview, or other formalised technique. While informal conversations can be difficult to incorporate into findings that can be presented to decisionmakers, there are ways this can be done ethically and robustly, and conversations can also provide a rich source of provocation for further formal research.

Conversations with colleagues are also a regular way council staff collect information on the value of their public art work. In some cases, this is one way to work through issues of what values should be considered most significant in their work setting – for one Aotearoa council interviewee, conversations with colleagues were opportunities to expand the shared definition of what public art can be and do and develop more comprehensive understandings of the value of public art for their local community. These conversations took place both informally in the office as well as in formal workshop settings during the development of policy and work plans. In other cases, it demonstrated the limitations of how valuable public art work in a council setting is considered by key management staff:

"[following an invitation to other colleagues to contribute to this research project] … he responded by saying 'I'll ask, but public art is way down. It's shifted way down the priority list'. And that's him just being honest. And it's true. So that's why, you know, making the case for it without evidence is so hard."

Case Study 5.1

This insight into the attitudes of decisionmakers is one benefit of informal conversations as an evaluation tool. This is not likely to be information that would be elicited in a formal interview setting, as it is unusual for public art staff to conduct evaluation on internal attitudes around public art. However, the information gathered in this, and other similar conversations could contribute to the interviewee's approach to public art value measurement and how they use available data to advocate for their work.

Four of the participating councils mentioned speaking with elected members about the value of public art projects. These informal conversations allowed staff to share their own perspectives outside of a formal reporting setting, gain greater understanding of the priorities of decision-making politicians, and discover what level of engagement elected members already had with public art. At one case study council, an elected member participated in the interview portion of the empirical research and noted that in the context of living somewhere with a small population, discussions around the value of public artworks can be challenging:

"It's quite brave, to have a discussion and say, you know, I don't agree with your point of view. So that's the hard thing. Especially in a small community, where you're relying on each other for getting things done… the artist is relying on the gallery director to show their work. And yet there are other people who are relying on us for good discussions."

Case Study 3.3

In this instance the informal conversation around the value of a public artwork was used to guide decision-making around a significant maintenance issue. The setting of the informal conversation, even within the high-pressure decision-making setting, allowed participants to share their perspectives and inform senior staff and elected

members of differing opinions. One of the benefits of informal conversation as a tool for evaluation is the ability to gather information in a setting not explicitly intended for research (Swain & King, 2022). In this case, an observed conversation was how this elected member was able to gather data and use it to inform their own decision-making.

In other councils, conversations with artists also form part of an informal data gathering toolkit. Two councils specifically mentioned that discussions with artists during and following specific projects helped inform both their understanding of the value of projects to artists and the communities they have worked with, as well as the value of the support council staff can provide to artists undertaking public art projects. This one-to-one discussion allows council staff to reflect on and adapt their internal processes to create a more valuable experience for involved artists:

> "Through artists who've been through the process, it's always really valuable, because for a lot of the artists that go through the [contestable funding application] it will be their first public artwork, you know, so how do we make it a much more accessible and supported supportive process for people to come through it?"

<div align="right">Case Study 3.2</div>

The relationship dynamics between artists funded by councils and public art staff within local government are complex and context-dependent, but there is clearly a role for informal conversation in understanding and creating value for both artists and local authorities. For the council above, supporting artists in their public art work meant a smoother, less complex project process, with artists being able to get quick responses to queries around consenting, engineering, equipment access and licensing. By the account from the interviewee, in providing this information readily and accessible, they ensured a greater likelihood of the project being completed. However, there are well-documented instances of power imbalances when local government organisations and artists work collaboratively (Bain & Landau, 2017; Eynaud et al., 2018), but both formal and informal evaluation during and following a project can contribute to a more fair and equitable relationship (Hartley, 2018). In the case above, the informal conversations and check-ins along the way meant a positive working experience for both the artist and the staff member, which aligns with

Hartley's position that evaluation can be an equaliser. This shows the potential of informal evaluation for building strong working relationships in a public art council setting.

The value of being involved in local authority public art projects for artists is not well researched, and while that is outside the scope of this research project, the information gathered during informal conversations with artists can help to inform council public art staff of this potential area of value. These conversations can have ripple effects for changed council practice (in this instance, the involved council developed support resources for artists new to working in the public realm and created internal networks to provide advice on areas such as building regulations and park maintenance for funded artists) and also mean that some level of information collection can be outsourced to artists involved in projects, who can share their experiences of how participants seemed to receive value.

5.2.4 Economic impact reporting

Economic value measurement aligns with prevailing evidence-based policy environments in local government, whereby decision making around policy and council interventions is (at least nominally) based on analysis of research around a policy area (Dollery, 2018). In this context, economic data, and demonstrations of return on investment using monetary terms, is a simple way to quantify value and allows different council service areas to be compared. However, as noted in Chapter 2, this idea of simplification is not necessarily true when applied to evaluating public art activity. For interviewees in this research, it is complex to measure the economic impact of public art, partly because of its expansiveness as a field – with temporary and permanent projects, small-scale to large, and community focused to high-profile, the measurement tools appropriate to understanding economic impact need to be expansive and are consequently sometimes expensive. Public art also concerns relationships between aesthetic value, social identity and the economic activity of the public, with all three areas typically using different languages to discuss issues of value and priorities (Bovaird, 1998; Refki et al., 2020b). Finally, there is a time-lag between when a project is installed or takes place and the demonstration of economic effect, meaning it is difficult to credit particular artworks or programmes with

specific results (Usher & Strange, 2011). All of these conditions make it difficult to attribute specific economic outcomes to public art interventions.

Given this, local authorities are attempting to measure the economic impact of their public art activity. However, council staff interviewed note many different approaches, some concerns with the efficacy or comprehensiveness of economic data collected, and limitations in their ability to fully understand the potential economic impact of this part of their work. No councils had a comprehensive way to measure economic value that satisfied their aims, and all noted a reliance from their elected members on the use of economic data to guide decision making. The following examples demonstrate the range of tools currently in use for measuring economic value and highlight the challenges for council staff in conforming to prevailing value measurement pressures in the wider council context.

One tool used by two councils to measure both levels of engagement and economic return is the use of ticket sales. While this method is only applicable to certain public art projects that are paid, limited entry and short term, it does demonstrate a clear financial return. For the few projects this tool can be used for, it is simple to collect data on economic input and output to simply compare return on investment. However, this is not relevant for most public art projects that the local authorities involved in this research undertake. It is significantly more challenging to collect immediate economic value data for projects that are free to attend without a ticket, in place for a long period of time, running concurrently with other events or programmes of activity, and in locations which do not have an associated local business development aim (for instance, permanent public art sited in a new housing development).

One tool used by two councils to measure economic value is associated bed nights. This data, which can be compiled using third-party organisations, measures the number of hospitality bed nights associated with a particular event. A typical tool used in assessing tourism productivity, bed nights describes the bed occupancy in hospitality venues such as hotels and motels (Peypoch, 2007) as well as non-commercial temporary accommodation, and is regularly used by tourism agencies

and economic development evaluators to gauge ebbs and flows in the numbers of non-residents in an area over a specific time-period. This tool measures the tourism pull of particular projects and is mostly suitable for short-term events designed to attract out-of-town visitors. Both councils expressed frustration with the limitations of this tool, noting it had a large margin for error and results could not always be confidently ascribed to public art projects as there are often multiple events taking place over one short period. Similar frustrations were also expressed at the use of credit card spending information, which is collected in a similar way and is used for many of the same projects.

> "You know, how many bed nights for this show? You know, like, fuck off. That's not why we do what we do. That's not meaningful. It doesn't mean anything to the politicians at all. Like, 'We had seven bed nights because Jimmy Carr is here' or whatever, you know, it's... they go 'people loved it, laughed and had a good time'. And the town was busy. And everyone was around, and it looked like Melbourne down the laneway. That's what they love. So why should we keep trying to convince ourselves that it's more than that?"

> Case Study 1.1

Event and contestable funding reports from those tasked with delivering public art projects is another common method of gathering information about economic value. Three councils mentioned using this method to pull together data on economic return, as questions about this were included in pro-forma reporting templates provided to artists and organisations who received funding for either ongoing work or specific public art projects. For one Aotearoa urban council, temporary public art events were a good opportunity to test out economic impact reporting measures:

> "Providing us with that kind of economic impact data, which is really useful - because we know as much as some of our councils just love seeing lovely festivals and things, a lot of them are also focused on how much money does it actually bring into the city? So having that kind of economic impact data is really useful when you're trying to convince council to fund you more or fund them more."

> Case Study 2.1

This quotation presents a common perspective among respondents, who focused on the potential of economic return data to be used as a compelling advocacy tool for

public art investment by local authorities. This interview participant's focus was on the pragmatic use of an available tool to collect data that would be most useful when appealing to elected members. Their perception of elected member preferences was that economic return information was the expectation, and that communicating other forms of value was not going to be effective in arguing for continued or furthered support for public art programmes. This aligns with wider research on cultural policy, that finds a prevailing disconnect between the desires of evaluators to communicate broad typologies of value and the expectations and attitudes of policy makers (Belfiore, 2015; Belfiore & Bennett, 2010). While public art evaluators may agree with critiques of the current environment of evidence-based policy making and feel limited in their capacity to comprehensively communicate or assess the value of projects and programmes, they are also working in a wider local government context where evaluation frameworks are created in and by other departments. For one council, reporting and evaluation was led by policy and governance teams, who required specific information to produce reports for discussion. While the current economic value measurement tools are well worth critiquing, there are practical limits on the ways public art staff can shift attitudes to create a more expansive expectation of value with their elected members. For the two councils with no public art policy (including one with no developer guidance note), their focus was on maintaining the viability of any public art activity connected to council, alongside the rest of their roles which were focused on other types of council activity (such as urban design and community arts support). Their capacity to campaign to change the evaluation attitudes of elected members was minimal. Therefore, while staff do recognise the limitations of the prevailing dominance of economic impact focused decision making at an elected-member level, they are unable to shift this.

One council mentioned supporting one local project where there was a clearly demonstrable economic value placed on the involved public artworks. The council provided seed funding to an external arts organization who engaged multiple local artists to paint provided fiberglass sculptures, which were placed in an arts trail temporarily around the city before being auctioned off as a fundraising exercise, with proceeds shared between the charitable arts organization and the involved artists. The trail had several aims, including to showcase a local horticultural industry, to

support local artists, and to create a free explorative trail throughout the region for residents and visitors. The auctioned artworks created a clear financial windfall for both artists and the organization that put the event together, and demonstrated the financial value that residents and businesses were willing to place on artworks which had been, at least temporarily, fully public.

> "That was a really great project in the sense that, you know, stimulation of the dollar, but also representing the [horticultural product that the region is known for]."
>
> <div align="right">Case Study 1.1</div>

This range of values aligns with those described in literature on the value of temporary public art trails (Krueger, 2017; Thompson & Day, 2020). Thompson and Day describe a potential model for understanding the conceptual impact of similar trails, using a range of quantitative and qualitative measures to overall ascribe cultural, economic, fun and social value to the temporary trails, either as singular events or as part of wider regeneration efforts (2020). For the Aotearoa council that primarily focused on the economic value of their own temporary public art sculpture trail, this model would create a more comprehensive measure of the range of values potentially achieved, which is in line with their own desires for expanding value measurement tools away from the economic.

The literal value of a public art collection has economic implications for councils. Although many councils will have asset management lists and associated insurance costs, insurance valuation was mentioned by only one council as a possible tool for capturing value in a very literal sense. The economic replacement valuation of artworks can also be leveraged against loans, providing a specific form of value for balancing budgets, but it also has implications for expense on insurance:

> "Because of the cost of valuing the entire public art and public memorials [collection], we did the most significant ones first. We're going to gradually go through and do all of them. But the value hugely increased once we had them properly valued, and that also impacts our insurance. So that's another question that we'll be looking at this year."
>
> <div align="right">Case Study 2.1</div>

The economic impact of public art collections for councils can be felt even if the council does not have an active commissioning programme. The example above demonstrates that there are possible positive (the insurance value of a collection can be used as leverage against debt) and negative (the valuation of public art collections can result in greater insurance expense) financial impacts for councils on a purely accounting level in simply maintaining an existing public art collection.

5.2.5 Community engagement

Formal community consultation is one way for councils gather information on the results of their activity as well as inform future decision-making. Consultation can be done during the development of long-term plans or annual budgets, as well as for project-specific reasons or the development of certain arms of activity such as neighbourhood regeneration projects, infrastructure projects, public planning, transport planning and park and open space strategic development (Abas et al., 2023; Lightbody & Escobar, 2021). All councils spoken with undertake some form of community engagement as a wider local authority, but three mentioned consultations done during the development of policies or plans as one way to inform their understanding of the value of public art for local communities. This consultation can take at place formal events, through surveys online, as well as using social media and hearing from residents of their own accord through email or in-person.

> "We're coming up to the annual budget deliberations, which means all of the art organisations and individuals can come and make public submissions on what they'd like to see. And people will be surveyed. And they will be able to, via social media, add their comments. There were strong comments around not funding public sculptures in the last annual budget discussions. And that resulted in some questions by elected members towards the [externally funded sculpture organization], which they hadn't faced before around transparency in the involvement of the public and what was chosen, for example. So that's going to have to be addressed this year… Everyone's taking very careful note of what everybody says, whether through formal or informal feedback."
>
> Case Study 2.1

The process of gathering information on community attitudes to public art during wider engagement processes around policy activity such as annual budgets or long-term plans parallels some of the pitfalls outlined in the section on surveys above. In that instance, the respondent felt that broad stroke surveys on public perception of all council activity were not specific enough to create meaningful data on public art. For this respondent, there is previous experience of critical public feedback on budgets for public art, which arises from comparisons with other parts of council activity (with some commenters comparing 'essentials' such as roading and water services with 'nice-to-haves' such as public art). Public engagement around council decision-making is an important part of active political citizenship (Lightbody & Escobar, 2021) and gaining an understanding of public attitudes towards a local authority's involvement in public art should form part of an evaluation programme for councils. However, the quotation above also demonstrates that the voices participating in certain types of formal community engagement are loudly heard. Unequal precedence may be given to publics who feel welcome in formal consultation settings (Abas et al., 2023; Lightbody & Escobar, 2021), which can skew an evaluator's ability to understand broader population attitudes towards (as in the instance above) council funding for public art.

Specific projects that receive formal council consultation include high street regeneration projects and new transport route planning. Each ratified strategy or plan includes notes on the forms of consultation undertaken, the stakeholders spoken with, the range of community members who gave their thoughts on the opportunities, and the feedback of internal council staff. One high street regeneration plan detailed the significance of public art for developing the town centre and described a range of community-informed options to deliver on the value described by consultees during the plan's development. One council noted the opportunities seen when public art is integrated into these plans, and the positive reception from residents:

> "There are still people who don't see the value of public art. But I think when it's pushed through avenues that seem to have a function, you know, then it's seen a value. Rather than a standalone public artwork. It's interesting how there are ways of doing it that make it more palatable but have a much higher impact."

Case Study 3.2

The availability of funding through these ringfenced projects also means supporting public art projects that might not be possible in otherwise standard long-term-plan associated budgets:

> "I mean, a lot of those kinds of decisions around public art in the city, it seems to me have evolved from quite pragmatic funding… but I think that's so much more successful to me, whether it's come about from pragmatic money or not, you know? The long-term impact is so much more successful, because it isn't just sticking something in somewhere, it's something that has a much broader lens on how it all fits together, and how people use the space."

Case Study 3.1

These quotations, from staff members in separate departments at the same council, align with research that demonstrates the potential value of public art which has been integrated into wider programmes of development. Cushing and Pennings found that in the example of two case study parks in New York, a range of possible emotional, physical and intellectual values were only afforded to publics if careful co-design of spaces maximized potential values (2017). In their example, public experiences of permanent public artworks relied on control of wider environments to create sightlines, manage physical access, and encourage engagement. There is limited research on the perception of public art by audiences (Zebracki, 2013), but informal observations following implementation of public art interventions by the interviewed council staff members noted how positively that integrated projects were received in comparison to those which stood on their own. Conversations with members of the public, informally following the installation or activation of public art projects, found that public art projects connected to new transport projects (such as bus network and stop redevelopment, where an artist created work on the bus stops) or street regeneration work (such as traffic limitations, heritage façade conservation, and the installation of accompanying urban design enhancements and street parks where artists were involved in road painting, street art, sculpture installation and the design of street furniture) were viewed as contributors to positive changes. The community consultation undertaken as part of the development of their regeneration

plan indicated this likelihood and affirmed the anticipated value of integrated public art for publics.

5.2.6 Observations

The use of observations as both a formalised tool and an informal method of gathering feedback on the value of public art is used in multiple council settings. Observations can include regular counts of users of a public space or numbers of interactions with an artwork, but also more qualitative records of how people behave and respond, whether this changes over longer periods of time, and whether any emotion or patterns of reaction can be elicited.

Due to the nature of public art as a broad field of activity covering a range of timeframes, spaces and experiences, the vast majority of public engagements with public art will not be captured in the use of formal or informal evaluation tools. Interviewed staff from four councils spoke about these challenges when trying to capture information about the impact of public artworks in their communities. However, observations are one tool where a sample of interactions with public art can be documented and analysed. Observations can include noting, both for the record but also for the council staff's own internal understandings, how members of the public respond to an artwork in interesting ways. For one case study local authority, whose main public art remit consists of overseeing work created via planning conditions in new housing developments, there are limited opportunities to gather formal feedback via the developers themselves, particularly as public artworks are typically installed before residents are on site in their new homes. However, informally observing responses can bring a nuanced understanding of what value new community residents place on the works months or years after their installation. For one artwork, new residents created seasonal headwear to adorn the local artwork:

> "[the artist] made these little cast birds that sit on the finials on the end of the street signs, and there's a story about how everyone knitted little woolly hats for them for Christmas and put them on round the development. Now, that makes my heart just glad. Because, you know, it's a bit naff in a way, but it means they really love them. And they've kind of created community spirit around them."

This observation provides a level of understanding about the levels of engagement that a local community has with a specific artwork. It shows that the artwork is perceived by the people who move through the area, and that it is a site where multiple community members congregated to engage positively through adding their own creative additions. In this way, the observation from the council staff member aligns with the use of observation tools by academic researchers to gain insight into public behaviours around public artworks. In some cases, observations of public behaviour provided insight into the movements of people around a public place and the influences of public artworks on this (Trivic et al., 2020). In others, like the interviewee above, observations resulted in greater understanding of levels of engagement and interactivity (Cartiere, 2012; Milne & Pojani, 2022). Other observations have contributed to studies on the experiences of local residents in areas undergoing targeted regeneration that included public art interventions (Hartley, 2018), and in tandem with other methods has been used to explore the value of 'flagship' public art (Zebracki & De Bekker, 2018). There is limited literature, however, on the use of observational insights by public art evaluators working from within local authorities. The above quotation demonstrates the insight potential of using observations as a value measurement tool, particularly given the familiarity of public art staff with the artworks and their access to them over a long period of time that may not be practical for an external researcher.

Some artworks are created to serve a particular function, and their value to a local authority depends on whether that function is fulfilled. One council worked with an external transport organization to create artwork on roads as a traffic calming measure, working with the local university, artists, community groups and council staff to paint images on a roundabout that had been identified as a high-risk area for pedestrian and vehicle interaction. As the goal was to encourage slower traffic speeds in the area and greater safety for pedestrians, university students were employed to observe speeds and pedestrian footfall traffic before, immediately after and a few months following the artwork's installation to assess its value as a safety

tool. This was combined with eliciting community feedback about their own experiences of using the changed public space, as drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.

One observation that can also illuminate whether a local community values a work is lack of interaction – specifically, a lack of vandalism. One council interviewee spoke about how this, to them, indicated community approval of a work and the processes that went into its creation:

> "When I go into town, I still check up on and have a wander around these, these sculptures, not one indication ever of any graffiti. There's lots of graffiti everywhere else. But these have never been touched. And it's always, always fascinated me… You know, from a community ownership perspective, these weren't just put there, they will put there with people's views. It's a very political town, it's been through lots of miners' strikes, and lots of rent strikes, and really still is, it's still very old school socialist. And these sculptures reflected that."

> <div align="right">Case Study 5.1</div>

In this case too, the long-term proximity of the council staff member to the location meant that they were able to casually observe changes (or in this case, lack thereof) over a long period of time, which gave them insight into prevailing community attitudes towards certain artworks. While this was not captured formally or reported on to their council, it informed the interviewee's understandings of public artwork value and was an accessible tool for them to use in a very low-resourced council environment.

5.2.7 External evaluators

Most of the councils spoken with had the resources available to fund external organisations to conduct public art evaluation on their behalf. However, two mentioned specific tools or contractors they use to measure the efficacy of their overall arts programming, which includes public art activity.

One English council uses the services of The Audience Agency, a UK-based charity that offers a range of audience insight services but in this specific instance, provides audience segmentation tools that provide geographically specific information about arts engagement (The Audience Agency, 2023). This service includes comprehensive

initial reporting on arts audiences in the council's population, yearly surveying to track generalized information over time, and surveying formats for specific events that can track against the same audience segments. For the council using this service, it allows them to not only track overall quantitative information about audience segments and number of participants in public art events, but also elicit qualitative feedback from audiences which can be used for internal reporting:

> "You input that [post-project survey results] into the dashboard, and you can kind of see the results you're getting as you go. So, we normally do a wash up, once a year, we look at those figures. But also, after every project, if there were specific things for the evaluation for that specific project, then we use those. We also get project specific feedback from the entire team and pick out the comments from those surveys… we then use to write our evaluation for individual projects."

Case Study 6.1

One Aotearoa-based council has used the Creative Cities Index, a tool that is intended to take stock of the creative capacity of a city – a measure of attitudes and perceptions of creativity, opportunities for artists and other creative people to create work, levels of engagement with the arts, and other aspects identified as critical for a successful 'creative city'. This is achieved through comprehensive surveying at a specific point in time, which is then measured against an index to establish a 'score' of how creative a city is, with breakdowns under categories that focus on themes such as Placemaking, Strategic Leadership and Talent and Learning. This exercise can be repeated multiple times to compare how scores change following the implementation of specific interventions. However, the author of this tool no longer promotes it or offers it as a service so opportunities to continue with this form of comparison will not be possible. Instead, each index scoring made previously is a snapshot of the creative and artistic life of the city at specific years, which can be used to reflect on and respond to.

In both instances, the commissioning of an external evaluator was preferred by the councils involved. In theory, external evaluators provide a level of distance from the subject of the evaluation, which should create a rigorous and more impartial response than evaluation designed and conducted internally (Fleischer & Christie, 2009; Wond, 2016). There can be a tendency for internal evaluators, who are also

involved in policy development and direction, to favour the production of data that support advocacy over evaluation that more fulsomely captures true value (Fleischer & Christie, 2009). There are a range of power dynamics also involved in the commissioning of external evaluation – while external evaluators may believe that their outputs are impartial, the council as commissioning body as the primary funding source may influence their evaluation design. Additionally, the 'prestige' of externally sourced evaluation may also disadvantage councils who are unable to afford the services of external evaluators; in the cases above, both councils interviewed were those with the largest populations and associated arts budgets.

5.2.8 Media analysis

Most council staff who were interviewed reviewed media as part of their formal and informal research into the value of public art activities. The scope of this was dependent on the type of projects implemented and who delivered them, as well as internal council staff capacity and the types of media being analysed.

Social media analysis is a readily used tool for assessing the value of public art. Only one council of the six case studies did not mention social media feedback while being interviewed. The others used social media comments around council work on public art, or on projects that were delivered because of planning conditions, to gather information about the perceived value of artworks and events to commenters. For one council, their current social media monitoring is conducted in an ad hoc way by the communications team and the relevant arts staff, and is used primarily to monitor responses on Facebook, Instagram, or X quickly after an event or project is announced or completed:

> "On the social media data that we receive, it's usually it's ad hoc, as is much of social media. It's not as structured as a proper data point, in terms of input/output for our values. But the anecdotal kind of instant feedback you're getting from the community is also very, very critical… So, you do access a different kind of data, which is also quite... when you're public facing, that can be quite reactive."

Case Study 2.2

For another large English urban council, Instagram engagement statistics were one way to understand their relevance for younger audiences. When one artwork was receiving a lot of interest on the platform, council staff were able to track this using location tags and hashtags, and use this to better interpret the value of the artwork for specific audiences:

> "And also, for Instagram, it's evident that younger people are very interested in [the artwork], you know - maybe they want to do it for the Gram, or maybe they want to do it for the experience. But regardless, they're engaging."

<div align="right">Case Study 6.1</div>

Social media tools, like other evaluation methods, require careful structure and systematic application to be most effective in measuring value against aims. The above analysis of social media statistics is limited in its ability to understand motivations for engagement and can fall into the trap of reporting numbers at the expense of data on quality or type of interaction. The relationship between public art and social media (particularly image or video focused platforms such as Instagram, Tik Tok and Facebook) is documented and critiqued in public art research literature (Cartiere & Guindon, 2018; Malachowski, 2022; Zebracki, 2016). For the council participant above, the motivations of those engaging with a work using Instagram weren't clear. The ways that social media and other virtual platforms can open up new audiences, encourage strategies of co-production, and create a sense of shared pride (Vlachou & Panagopoulos, 2022) are all possible benefits worth understanding, that may not be fully understood in a simple examination of engagement metrics, as noted here. Conversely, the potential influence of social media on the production of new public artworks (Garrido Castellano & Raposo, 2023), expectations of some funders that projects will become magnets for social media engagement over other objectives (Malachowski, 2022), and a reliance on social media to receive feedback from communities are all potential pitfalls of social media evaluation.

For some councils, news media review is also one way to understand community reception of individual works of public art, events, and overall programmes of activity (such as the high street regeneration and traffic calming efforts mentioned in

earlier sections). This can also be combined with social media review, as articles posted on council social media pages and news media accounts were also opportunities for commenters to share their perspectives and reactions. Only one council specifically mentioned using reviews of news media articles as a form of measurement, and two mentioned that the projects they work on do not typically prompt press releases directly from council, as they primarily work on projects paid for and led by housing developers:

> "We don't tend to press release, because we're not the people who are, you know… Because it's not our project."

<div align="right">Case Study 4.1</div>

This approach creates a lack of council control around the narratives of value of public art projects initiated by developers. Because the interviewed council was not in charge of the project, they were not able to produce new press communications around it or take credit for any involvement. Some scholarly critiques demonstrate the prevalence of press releases around public art projects as useful public relations opportunities for property developers or other businesses. In one example, researchers demonstrated that public art project press releases were used to manage local opposition to increased surface mining, by framing artworks as valuable public services to affected communities (Chambers & Baines, 2015). In crediting public art sponsored by this company as a driver for economic and cultural regeneration, the company was able to influence mainstream media depictions and critique of their actual purpose – extractive mining activities that harmed local ecologies. Both news and social media can be wielded by artists to increase or affect engagement with their work (Thor, 2015). For the council above, they were not able to engage with press media in this way. In evaluating both news and social media, evaluators must therefore be critically mindful of the nature of the media item's production and who was involved in creating or prompting it.

5.2.9 Other tools

While the tools described above comprise the majority of those mentioned by council staff in interviews, there were some also described that don't fit neatly into categories with other tools for evaluating public art.

One council noted that one measure of value that resonated with their elected members was awards won – for specific projects and for team members or leaders within the arts team. They explained that this provided value for political and senior management leaders, who were able to use awards as external validation of the value of their council's work and enhance the reputation of arts programming.

> "For us, that's, that is not measurable, so much as it helps raising status and our reporting, which means we get more [funding]. So instead of, you know, you know, the rubbish dump can go 'we've done this many rubbish pickups, and this many here, and here's all the data and rarara', we're actually going 'well, we won these awards. We must be good'."
>
> Case Study 1.1

In putting themselves or team members in contention for awards as individuals, rather than for specific projects or events, the interviewee was able to enhance their ability to advocate for their work in public art to politicians.

> "And that was the same thing about running for those awards. It was totally strategic. I hate doing that sort of stuff. Holy hell, it's made such a difference… they just ride on that - on the coattails of that."
>
> Case Study 1.1

This approach is very much focused on advocacy. Rather than pursuing this evaluation tool to better understand the work of the council department, it was instead a strategic proof of externally validated value that the department could then use to advocate to decision-makers. This participant was clear that their aim was to also produce and use tools that allowed them to gain further insights into public art value for their communities but highlighted the efficacy of some measures of value that enhanced their reputation with decision makers, furthering their ability to access funding and resources.

Tracking changes over time or trends in quantity and project size becomes more challenging in an already stretched working environment. One council actively tracks the number of new public art projects approved when developments make their way through the planning process. While there are limited opportunities to collect value data from planning conditioned public art, they noted that understanding the quantity of new work being created, installed, or performed because of new developments was a useful metric. However, there are difficulties in using this data most effectively – housing developments can take many years to actualize from approval to construction.

> "The difficulty with all our public project projects is when you count them because some of them go on for years! You know, I think I've probably told you the story where the public art consultant who was working on it, her children are now at secondary school. From when we held the first interviews, she was she was pregnant and off on maternity leave, and now has children at secondary school, so it's like, some of them go on for years, and you just keep going back to them, so nothing happens forever. And then you go back to it, and then nothing happens forever, and then you go back to it. When you count it, and what you count is... really tricky."
>
> Case Study 4.1

This quotation articulates the challenges of time in developing programme and value measurement tools. In this instance, the point at which a project can be 'counted' is unclear and this impacts the staff member's ability to usefully use statistics about the number of projects taking place each year.

One council measures the instances of public art projects where they work collaboratively with other organisations and looks at the number of new relationships as one way to determine enhanced value for audiences – in particular, their value for new audiences or to achieve extrinsic value goals in areas such as sustainability through public art.

> "[we are] measuring that through the engagement with scientific groups who are kind of focused on climate change, as well, and seeing how much more our audiences will engage with those groups in that project."
>
> Case Study 6.1

5.3 Different tools for different values

Chapter 4 examined the range of types of value that participating councils spoke about when considering their involvement with public art. This range of instrumental values spans the social, the economic, the environmental, the wellbeing and the capacity of public art to contribute to placemaking. To assess whether public art projects and programmes deliver against the values, described both in formal policy and guidance documents or informal staff priorities, tools need to be tailored to evaluate effectively and comprehensively. This section will argue that different types of value demand different measurement tools when evaluating public art for councils, using the information gathered during interviews with council staff.

All interviewed council staff spoke about the capacity of public art to provide social value. For three this was through enhancing connections to place, for three it was through providing a platform for urban storytelling and public displays of identity, and for two it was through encouraging collaborative creation and for all it was through being a catalyst for conversation and connection. To measure whether their public art intervention provided social value, a variety of the tools described earlier in this chapter are used by councils. These include:

- Conversations with members of the public, artists, elected members, and developers
- Social media and print media monitoring
- Local and national awards for project excellence
- Surveys
- Observational tools
- Community consultation

Tools to measure the economic value of public art are more limited in the councils participating in this research. Their scope, and capacity to fully measure the economic return on public art projects, is small and generally only appropriate for certain kinds of short-term event based public art projects. The tools currently used by case study councils include:

- Bed night data
- Credit card spend data
- Ticket sale records
- Charity fundraising profit records
- Post-project reporting by artists and organisations

Notably, most of the information gathered using these tools is only possible when examining event-based public art. Council staff spoke about how they did not have the time or the relevant resourcing to create evaluation tools that interrogated the economic impact of permanent public art, or examine aspects other than immediate spend information, such as the financial impacts the project had for artists and local businesses involved in production, the total spend by developers on public art projects over time and what this potentially meant for their own profits, and other calculations concerning return on investment. Literature on the use of Return on Investment tools in public art evaluation, and arts evaluation more generally, shows there is greater opportunity to integrate more fulsome evaluation methods that better explain the economic impact of public art. These include the conceptual impact model for temporary public art sculpture trails (Thompson & Day, 2020); records of economic investment in projects alongside resulting employment, changes to the property market over time, and the use of territorial marketing (Forte & De Paola, 2019); and surveying residents to determine their theoretical willingness to spend money on public art (Tanguy & Kumar, 2019). However, there is also contemporary academic debate on resisting the trend towards the prevalence of economic evidence (Belfiore, 2015; Meyrick & Barnett, 2021; Street, 2011; Vuyk, 2010; Walmsley, 2013) and this aligns with feedback from multiple interviewees in this research project – that they feel a frustration with a presumed focus on economic evidence and instead seek tools to measure a broader range of public art values.

Three councils spoke about tools that measured the value of public art created to explore issues around environmental sustainability. One of these case study local authorities mentioned the capacity of public art to contribute to wider council goals to address the climate crisis, and consequently included recommendations to

property developers to commission public artwork that explores this theme – however, it did not have a formal tool in place to measure the impact of environmentally focused public art commissioned in this way. Two others spoke about specific artworks that focused on climate resilience. One of these assessed the impact of their permanent artist-led planting project through post-project reporting from the artist; the other used post-project participant surveys, observational tools, and social media monitoring to understand the impact of their temporary public sculpture work.

While most research participants spoke about their belief in the capacity of public art to contribute to goals around health and wellbeing, none had specific tools in place to measure this form of value. This was a potential value identified in some policies, indicating a disconnect between stated hoped-for values and the pragmatic ability to measure outcomes.

Five of the six case study councils described the value of public art as a contributor to placemaking and localized neighbourhood regeneration efforts. Current tools used by local authorities to measure the placemaking value of public art include post-project surveys, focused interviews with business owners in targeted high streets, footfall and traffic observation, social media monitoring, and print media analysis. They also all spoke about using ad hoc conversations with the public, artists, colleagues, and developers to explore public art's role in placemaking.

5.4 The influence of time on tools

Time is a significant factor for deciding which tools are most appropriate for measuring the value of public art for councils. Whether what is being evaluated takes place over a set time frame or is in place permanently; whether evaluation takes place immediately following completion and installation or if it instead is conducted days, months, or years after; or whether a discrete project or an ongoing programme is being evaluated all contribute to the development or selection of tools that will be most useful. The time at which evaluation is undertaken at different points within a project or suite of activities also influences the data that will be collected – for

instance, pre-project consultation, assessments of value during creation or delivery, and post-project evaluation all provide different types of information for council staff to use.

One public art project can have different effects and values depending on the time evaluation is done. One council explained that in putting on a street art festival, there were different values achieved at different points of the project's life cycle – firstly, the event itself drew residents and visitors into the town centre, but a follow up effect was the artworks left in place once the event finished. These created different opportunities for engagement, provided staging for other events, produced opportunities for promotion of the town streetscape, and enhanced other town centre regeneration efforts.

> "As an event it brings people to town, it brings people out of their homes into the CBD, you know, it has this kind of festival element to it, but then it has this this further quality to or has this lasting visual impact, and that will support a whole range of other events - they tend to be temporary by their nature, they don't have that [lasting quality]. I think it's extraordinary value for money."

> Case Study 3.1

This quotation demonstrates the potential layers of activity that public art programming can contain, as well as the changing values it can have over time. This complexity contributes to creating challenging conditions for evaluation. For the interviewed local authority staff members, long-term evaluation undertaken at a distance from the installation or presentation of public art projects was considered desirable but also impractical, given pressures on their time and resources that meant immediate information about project successes or failures was more justifiable to decisionmakers. The above quotation is the interviewee's own perspective on the way the street art festival provided value for the council as a participating funder, but there are no tools in place to help the council measure or communicate the longer-term effects of the artworks left behind. One parallel example of cultural policy evaluation that does explore the effect of complex, multi-artform programming over a long-term timeframe is the measurement of outcomes around the UK Cities of Culture programme, where the UK Government every four years awards a year-long

designation to a city that subsequently hosts cultural events and celebrations (British Council, n.d.).

It is clear from research around evaluating cities that have participated in the scheme that there are immense difficulties in producing linear cause and effect relationships between cultural policy interventions and specific outcomes (Crone & Ganga, 2023), and that a statistics and figures-forward approach to evaluation does not fully capture impact (Crone & Ganga, 2023; Garcia, 2005). As distinct events lasting for a year, but that typically also result in permanent or long-term changes to the arts landscape and perceptions of a city, Cities of Culture can mirror public art in their range of potential impacts. In research literature evaluating the outcomes for participating cities, evaluators examine the results in years following the event, demonstrating that an evaluation approach can benefit from distance from the event, showing that a more robust suite of data can be gathered than during or immediately following an event, and that a dearth of evidence on long-term impacts for culture risks perpetuating un-rigorous rhetoric around cultural value (Ashton et al., 2023; Crone & Ganga, 2023). There are demonstrable benefits to conducting evaluation over a medium- and long-term period, and for public art this would likely be useful for staff in local authorities. However, without appropriate support from within councils by elected members or senior staff, this is difficult to implement.

Following on from this, for the councils that took part in this research project, the time of staff working on public art was also a major theme in discussions around evaluation. All interviewees spoke about the challenges of being stretched in their roles and the impact this had on their capacity to deploy effective evaluation tools – which in turn, affected their ability to advocate for the work they do in public art or critically reflect on the projects they contributed to. All interviewed staff only worked on public art for part of their role, and for some it was not present in their actual job description and was instead an extra element of their role taken up because no one else was working on it. This, in some cases, created a feedback loop where a lack of available relevant data meant decreased funding support from annual budgets, which in turn meant even lower capacity to spend time on evaluation.

> "Definitely, the expanse of the role does inform the public art realm, but then it also does kind of mean that there is less capacity to do the things that are on the list [for other parts of the role]."

<div align="right">Case Study 3.2</div>

The impacts of austerity, or austerity-like approaches, have been felt across the totality of local government, particularly in England (Fahy et al., 2023; Rex & Campbell, 2021) but also in Aotearoa (John et al., 2015). This scarcity approach to local authority funding has seen significant reductions in the provision and resourcing of arts and culture teams within councils, with councils across England generally seeing a reduction in arts and culture and in particular, funding for arts officers and associated funding programmes (Rex & Campbell, 2021). While I have been unable to find data on changing numbers of dedicated public arts officer roles across England or Aotearoa, interviewees anecdotally noted that they noticed multiple restructures and role abolitions across their networks, particularly since 2010. This included the disestablishment of public art officer roles across councils in England, smaller arts and culture departments in larger cities in Aotearoa, and the abolition of culture departments in some English cities entirely, which aligns with literature on the impact of austerity on culture departments in the UK (Rex & Campbell, 2021). They all also commented on the pressures of maintaining existing programmes of activity and how this limited their capacity to expand evaluation.

One council employed an external organization to provide tools that would allow them to monitor changes in audience segmentation in their arts provision over time, including public art. This was described in the 'Tools' section above. Having the funding available to commit to long-term evaluation consultancy meant that staff were able to create consistent reporting, track data efficiently and better understand the needs of their communities and the value that arts and culture provides to residents of their area. It also meant they were able to monitor in more comprehensive depth the diversity of audiences and ensure that any contracts for service delivery with external arts organisations aligned to the council's strategic direction for their arts provision. This evidence-based approach meant that there was potential for these organisations (which had relied on council funding to deliver, as

part of their contracts, public art activity) to lose all or part of their resourcing if they were not able to meet the ambitions of the council:

> "We've come to the point where those organisations were historically funded for many years now. But they're not really developing, delivering on the contemporary vision, or if they are, we don't really see how they are… In the next financial year, I think there will be conversations to be had."

<div align="right">Case Study 6.1</div>

This approach demonstrates the critical potential of evaluation. While many staff spoke about the importance of good evaluation to support advocacy, cultural policy scholars also note that this is a limiting perspective and that to genuinely understand the ways people engage with culture, there should also be evaluation strategies that allow for critique and nuance (Belfiore & Bennett, 2010). An evaluation framework that openly explores impacts over multiple phases of time means that a range of outcomes can be examined and measured against instrumental goals of the relevant council, leading to a greater picture of how projects and funded organisations affect their communities over time (Evans, 2005). In a practical sense, this means that data gathered during evaluation can be used to critique the effects of policy interventions and funding. For public art, this means that results can be used both for advocacy as well as for justification of decreased support for particular funding streams that do not deliver on council aims; for two interviewees, this meant that organisations which had previously received regular funding, but were not delivering projects aligned with new council cultural strategies or long term plans, were liable to lose funding unless they changed their approach to align. It is therefore important that council staff are given access to tools that allow them to research the value of public art over time.

5.5 Value measurement challenges

Prior to interviews taking place, many of the councils who completed the initial survey had answered that they did not conduct evaluation of their public art activity. However, when conversations about what evaluation can be and do came up during the case study research phase, it was clear that a wide range of evaluation activity takes place at both a formal and informal level. Alongside these discussions

exploring the variety of tools currently in use, interviewees all spoke about opportunities to use improved or more expansive tools, and the impact this could have on their ability to advocate for their work, secure greater resourcing and ensure the provision of more valuable public artwork for their communities.

Every one of the nine council interview participants spoke about the challenge of finding enough time to conduct any evaluation, let alone ringfencing time to create and implement improved value measurement tools. This was the case for even the largest council involved, which had a sizeable arts team and the budget available to contract external organisations to conduct some of their evaluation activity. Without adequate staff time to conduct evaluation, analyse results and then use them appropriately, staff identified a vicious spiral of decreasing support from decisionmakers – without evidence, they receive less support, which in turn means lower capacity to gather evidence.

The interviewee at the council with the smallest level of public art activity was pessimistic about the ability of additional value measurement tools to create compelling arguments for increased support within their organization. They noted that existing perceptions of the value public art can provide for places like their regional, rural English council location by politicians and the public meant that it was unlikely that any business case for added budget for public art activity would succeed. The limited public art projects currently taking place were not of a significant scale enough to create a highly resonant argument for increasing support in a council context already struggling under austerity. For them, the only tools that might encourage support were case studies of pilot projects in similar contexts that would be able to encourage their own councillors to commit to small levels of investment as a test of concept. This felt perspective builds on Belfiore's critiques of dominant modes of decision-making around cultural value, whereby they argue that the connection between evaluation and 'making the case' for the arts being a worthwhile subject for public spending creates an environment that privileges the economic over the exploration of other typologies of value 2015). For this council interviewee, the wider discourse around evidence-based decision making, combined with an environment of austerity and what they felt was a generally poor

understanding of public art's potential among elected members, meant that specific evaluation tools were not the primary challenge in their work – rather, changing broader attitudes around both public art and risk were the barriers to increased support in their local authority setting.

One Aotearoa council participant spoke about the challenge of prioritizing evaluation when job insecurity meant the focus needed to be on actual project delivery, rather than administrative activity around council public art work:

> "That just hasn't happened because of, I guess, a capacity issue. Also, if I'm being quite honest, it's also been a sense of… because I wasn't full time for a long time, I guess. I was a contractor for a long time. And so that sort of job insecurity..."

Case Study 3.2

Four out of the six council case studies did not have funding available to employ external contractors to conduct public art evaluation on their behalf. Of the two that did, one was based in England and used the services of the Audience Agency, and the other was in Aotearoa and had previously worked with the Creative Cities Index. The ability to outsource some evaluation activity allows council staff to both create consistency in their own measures as well as spend time on using data most effectively. For the councils without this ability, staff were clear that pressures on their time severely limited their ability to work with public art evaluation research.

The impact of election cycles is another challenge that council public art staff feel impacts on their ability to evaluate. In Aotearoa the local government terms run for three years (Electoral Commission, 2023), while in England the cycles last for four years (Department for Levelling Up, 2023). These relatively short timeframes mean that council activity can be affected by political perception near to election periods, with councillors sometimes unwilling to support spending decisions that may be unpopular with the voting public:

> "You will never get a local politician, you know, canvasing on public art. You just, it's never ever an issue for them - it is how many bins have you emptied this year? You know, we don't charge for car parking in our town centres. It's those type of things. It's your appeal to voters."

Two other interviewees identified opportunities to improve and refine the tools they are currently using to better suit the distinctive nature of public art. One Aotearoa council conducts yearly community surveys that gather information on community perceptions of their overall work streams, including an arts and culture strand. This did not specifically ask about engagement with public art, and instead focused on formal institutions and cultural event engagement. However, the staff member interviewed had lobbied the research team within council to include a new question on whether residents felt that the city was creative – the interviewee created a direct link between the surveyed residents' perceptions of creativity and council's support for public art, as a very public expression of the city's creative and artistic community.

Multiple interviewees spoke about the limitations of economic value measurement tools currently in use, and their lack of ability to both fully reflect the economic impact of public art works over time as well as the futility of focusing on economic outputs at the expense of other impacts.

When asked explicitly what value measurement tools would be most useful, respondents noted varying ways to elicit data that would help them monitor, understand, and communicate the value of their public art work as well as advocate for future support from decision makers. These included comprehensive dashboarding tools to evaluate and compare multiple projects (which can be built from spreadsheet templates, where data can be input for individual projects and then analysed, compared, and visually represented in graphs and reports), as well as those that would capture public perceptions as they change over time. For one council, being able to provide case studies of relevant public art projects that demonstrated the value of public art for that context was one desired advocacy method. Three councils specified that they would ideally like to use more nuanced economic impact reporting tools that gathered information on both the immediate financial impact of events and permanent works, as well as continuing effects on artist careers, local businesses, and other economic measures. Council staff also expressed an interest in

developing additional levers within council planning departments to compel developers to expand their public art value reporting when feeding back to local authorities after delivering planning conditioned work, such as an obligation to provide not only a public art plan during the consenting stage, but also a requirement that post-installation evaluation reporting is provided before planning conditions are discharged. Most councils desired greater time to spend on evaluation and noted that this would allow them to enhance existing tools to gather additional qualitative data to support existing quantitative measures, such as post-event surveying and social media monitoring, and incorporate additional evaluation tools into existing work programmes around public art such as maintenance planning.

While Chapter 2 outlined select case studies where evaluators employed specific models of tools (such as Social Return on Investment, or logic models) to understand the value of particular public art projects, none of the councils participating in this research utilised these. Instead, each approached their evaluation work in a bespoke way, using the set of tools, resources and time available in each council context. This may be due to resourcing constraints (the SROI and logic model options require specific training, potentially software purchases, and a significant investment of time). The tools mentioned in Chapter 2 are also discussed in critical reflection, with perceived deficiencies in the models highlighted by authors around the limited scope the tools cover and the particular ways that insights were expressed (Refki et al., 2020; Usher & Strange, 2011).

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter ultimately demonstrates that between multiple different councils, there are very few consistent approaches to tools to measure the value of public art. All councils explored issues of value through ad hoc conversations but did not necessarily consider this a useful tool for collecting information on value for advocacy purposes. Formalised tools are considered more compelling for decisionmakers, to create comparability with other areas of evidence-based council activity (particularly of a quantitative nature). This is a frustration for many council staff, who recognize the difficulty of existing in an evidence-based environment

while also desiring a shift towards greater understanding of the unique nature of public art and its multiplicities of value for communities which may not be easily measured. These results are a new demonstration of similar frustrations felt in other areas of cultural policy research (Belfiore & Bennett, 2010; Walmsley, 2013), but these findings show that the specific conditions of public art work create additional complexities in conducting evaluation in a local authority setting.

Evaluation is an area of local government public art practice that showcases a range of tensions and practical compromises. For participant councils, the design of evaluation programmes incorporates accountability to stakeholders such as elected members, council finance teams, communities and interested groups, but it also acts as a learning opportunity for those enacting policy and projects. The ways that evaluation tools are used, their design, and the level of interest in them from council decision-makers has a significant influence on public art in a council setting.

This chapter has focused on examining the impacts of the tools used by staff working in councils on public art, to better understand the range of evaluation methods currently in use and what gaps exist between desired achieved value of public art provision and ways in which to measure this effectively. Results show that there is a broad spectrum of value measurement tools currently in use and that their use is influenced by conditions such as staff time and capacity to conduct evaluation, overall existing political support for public art, whether there is a public art policy or related strategy in place, budget availability to employ external contractors to conduct evaluation, and the specific ways that case study and survey respondent councils are involved in public art delivery or commissioning. They also show that despite this variety, the tools currently used by participant councils do not achieve the ideal evaluation aims of interviewed staff, who seek data that can support their advocacy work and create more in-depth understandings of their public art policies and programming. For some, this constitutes accessing a greater level of detail by adapting the tools currently available, to provide new insights into audiences, artists, and participants. For others, the addition of tools to capture broader types of value are what is desired.

Tools used comprise both the formal and informal. For some councils, most of their evaluation methods are informal, as they lack staff time, management support and budget availability to conduct formal evaluation on projects that are primarily delivered via housing developers through planning condition levers. In these instances, informal evaluation methods include conversations with artists, developers, colleagues, and members of the public, as well as unstructured observations of how publics interact with new and existing artworks, and social or print media monitoring. For other councils with greater resourcing or the commitment to public art support via existing policies and strategies, formal tools include a range of surveying and formal consultation opportunities, traditional audience tracking data such as ticket sales, economic impact reporting through spending data, formal observational studies, the employment of third-party evaluation contractors, formal interviews and data on insurance valuation and number of projects commissioned. For each council, value measurement methods were intended to produce data that would help staff reflect on the value achieved and then communicate this to politicians, colleagues, and the public. However, for most councils, their existing tools both formal and informal, did not capture the full range of information that would support these advocacy efforts.

Time also has a significant impact on the types of tools used and the information that can be gathered. Public art projects can be temporary or permanent, meaning that evaluation takes place at different points during the artwork lifespan and value for communities can change over time. This creates a complex setting in which to conduct evaluation, which is made more difficult again by the variety of projects that can constitute public art – for instance, as demonstrated in this chapter, projects can include temporary ephemeral events as well as permanent works, urban design elements as well as standalone projects, and creative planting schemes as well as memorials. The ability to monitor changes in value over time, as opposed to only immediate post-project evaluation, was something multiple councils were exploring in their current work or seeking in future tools for measuring public art value. Finally, time was also a large burden for the council staff working on public art – in all cases, staff noted that their roles had multiple responsibilities and draws on their time, and that evaluation was therefore sometimes a luxury when the pressures of

project delivery felt more acute. Time was also a factor in the challenges of working under a political environment with short-term election cycles – this meant that staff, by necessity, focused on a period of three or four years rather than a longer-term vision, and this affected both the projects they worked on, and the tools used to evaluate them.

Time was the most regularly identified issue, but only one of a whole range of challenges to implementing effective evaluation of public art in a local authority setting. Interviewed and surveyed staff noted difficulties in accessing appropriate budget to complete evaluation; challenges around existing perceptions of the value of public art for politicians, senior staff, and the public; and a lack of refinement in tools currently in use that made them less appropriate for applying to their range of public art projects. These conditions arise in part out of environments of austerity and low local authority funding, where limited council resourcing creates an environment of competition between council services (Fahy et al., 2023; John et al., 2015; Rex & Campbell, 2021). For two councils, a lack of public art policy was also identified as one reason their councils felt able to minimize financial support for their work. Despite these challenges, public art staff were able to identify a suite of opportunities for improve value measurement tools that would help them more comprehensively understand the impact of their work and then use this to advocate for its continuation and growth.

There are opportunities for future researchers or public art practitioners to develop research around these tools, to provide practical solutions to the challenges prevalent in public art evaluation. What is also necessary is ensuring greater theoretical scrutiny of the relationship between value measurement tools and overall policy direction. As such, the next chapter will focus on public art policy, connecting practical experiences of council practitioners to existing literature, and critiquing the impact this has on public art activity.

6. The impact of measuring value: the effects of evaluation on local authority public art policy and activity

6.1 Introduction

This chapter argues that evaluation has a significant consequential relationship with public art policy and activity in a local authority setting. It aims to demonstrate this through an interrogation of public art policy within council contexts, in particular the prevailing assumed environment of evidence-based policy making – although it critiques this dominant framework. It contrasts the effects of evaluation on councils with different types of public art policy and those without guiding documentation. Ultimately, it finds that policies are advantageous for guiding work and providing a level of security for planning future activity, and they demonstrate an expansive and optimistic vision for public art in communities. Conversely, councils without public art policy struggle with low levels of public art activity. Evaluation has an important role for councils with policies, in creating data that informs against the aims held within the policies. A lack of evaluation is strongly seen in councils without public art policies, and this results in a lack of support from key decisionmakers such as elected members and senior managers.

The prevalence of a true evidence-based policy environment for public art workers within local authorities in Aotearoa and England was a significant feature of conversations with staff. However, as Dollery notes, in practice there may actually be a practice of policy-based evidence making, in which councils privilege particular forms of evidence in service of their existing goals, and create policy to suit this (2018). This chapter interrogates this paradigm and examines the impact of this policy-evidence relationship on public art in a council setting. There are also strongly felt relationships between a lack of policy and a lack of evidence of value, and even within cultural policies there can be issues with capturing the full scope of value of the arts. Arts Council England released a literature review which showed limitations in expressions of value for cultural policy across the UK (Keaney, 2006),

and Caust published an article in 2003 demonstrating that market-driven agendas were monopolising arts policymaking. This chapter examines whether these perspectives stand true for a contemporary public art context, providing both added detail for the specific context of public art and an updated response to critiques from two decades ago.

To examine these concerns, the next sections of this chapter will lay out the perceptions of council staff, common threads in all council public art policies, the range of policy document typologies currently in use, and some of the challenges and practical realities of producing and using public art policy in a local authority setting.

Before this can take place, it is important to define what is meant by policy and activity. As noted in Chapter 2, *policy* as a term describes the formal guidelines and principles that inform decision-making and practice in government departments, including the delivery of public services and partnerships that governments and councils make in order to achieve their strategic goals (Klassen et al., 2016). Policies may be entirely new or replace existing but outdated versions. For this research project, policy is an umbrella term that covers a range of approaches to decision-making expressed as guidance documents for councils, including strategies, plans, policies, and guidance notes. All these documents perform the function of 'policy', through describing the reasons for decision-making and the parameters under which programming will take place. Each service area in local government (such as housing, transport, urban policy, or social work) will likely have particular statutory regulations that influence the types of policy that are created and how it engages with research and the public (Davies et al., 2000; Nutley et al., 2012). For cultural activity in Aotearoa, the Local Government Act 2002 outlines a legislative requirement that councils have to promote cultural wellbeing in their communities (Department of Internal Affairs, 2002) although this does not specify what this provision consists of (LGNZ, 2020). In England, local authorities are the major funders of arts and culture, and while there is no legislative burden for councils around specific cultural activities, white papers produced by government outline expectations on the role of councils in cultural activity (The Department for Culture Media and Sport, 2016). Public art crosses several council activity areas, but as a cultural activity is often

under the remit of wider cultural practice including administration of libraries, theatres, museums, and community arts.

In contrast, *activity* is the term used to describe activity taking place within a council context. This activity is enacted by council staff or is commissioned by them and can happen whether there is or isn't a policy in place to guide decision-making on practice. Activity can describe one-off projects, ongoing programmes of activity, suites of interconnected projects and the results of funding or other support provided by council in some way and generally takes place on some kind of schedule (Adler & Goggin, 2016; UNICEF, 2019). Examples of activity in this specific project include council-commissioned public art projects, council-approved public art projects taking place in new property developments, projects that received funding or administrative support from councils, artist support schemes, and other ways that council supports public art practice in their region.

This chapter begins by exploring the current provision (or lack thereof) of public art policies across participating councils. It will also look at the various forms these policies take, and their stated purpose both within written documents and as utilised by interviewed local authority staff members. It tests the in-practice prevalence of evidence-based policy development and use, and in doing so, it will argue that evidence and value measurement have a significant relationship to the provision of public art activity and related policies.

6.2 Public art policies: who has them?

Of the 27 councils across Aotearoa and England who completed the survey, 16 shared that they had and used some kind of public art policy, be it a dedicated policy or strategy, a section within a broader arts and culture strategy, or guidance material provided to external parties approaching the council for advice. The additional 10 who responded to my initial enquiry who stated that they had no public art activity within their remit also did not have any identifiable public art policy in place (this information was gathered independently following their response email, using publicly available policy registers on council websites). Therefore, of the total 37

respondents in the first phase of this research project, 43% had in place some level of public art policy.

Six councils participated in the subsequent in-depth research phase, and of these, five used some kind of public art policy or guideline document. One of these had a specific public art policy, three included public art sections in larger arts and culture strategies or regeneration plans (one of these was in the process of developing a public art specific policy to sit underneath the larger strategy), and one used a public art guidance note when working with developers. Two had no specific public art policy in place while having an overarching cultural strategy, although both were currently developing this at the time of research taking place. Additionally, two respondent councils had additional documents that referred to public art – these comprised regeneration plans for local high streets or central business areas. Within these, public art was mentioned as a tool for creating instrumental value in other areas of the regeneration plan.

Councils in both Aotearoa and England had in place varying public art policies – there was no strong trend in either country for specific types of policy or levels of policy provision. I could not find formal guidance documents for developers in Aotearoa. This was likely due to the different planning environment to England, as Aotearoa does not have a similar planning mechanism to Section 106, or the legislative ability to apply other public art planning conditions. Where property developers did decide to include public art in their schemes, there is instead a more ad hoc approach that does not follow a single typical process, but instead councils offer assistance where desired or suggestions of best practice that are not enforceable (Christchurch City Council, n.d.; Wellington City Council, n.d.).

In previous chapters the lack of participation from certain types of councils has been noted, specifically some from both countries that have a reputation for strong public art activity as well as those that are particularly large. In Aotearoa, some of the larger cities did not participate, and in England, some cities with a reputation for substantial public art activity also did not respond. Non-responses from these councils were likely due to a range of causes including severe lack of staff time, staff expertise not

being available due to parental leave or job changes, and the study taking place at a time of staffing restructure, among other potential reasons. The public art policies for these cities are publicly available, so as the strategy for this research project was to use a range of methods to explore a range of council examples, including interviews with staff to interrogate their experiences around policy and value measurement, it was deemed prudent to include additional publicly available policies to complement the documentary analysis element of the research. While these are not attached to councils that participated in the interview process, they do add an additional level of breadth, particularly around expressions of value and priorities for public art across both countries.

6.3 Types of policy

During the survey phase of this project between June and September 2022, respondents were asked whether they had a public art policy in place, and if so, to provide a link to a publicly available version. Of the 16 that responded yes, 11 were able to provide a link. One stated that their policy was currently under development, and another noted that they did have a policy but that it was very out of date (from 1998) and no longer practically in use – however, they do provide a guidance note for developers who have planning conditioned public art applied to their schemes. This section describes the range of public art policy documents in use by participating councils, noting the specific features of each that have different effects on council public art practice. Further sections in this chapter then use this baseline information to argue that policies are a substantial tool for advocacy, building understandings of the value of public art for local government organisations, and that they have a significant relationship with value measurement.

As noted earlier in this chapter, respondents provided a range of different types of documents, that comprised their perspective public art policies. This included dedicated public art policies, more general arts and culture strategies, guidance notes for external developers, and regeneration plans which included references to public art. This demonstrates that many categorisations of guidance document can function

as policy – this section, and the rest of this chapter, will demonstrate how these perform different functions within a council public art context.

Strategies are a type of guidance document produced by councils that outline medium to long term values and priorities of the organisation (North East Lincolnshire Council, 2023). They set out a broad operating context for the council in a specific area of work and define desired future outcomes as well as how success against those goals will be measured. They are generally a higher level document, where elected members agree to a strategic vision and may include intended actions around specific policies (Local Government Association). Of the council staff who responded to this research project survey, eight who affirmed their use of a current public art policy provided a link to an overarching arts and culture strategy. These included some goals around public art, but also covered their council's long-term goals and aspirations for all arts and culture as an interconnected vision.

By contrast, one respondent instead linked to a dedicated public art policy. This council also had an overarching arts strategy, but referred to their public art policy for more specific direction around public art. Strategies describe high level documents that set out a vision and a range of actions which will be implemented to achieve that vision (Crowder et al., 2022; Faculty of Public Health UK, 2023). Policies, in contrast, are typically documents that outline the council's point of view and set of guiding principles around a specific topic, containing guidelines for how council makes decisions in that workspace and their anticipated reactions to events (North East Lincolnshire Council, 2023). The linked public art policy outlines what is meant by public art, the possible and anticipated value that public art provides for the local community, the desired outcomes of council supporting public art, and information on likely maintenance planning considerations and how work will be managed. The policy also notes connections to other council strategies, policies, and plans.

Two of the councils interviewed in the case study portion of the research mentioned the integral role that public art plays in local neighbourhood regeneration plans. These plans are action documents that outline a range of achievable goals, specific

schedules, and principles for interventions in the public space and legislative environment of a particular area in a local community. These specific documents are not being specifically cited to maintain confidentiality. In both, each centred on town centres going through a period of regeneration, public art is identified as a critical tool for achieving placemaking aims – including as a way to attract foot traffic, calm traffic, enhance streetscapes, create more appealing and interactive public spaces, and represent the stories of the local area with more nuance and relevance than is the case prior to the plan being agreed to. These plans are very detailed and articulate multiple actions that will be taken and outline the ways that success against these actions will be measured. They both note that public art does not exist in isolation and instead connects to other areas of activity, such as urban design, community development, heritage, and infrastructure.

This interconnectedness is reflected in publicly available policies from other local authorities that reference other council documents as influencing and supporting public art activity. For example, the Auckland City Council Public Art Policy notes that it, as a document, exists with connections to the key strategic document guiding all council activity (the Auckland Plan 2050), as well as Toi Whītiki, the city's arts and culture strategic plan, and other strategies and plans covering city centre planning and regeneration, local board planning, economic development strategies, parks and open spaces planning, and the Māori statutory board's own 30 year plan (Auckland Council, 2013). This shows the way public art is connected to a range of council activity areas, and as such, policy around it needs to both complement and influence these strands of local authority practice. The value of public art to these other areas of activity, in particular regeneration, is evident in its inclusion in these policy documents, but this is made explicit in their dedicated public art policy.

Finally, two of the English councils that responded to the survey included links to the guidance notes for developers. These documents are prepared by council as an agreed set of standards and expectations for public art produced during property development processes, where developers are obliged to commission public art as part of their set of planning conditions. This legal mechanism in planning legislation

is not available in Aotearoa, which is why this was restricted to councils responding from the UK. These short documents describe what the council views as high quality public art, their definition of public art, their expectations for developers when it comes to public art plans, their ideal outcomes for communities, and their expectations for appropriate budget and the permanence of work (generally a lifetime of at least 10 years). They also outline their expectations for appropriate community engagement around the public art project, their idea of a best practice commissioning and production process, and notes on providing support for maintenance planning and decommissioning once the lifespan of the work is perceived to be reached. These guidance notes are a critical way for councils, which may for a variety of reasons not have the resources to implement larger-scale policies or strategies around public art, have some level of control over the direction of public art in their regions.

A guidance note of this kind shows one type of external party (those involved in permanent public art on new property developments) the decision-making framework of the council when they are approving public art plans, so is only a small part of a potentially much larger suite of public art activity in councils. However, for the two responding councils, this was their only written policy document concerning public art, and interviewed staff noted the necessity of the guidance notes in providing leverage to encourage developers to improve their public art commissioning procedures – in these cases, even a small policy document can back up council staff expertise and show consistency across decision making.

> "'[We can say to reluctant developers] … well, no, it does say that the public art plan will be developed in line with the advice notes. And our advice says you should be spending a bit more than that'. I still think we'll never get the amount we should do. But yeah, sometimes you nudge them into doing a bit more [by using the advice note]."
>
> Case Study 4.1

This demonstrates an opportunity to use official policies, no matter their size and scope, to build greater resourcing for public art from key stakeholders (in this case, property developers). For this council, their advice note is the only formal guidance

they have to provide around public art processes, and it sits alongside other planning policy for use in large-scale developments. It was written by the sole, part-time arts and culture staff member, and assists both them and the planning team in communications with developers.

None of the regeneration plans supplied refer to public art in rural areas, instead focusing on urban neighbourhoods. Other policies mentioned above similarly lack specificity around rural communities and public art, which is surprising as many of the participating councils have a rural or peri-urban make-up, as can be seen in Appendix 7. Recent research on public art in urban spaces demonstrates its potential to contribute to rural community development (Balfour et al., 2018; Crawshaw & Gkartzios, 2016). For one interviewee, they noted the particular challenges that a mostly rural constituency posed for public art delivery.

> "It's quite odd in that a lot of authorities have a big, central heart and we don't. I noticed quite a lot of places that have a major town have a public art/cultural strategy for the town. That's not really appropriate for us because we're not really like that."
>
> Case Study 4.1

This range of policy document types demonstrates the different ways that public art guidance documentation in councils can look, and some of the features of each type of document. It also shows that there is no uniform approach to public art policy across all councils, and instead for each context there is policy tailored to the priorities of that specific council. The next sections will examine how this impacts the kind of work taking place, as well as the relationship between these types of policy and evaluation.

6.4 What is the purpose of public art policy?

The previous section described the range of public art related policies provided to me by participating councils and sourced from council websites. This section expands on this base typology to examine the purpose of public art policies and how they are used in practice.

Public art policy documents all provide a framework under which council staff can direct their decision making around public art work. No matter their form, at a minimum they all outline local authority expectations for public art in the council's region, the anticipated benefits of providing public art, and define what is meant by public art for that specific council. All reviewed public art policies (including arts and culture strategies where public art is included) contain commitments from the council to a particular vision for public art in their communities – while in some cases this is broad and simplified, it does present a commitment from councils to supporting public art, that has been agreed to at the highest levels of governance.

For the interviewed councils, policy is a way to articulate approaches to different arms of their work that ultimately align with overall council strategic aims.

> "…our strategic direction, every bit of policy or regulation we implement as officers of the council is intended to move us closer towards achieving this in whatever way that is."

Case Study 2.2

In practice, this means that council public art policies are developed to align with long term planning goals for local communities. For the quoted council here from Aotearoa, their overall council strategy takes the form of a 10 year plan (commonly referred to as a long term plan, or LTP) (Office of the Auditor General, 2021). These have a 10-year term but in practice are reviewed and amended every three years as a new council is elected. Policies fit underneath this overall strategic approach and support it through guiding decision making on specific activity areas. Depending on their specific context, long term strategies may also align with legislative and regulatory directives from central government (for instance, in Aotearoa, local government legislation requires councils to deliver on goals against community cultural wellbeing) (New Zealand Government, 2019; Skilling, 2005). The overall strategic plans for councils inform policy and practice for all aspects of their work, including public art.

Practically, the provision of public art policy, or more broad arts and culture strategy, provides a level of security for staff working in that area. Staff spoken with at three

councils across both Aotearoa and England all noted that the existence of relevant policies gave them justification for their own work plans and sometimes even helped them argue for the existence of their roles. The availability of a relevant policy, agreed to by councillors and approved by management, meant that delivery of public art work could be planned for with a certain level of long-term capacity – although this was still difficult while operating in a context of short election cycles and long-term budget agreements.

> "When you work in local government, or any kind of government, having strategies you can point to is just phenomenally useful. If something is in a strategy, then it's exponentially easier to argue for it to happen."

Case Study 3.1

> "Every three years, they reconsider what they value for the next three years, and what the community values for the next three years, and how they're going to get there. So, in terms of the specific public art policy, it specifically references the documents, the strategies and the plans, and then it has the underlying direction of council, particular to public art."

Case Study 2.2

These quotations show that an overall council focus on the short term means that public art policy is a necessary buffer against the changing political climate that can drastically change the approach of councils to their work. The use of policy as a form of advocacy is noted by Belfiore and Bennett (2010), who observe that cultural policy more broadly is regularly employed within a government setting to support advocacy efforts around cultural activity, and connected evaluation is less concerned with creating genuine understanding of the effects of artistic interventions and more with continuing its existence. While the cases above all had high-level strategic plans that were reviewed regularly, in most cases, dedicated public art policy was not updated alongside the three or four yearly election cycle (depending on which country the council was in). Instead, it was ratified and then used for several years until it was reviewed against a longer-term schedule. This was the same for the arts and culture strategies – they all had a five to ten year expected lifespan, and some were older than this but still in use. This lack of frequent review may indicate that these policies are deemed low significance by councils. It could also potentially be a pragmatic consideration of a lack of critical need when other aspects of delivering

council activity feel more urgent. For one council staff member interviewed, this was the case, with other aspects of their job being project based and therefore prioritised when they were making decisions about what to spend time on. For councils where either option is the case, a lack of policy review may result in a lack of understanding about the efficacy of the policy.

Historic shifts in stated cultural policy aims over time, from intangible good to a tool for delivering instrumental value, show how influential these documents are in influencing actual practice. Skilling notes that in New Zealand, cultural policy aims have gradually shifted from aspirations for the arts to be public and social goods with intangible value in their own right, to a tool with which to boost the economy and represent a national identity (Skilling, 2005). This is documented in national governmental political debate records, with associated policy announcements and supporting material showing a drift towards support for artworks that support economic and social cohesion aims – this is expressed through funding direction for the national arts council. This shift is also echoed in the United Kingdom, with documented written changes in national arts and culture policy focus over time from intrinsic value to instrumental value (Craik, 2007). While this research project focuses on current practice and policy, several council interviewees mentioned either very old inactive policies, or changes over time in the way their organisations approached public art policy.

Through conversations with council staff, it is clear that policies are advantageous for guiding work and providing a level of security for planning future activity. Policies are a commitment from elected decision-makers to a specific approach or course of action and include high level strategies as well as area-specific policy documents and more targeted guidance notes for developers or other third-party organisations. In all cases, public art policy demonstrates that a council, at least theoretically, supports public art in its region and recognises its value. These policies define what a council views as public art, how they manage it in their regions, and how they measure the efficacy of any public art interventions. Policies provide guidance not only on a council's vision for public art, but also how a council defines public art. This can be a significantly more expansive view than a local authority's

current existing public art collection might infer and demonstrates the aspirations a council has for expanding the ways public art can look and feel within their communities. This showcases one of the ways that policy can inform future programming, and potentially direct funding and support to new or surprising ways of producing public art.

6.5 Evidenced-based policy

The previous sections have examined the types of policy currently in use and what their purpose is. This will now delve into the policy making environment, including the prevailing dominant paradigm of evidence-based policy, critiquing whether this is truly the experience of those working in a council public art policy space. It argues that council staff are strongly informed by a relationship between evidence and policy, but that this relationship is two-way and complicated by the overall political environment of each council context.

Evidence-based policy describes a relationship between research (evidence) and practice (policy), namely that policy is developed in a linear fashion on the foundation of collected evidence (Morrell, 2012).. A strong recurring theme among interview participants was a total commitment to evidence-based policy making in all councils that took part in the case study phase of this research. For councils across both countries, there was an acceptance by interviewed staff that no policy would be created without substantial research to support its development. This section will examine this policy production environment, look at the kinds of evidence used by councils when developing policy, and examine the impacts of this expectation of evidence on public art activity in a council setting.

Multiple interviewees spoke about the necessity of being able to compare the value their work areas provided with other facets of council activity. This was brought up with an acknowledgement that some other aspects of council work, such as (depending on the country) water services, social care, roading, rubbish and recycling services, planning and building control were considered inherent priorities

of council organisations and that strands like public art were, no matter the evidence available about its value, more of an optional extra.

> "We have a lot of monitoring and reporting on the council's core services. For lack of a better phrase, the water, roads. Those sorts of things. That amount of data we have on that is astronomical."
>
> Case Study 2.2

This availability of monitoring and reporting contributed to elected members feeling confident that the decisions they made in these areas were well informed, justifiable and in line with their overall strategic direction for their communities. By contrast, not having similar levels of information for making decisions on arts and culture (including public art) meant there was a higher level of risk for elected members when determining their level of support for related policy initiatives and programming. When speaking with an elected member at one council, they noted the difficulty in applying this standard of evidence to public art:

> "Yeah, the evidence thing is very difficult, you know, because at the end of the day, public art is very emotive. And so, what do you call evidence, you know, like, measuring how somebody feels about something? You know, it's not like counting something."
>
> Case Study 3.3

That there is an expectation that similar evidence levels can and should be provided for all areas of council work presents a major challenge for staff working in this space. For collecting evidence of the varying instrumental values of public art, a range of potential contributions it can make are identified in public art policy. However, these potential values in some instances include direct connections between the provision of public art and economic benefits, social cohesion, and community development, enhanced national and international perception of a community, improved individual wellbeing and contributions to sustainability goals. While some 'core' services also contribute strongly to these aims, it can be simpler to demonstrate their efficacy than that of public art, where these value outcomes are both not necessarily obvious, and where value measurement tools to illustrate this are not readily available. Additionally, the range of values ascribed to public art present a unique challenge, particularly when combined with often low budgets – it

can be immensely difficult for staff to balance providing multiple tools to demonstrate multiple values, while also being stretched between other areas of work alongside public art.

Practically, policy documents might be developed using a strong basis of evidence, but policy enactment does not necessarily follow as planned. This can be due to a range of reasons, including unexpected changes in budget availability, shifts in the priority of decision-makers, changes in staff, and other external factors influencing the ability of a local authority to deliver against its stated aims. For public art, this means that a well-evidenced topical policy, grounded in strong community support and existing reporting, might not be possible to put into practice. This can have flow-on effects into future council activity, as a subsequent lack of data could mean less confidence in determining the direction of related policy.

> "One of the things that worries me about the suspension of the [regeneration plan] is I don't know if that data collection will keep happening, because I'd been very excited about that. I thought 'that's going to give us a completely new set of data that we haven't had before'. And one that can then be being used to advocate for revitalization of other areas."
>
> Case Study 3.1

The availability of value evidence for interventions and programming therefore has a direct relationship to the provision of future policy. In the instance quoted above, the results of evaluation that was going to take place were going to inform the development of future regeneration plans for different areas. The evaluation would have comprised of repeated interviews with business owners in the street going through regeneration, over the course of the project and following its completion and comprised qualitative insight into their impressions of the effect of public art and other regeneration activities on the target area. According to the interviewed staff member, without this evidence base, it is likely that regeneration plans for those different districts could potentially be smaller scale, have less emphasis on public art and urban design, or not exist at all. This relationship between evaluation and policy can therefore be influenced by political decisions, external conditions such as economic conditions and central government legislation, and other factors that impact the ability of a council to conduct research on the value of its public art work.

This is an area of high risk for council staff working in this space and demonstrates the important role of project and programme evaluation in ensuring ongoing sustainability and security.

In conclusion, evidence heavy policy environments are ubiquitous in local authority settings across both Aotearoa and England. This covers all areas of council work, not just arts and culture, and creates an expectation that decisions will be made based on comprehensive research and understanding about a policy area – although, in practice, there may be influences from other areas of policy that strongly influence the evidence collected to inform public art policy. Irrespective of the direction of the relationship between evidence and policy, this context places a substantial burden of proof on public art staff to prove its worth, to publics, staff, stakeholders, and elected members. Staff were generally supportive of this environment, with interviewees strongly feeling that as the caretakers of public money, councillors should be obliged to make decisions only with the support of well-informed advice from council officers. While public art was a challenging work area to evaluate effectively, as described in previous chapters, they argued that this did not mean it should be exempt from the onus to demonstrate its value. Rather, additional support should be provided in gathering this evidence to ensure it is robust, compelling, and useful. This support would ideally come from within councils, but some respondents also mentioned central government or independent research as possible other sources for improved value measurement tools and strategies.

6.7 Lack of public art policy

Even in councils where there is no public art policy, public art programming can still take place. One council case study participant described their lack of public art or arts and culture policy – this had changed over time as the focus of the council moved and austerity budgets meant that arts and culture was seen as a non-essential workstream, meaning staff roles were cut and work stopped. The predominant way that public art is now produced in this council area is through planning-conditioned public art or Section 106 clauses. Public art plans are received from developers to the planning department and then sent for approval to the staff member I spoke with,

who works separate to the planning team as an urban designer. There are no guidance notes for developers to develop public art plans against – instead, they speak with the approving staff member who provides informal guidance that the planned artworks should be contextually relevant to its setting, involve an artist, and include a creative process. There is no mention of public art in the local plan, and no other guiding documentation to provide staff with a framework against which to make decisions. This lack of policy creates a precarious environment in which to work.

> "It's because there's no policy to hang anything off. It's just as it comes along, and we react… It's a reaction to opportunity, whether that's external funding. It's not a priority for... I think, I need to be careful, but it's not a priority for our members, because we would have a policy about it if it was."

<div align="right">Case Study 5.1</div>

For this staff member, it is their personal passion for creative urban design that means public art plans arrive on their desk for approval – it does not form part of their job description or workstream KPIs. When asked, they could not find any benefits to this way of working, explaining that the lack of policy is symbolic of the lack of value that the council places on public art, and arts and culture more generally, as a core part of their work. In having no policy, they also have no justification for spending on public art, which means their involvement is limited to approving a few developments and then, where possible, small-scale projects attached to external funding sources such as high street regeneration.

The participant from the council without any guiding documents at all felt that a lack of policy means that council staff working on public art are at an immediate disadvantage when compared to other areas of council work with adopted policies. Policies outline council support for an area of work, as well as the value they perceive in supporting it. Policies mean it is simple to articulate why a council is involved in certain realms of practice and justify their use of public funding to contribute to types of work. When lacking a public art policy, there is no unified perspective which council staff, elected members and members of the public can refer to when trying to articulate their support for council public art activity.

Improved evaluation would, however, assist with this, using specific cases to showcase the benefits of local authority involvement in public art.

> "I think [better value measurement] would just change the perception of us as a local authority in terms of what we can actually do. Rather than just doing the basic functionality that we have to do by law, you know, there's more to us as an authority - there's a creative element to it, there's public engagement side of it."

Case Study 5.1

The provision of a better evidence base around public art would also enhance the case for creating public art policy, contributing to the policy development cycle at the earliest stage.

A lack of policy is generally associated with low levels of public art programming, with activity typically limited to planning conditioned public art (and therefore normally funded by a private company), small-scale projects which form part of a bigger programme of activity such as neighbourhood regeneration, or one-off programmes connected to external funding. Council staff in organisations that do not have public art policy in place struggle to advocate with their colleagues, their elected members and sometimes members of the public. They also see a lack of cohesive public art in their regions, as different stakeholders in their communities work on projects without a united vision or connected set of ideals for how public art should be commissioned. Interviewed staff felt that their work would be enhanced by the development of public art policy, with consequential positive outcomes for communities who could see greater levels of public art, higher quality work, and art and events that presented a clear story about the local context. While public art policy alone would not achieve these goals, staff anticipated that it would provide a uniting and cohesive vision to guide current and future elected members with.

This lack of policy also contributes to a cycle of lessened decision-maker support. No policy in place means no provision for connected evaluation, which means there is a lack of locally specific, up to date, nuanced data on the value of public art available. This then feeds into a lack of evidence to argue for increased support, which in turn means ever decreasing budgets and role allocations. Within the

councils without public art policy in place, or those with very outdated policy, council staff felt that their roles were precarious, the work they were doing was not a priority for their colleagues or leaders, and that they were limited in their scope to conduct meaningful work, particularly on evaluation.

6.8 Policy development and evaluation

Policies provide guidance for how to make decisions, but also about how councils will measure the success of defined vision and goals. This connection between policy aims and measuring policy efficacy was a key topic for the staff interviewed in this research project. This section argues that there is an obvious relationship between evaluation and policy design, as well as execution, but for public art this is a challenging space.

For some councils, their public art policies have become more realistic over time as the policy development has become more refined. While community consultation is still essential, ideas and proposals put forward by the public are now assessed against practical measures and connection to higher level council aims.

> "… just comparing this arts and heritage plan with the immediate previous one… it had some pretty random stuff in there that came out of community consultation, where people came up with ideas, and they said 'Oh, yeah, that sounds great, just stick it on there'. And it was never going to be achievable."
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> Case Study 2.1

This approach means that the council can readily commit budgetary support to a programme of public art work, confident in producing measurable outcomes that support wider council goals for their community. Staff at this council felt that in creating a new policy with achievable public art goals, with committed support from elected members, they would be able to build a compelling evidence base of the value of projects that would increase budgets for public art in the future.

For the two councils currently in the process of developing new public art policies, evaluation plays an important role in informing their policy design. Both councils

currently have overarching arts and culture strategies, which include action points on the creation or updating of public art specific policies. Both councils described their policy development process, which comprised: targeted community consultation, both with specific stakeholder groups with an interest in public art as well as the general public; review of existing public art asset lists and historic projects; cross-council staff workshops to integrate the range of colleagues working on public art and their perspectives and job priorities; and comprehensive examination of existing public art reporting and collected evaluation data.

> "… our elected members are very, very good at saying 'you've got that in there… why is that there? What's its purpose?' And you need to know why you put it there. And of course we are very diligent about if it serves no purpose, it doesn't go in policy, because someone has to implement the policy. They can't do so if there's not a good enough reason to do that. Why have it there? So, we are trying to get well researched, well considered, well informed policy."

> Case Study 2.2

Council staff agreed that the provision of relevant data was a rightfully important part of the policy development process. It lowered the risk of producing an unworkable document, it provided a strong basis on which to argue for continued or increased support, and it meant that the arts were considered on an equal footing to other areas of council work where evidence bases are considerable and data to support their value easily available.

Being able to provide evidence of the value of public art means elected members are informed when making decisions about budget allocations and council priorities. While this is necessary for the day-to-day functions of a local authority, the ability to produce evidence of how valuable public art projects and programmes are also means that councillors can back up their decision-making decisions when explaining their processes to voting publics in their local communities, thereby protecting their own reputations as responsible governors.

> "You wouldn't expect council to spend public funds on something that they don't understand well. Because if we can't, as officers, communicate in a way that is understandable to our council on the value of public art, how can our councillors be expected to communicate back to the public? Why are

they spending money doing this thing instead of that thing? Or why they prioritise this over that? Choose one, not the other?"

<div align="right">Case Study 2.2</div>

Policy development was also an opportunity to create new sources of evidence for the value of public art. One set of councils, who had a shared arts and culture strategy across multiple councils in a single region, as part of community co-creation of their public art policy, conducted (at the time of interview) two exploratory workshops with key arts and community stakeholders, to explore why public art was valuable for their communities and what potential value could be in creating a cohesive and structured policy around council roles in public art provision. These sessions resulted in baseline information on attitudes and perceptions of public art, specifically by those with an existing interest in the sector locally.

"What it really was, was why does public art matter? What is the value of public art for our cities? And what is the council's role and relationship?"

<div align="right">Case Study 1.1</div>

This was then intended to allow the collection of councils to then move forward and create an agreed framework of priorities for public art, that could then be tailored by each participating council to a locally specific public art policy that reflected their own capacity to deliver, manage and maintain different types of public art. This council was in the process of developing this policy when I spoke with them, so it would be interesting to return once the policy development process is completed to review how this was distilled from the initial workshop feedback.

Evaluation of policy is also complicated by not always outlining who determines the success of what is being measured, and what policy decision makers consider a success. If something is valuable for the local government elected members, it may not be the same for community members, artists, project partners or other stakeholders. As those deciding on policy commitments, councillors may also put different weight on whether a decision affects their popularity, how simple a policy is to enact, or whether there are going to be long-term impacts on the target community (Cairney, 2019). One council staff member noted that the power of

councillors to make decisions according to their own personal or political priorities, as opposed to solely acting on the expert advice of staff, meant a reduction in support for arts and culture in the current term of office for his council.

The inherently political nature of evaluation, and the power balances present in the policy development cycle, is a challenge for council public art staff. While a bank of literature providing technical advice on generic policy value measurement tools does exist, there are less immediately obvious resources available that explore how evidence is actually used and the impacts of this on policy (Cairney, 2019). This also demonstrates the limits of objectivity when considering evaluation – while evidence-based policy is often explained as a way to ensure decisions are made with rigorous research, it is not a strictly impartial process, demonstrating more of a policy-based evidence process (Dollery, 2018). The research-policy nexus is a spectrum of ways that policymaking and knowledge-making interact and inform each other, and the role of the researcher (in this instance, Council staff) is important in determining the ways that particular forms of evidence are privileged and the ways evidence is used to inform and influence policy stakeholders. Council staff demonstrated in their interviews an adeptness at creatively adapting evaluation to suit the needs of a range of different interested parties, including elected members. They felt that this ability to understand the different priorities of a range of stakeholders would be enhanced by greater availability of tool templates to allow for a more efficient way to collect different types of data to suit different audiences. This approach somewhat feeds into a structure of policy development that capitulates to those with outsized power in the process but demonstrates creative agency from staff in adapting to this challenge.

When policies are under development, the ways success will be measured against each policy aim is typically outlined in the document. For the respondent councils with high level arts and culture strategies, measurement is mentioned in each document – however, the majority note that a comprehensive evaluation and monitoring plan will be developed following adoption of the strategy, rather than having it prepared alongside the strategy itself. This does mean that while a commitment can be there on paper to support comprehensive value measurement, in practice a range of competing priorities might mean this is not immediately feasible.

One council did outline its specific intended arts and culture value measurement tools in its art strategy document. These included culture participation and attendance rates for residents, increased diversity in arts funding recipients, quantifiable changes in emerging and Māori representation in public art commissions, and other less quantifiable outcomes including increased heritage prominence in the city. These were directly connected to specific arts and culture goals outlined in the policy, and staff at this council were clear that the expectation from their senior management and elected member was that evaluation would form an integral part of all work undertaken. They note that in adhering to this expectation and providing evidence of the value of their arts and culture activity, including public art, they have been able to ensure support for this activity in an ongoing way:

> "We're seeing a greater range of the community more than ever actually getting involved with public art, which is really amazing. And I think it's all come because we're able to prove that this stuff really does have value and that there really is impact, and the council has been amazing at being able to support these groups do this."
>
> Case Study 2.1

However, staff from this same council were also practical about the limits of how compelling the evidence they provide can be when convincing decision makers that their work deserves additional budget.

> "[community groups] are all competing for one big pot of money. It's really hard when you're trying to compare an arts organisation with someone who's trying to save, you know, children or the environment. I mean, it's really hard for us to be able to assess that. And it's really hard too for the council to then decide how much money they want to put into any particular pot."
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> Case Study 2.1

For this council, those decisions were informed both by policies, but also by community submission and strength of belief in certain priorities from various elected members. This sentiment was echoed by other interviewees, who were pragmatic about how arts and culture was not considered a core or essential service in their council organisations. This was the case in both Aotearoa and England, which are countries with different local government responsibilities – however, for

all, the arts (including public art) were a nice to have, even when there was local evidence to demonstrate its value for communities.

Given the above, there is a distinctive relationship between evaluation and policy design. Both councils currently developing public art policies were clear about the expectation from their organisational leadership that all policy development and approval required strong evidence and research to support any recommendations. This was in line with expectations across the organisation, and not only confined to public art. However, the scrutiny that public art was placed under by elected members and the public, as a perceived 'nice to have' rather than a core service, meant that there was no leeway to produce policy that was not backed up by data. The focus of elected members was on achievable policy that could then be effectively demonstrated as a success, which would enhance the public profile of the council as well as ensure any financial support was used in a way that would enhance the organisation's wider strategic aims for their community. For one council this saw a contrast with previous arts policies, where suggestions elicited during community consultations were sometimes included without ensuring alignment with council budget realities and overall strategic planning. Instead, the new policy was assiduously researched, with community consultation and review of existing public art data informing a vision document that councillors were comfortable supporting.

6.9 Practical considerations

Respondents spoke about how having appropriate policy directives in place could support their ability to improve value measurement. There are several contrasts between what council staff described as their ideal best practice for collecting evidence of the value of public art, and what they felt was pragmatic and actionable in their own working contexts. These included the provision of adequate measurement tools, the ability to effectively advocate for support for public art when put in competition for funding support with other 'core' council services, and the capacity of staff and support for dedicated public art roles within councils. For some smaller councils, evaluation was seen as a tick box exercise rather than a meaningful process that creates useful data. For others, having the ability to undertake long term

research around the effects of public art projects was considered unachievable due to the short-term nature of budget cycles and the changes of priorities when elected members leave or assume their seats following elections. These practical considerations influence the type of value measurement undertaken in everyday practice and influence the ways policy is used and developed in a council setting.

Case study interviewees were open about the opportunities they could see for improved value measurement, and how this would enhance their policy design and public art programming. For some, enhancing existing value measurement tools was raised as one option for enhancing their public art data collection – instead of creating and implementing new tools, adapting existing surveys, changing post-project report templates, or refining statistics provided by third party organisations would create more useful information for council staff to use. One Aotearoa council spoke about how changing these tools took work over time, using the example of data collected by a national statistics organisation (Infometrics) on creative industries employment in the region, and how they had worked with the company to isolate more relevant data from its initial broad scope. They first identified that the employment data being analysed included both cultural sector information as well as sports and leisure; as a single category this did not serve either the sports sector or the cultural sector. They also ensured that information about the prevalence of the sector as a secondary job was included, as creative careers in the region tend to be part-time and in addition to other jobs in different sectors, which previous measures didn't account for. Following a process of distilling the data, they were then able to represent the economic impact of cultural sector work more accurately for their region and use this information when providing support to local artists, advice to their council and in strategic planning for their own work. While this was not a value measurement tool specific to public art, it demonstrates the capacity to hone existing tools to enhance their relevance and accuracy, which supports advocacy.

For another council, the lack of specificity in their tools for measuring diversity meant that forms and reporting around public art projects were not able to capture nuanced information about participating artists and other project partners. The interviewed staff member believed that this meant they were not always able to

create programming that accurately reflected their local community, and that there were opportunities to adapt the paperwork that accompanied public art projects to collect more comprehensive demographic information that would improve the council's internal capacity to support artists and practitioners.

> "If everybody had to think about [better diversity monitoring] while they were planning their evaluation, I think there would be a lot more kind of awareness around it. And it would definitely improve the quality of the art as well, again, because we'd have a greater variety of different creators represented… they would want to come to us and work with us, because they would feel like they'd be heard."

<div align="right">Case Study 6.1</div>

The tools currently used by councils to track visitor activity in some cultural institutions do not suit the particular context of public art, and this means valuable information cannot be captured without major adaptation or additional tools. Some councils spoke about their current use of reporting dashboards and the resulting focus on quantitative statistics over qualitative data to understand resident and visitor engagement with arts and culture in their regions. Three councils noted their current use of dashboards that primarily tracked information about arts audience attendance numbers, collected through visitor counters in art galleries, ticket sales for performances in venues, and occasionally public event visitor number estimates. While this information was a straightforward tool to track changes in visitor behaviour over time, it was limited and did not allow for the addition of information about the quality of experience for visitors, their reasons for engaging with creative activity, and was also limited to experiences that had formal entrances and exits or paid entry. Involved councils also noted this was not appropriate for much of their public art activity, particularly permanent works in free-to-access public places. If additional tools were available to also provide similar tracking data for artwork in spaces where audiences were free flowing, as well as incorporate information about the quality of interactions, this would allow council staff to provide comparative information for dashboards and report in a more in-depth way.

Other council staff were pessimistic about their perceived distance between their vision of ideal public art practice and what would be achievable in their own

councils. This was particularly the case for two English council interviewees (where neither council had in place an arts and culture policy), who had both witnessed drastically reduced arts and culture budgets over their time on staff, and who had seen public art programming opportunities decrease alongside this. They noted their own beliefs about the potential of public art, and their personal perspective on its value, but felt that their current environment was not conducive to meaningful change towards things like new public art policy, increased arts and culture funding or the addition of dedicated public art staffing positions. They noted that, with ever increasing pressure on council budgets for core services, their elected members would require any public art funding to come from external sources rather than standard revenue such as council tax/rates, or central government allocations, as competing services were also currently underserved.

> "When you look at local authorities and see what type of officers they have, as in people… we're not getting a public art officer, actually, we've barely got a conservation officer. We've not got a tree officer, you know, all these things that are seen as 'all that' - we need binmen. And when we need planners and we need all these functional staff. The other stuff, the softer stuff, just gets slashed at every opportunity. And it just illustrates the priorities of an authority. So, if I had to make the case for a public art officer, now, I wouldn't know where to start."

<div align="right">Case Study 5.1</div>

Without an active art and culture or public art policy, there are fewer levers that council staff can use to argue for allocated staff time and associated budget provision. Staff identified a vicious cycle where a lack of evaluation contributed to a lack of support for council involvement in public art, which then in turn fed into less time for evaluation and the collection of data. This perspective aligns with Newsinger and Green's argument that cultural value is a construct created through political dialogue, and evaluation methodologies support the aims of broader political actors (Newsinger & Green, 2016). It also corresponds with Belfiore's provocation that cultural policy is set and valued by those with power and demonstrates that for public art practitioners in councils across Aotearoa and England, the process of valuing their work is fraught with tension and power struggles.

Council staff are creative in their approaches to using tools to efficiently advocate for their work, despite regularly operating under immense time pressures. Sometimes, council staff found that despite having a guiding document to support their work, there were still major challenges in delivering against the specified aims. The disconnect between agreed-to policy and actual enactment against stated policy goals is not unique to public art or arts and culture policy (Cairney, 2019). Cairney identifies that the most palatable policy decisions for elected members are those that allowed them to demonstrate their own success in achieving their personally stated goals to voting publics. Evaluation tools can therefore sometimes be successful in achieving the goals of elected members (to demonstrate that something they promised has taken place) but may not provide useful data for other stakeholders or the public (Cairney, 2019; Cartwright & Hardie, 2012). For council public art workers, this means balancing the value measurement needs of different stakeholders carefully, and managing their limited time to ensure what information is collected is most suited to their needs. For one council, this meant pursuing nationally recognised awards for their work, as this was found to be a compelling way to demonstrate their adherence to best practice against other council workstreams with more standardised methods of monitoring and reporting information. After using this method of value measurement, they noticed a change in how politicians engaged with their projects and used the external award validation as a marker of excellence when speaking about their arts and culture work.

It also connects to the practicalities of contemporary public art production – with scarce funding availability, the viability of large-scale permanent sculpture projects is often less possible, whereas temporary projects, small-scale work or community and social practice can instead be more achievable. Without a written, widely agreed to definition of public art, council staff are in a weaker position to argue for less 'traditional' forms, particularly when advising external parties such as property developers or philanthropic organisations.

Guidance for best practice in measuring the value of arts and culture is available, but not necessarily accessed and used by public art staff. A range of resources are accessible if value measurement is something council public art staff are seeking to

improve. The Centre for Cultural Value at the University of Leeds recently released a set of Evaluation Principles that share ideas about cultural evaluation as it currently takes place across the UK cultural sector (Centre for Cultural Value, 2021). These state that evaluation should be beneficial, robust, people-centred and connected, and include definitions for these terms, examples of application and how the principles apply to organisations, evaluators, and funders. The Arts Council England provide self-evaluation toolkits with varying questions that are designed to measure the quality and impact of a project, the effect it has on developing people involved in its production, contributions to organisational growth and how well processes and systems have been used (Arts Council England, 2023). Creative New Zealand provide links to tools to assist organisations with value measurement, including the Good Finance outcomes matrix, which measures social impact (Good Finance, n.d.), and What Works, a collection of tools for community groups that help demonstrate a range of values (What Works, 2023). However, none of these resources are stated as specific to public art and were also not in use by the council staff interviewed as part of this research project. While not asked specific questions around access to support resources such as these, some staff felt that challenges specific to their contexts were lack of time (which impacts on capacity to research and adapt available support material), lack of training in evaluation (to use available tools or customise their own) and lack of support from senior management to undertake this work. These pressures are significant barriers to improved evaluation.

Evaluation is typically alluded to in policies, but the specific measures and tools that will be used to understand value are not always readily clear. This murkiness was partly caused by practicalities during the policy development process (with specific evaluation methodologies not forming a part of the policy approval cycle, and therefore not being a priority during the development phase) but could also have been the result of lack of confidence by council staff in describing tools that may not be practical to use depending on future budget availability and staff time allocations. As the strategies and policies provided were typically expected to have a lifetime of five to ten years, the lack of correlation to the shorter-term election cycle meant that there was a potential disconnect between what was agreed to by one set of councillors and what could be the set of priorities of another subsequent one. Staff

described being adept at tailoring evaluation foci to the preferences of different managers and councillors, creating data that would have the most impact for a specific individual or group. By not having specific evaluation measures in higher level policy documents, staff are able to change and adapt their value measurement strategies to be compelling in different ways for different audiences.

6.10 Conclusion

This chapter set out to answer the third research question: what impact do value measurement tools have on the provision of public art activity and related policies, from the perspectives of public art staff in local government? This question was formulated in relation to a vital gap in literature around cultural value, particularly for the context of local authorities. The specific perspectives of council staff are a lens through which the chapter has provided insight into pragmatic, on-the ground working practices around public art policy. Newsinger and Green provide an important critique of how policy production and discourse around cultural value typically privilege institutional voices over a practitioner perspective (2016). In exploring the perspectives of public art staff, who are exposed to both practitioner perspectives and institutional or political directives, this project has been uniquely placed to present a working understanding of the current state of public art policy.

This chapter argued that for council staff there is a strongly felt relationship between evaluation and public art policy in a local government setting, in the councils participating in this study from across Aotearoa and England. Through an examination of public art policies, as well as surveyed and interviewed council staff, this chapter has demonstrated that there is a prevailing environment of reliance on evaluation to support advocacy and improved practice.

Public art policies in councils take several forms. Policy, in this project, is a term that describes approaches by local government organisations to decision making, which are conveyed through various guidance documents. In this case, these documents include broad arts strategies, regeneration plans, specific public art policies, and developer guidance notes. These all, in different ways, describe the framework under

which decisions are made around public art, the anticipated value in the council's involvement in public art activity, and the parameters that are covered by the policy. They contribute to a suite of other policy documents which guide all local authority work but are distinct from other service areas such as housing, transport, and social work in their lack of supporting national legislation to guide activity.

This chapter demonstrates that policies are critical tools for guiding council work in a way that allows staff to feel secure in planning and delivering activity. Staff in councils with policies hold broad and excited views about the potential for public art in their communities, as well as pride in what they already oversee. They use policies as justification for their decisions, as well as tools for advocacy. The length of time that a policy remains valid is typically longer than a period of a single council term (in Aotearoa, three years, and in England, four), meaning that there is a level of continuity for planning public art work despite potentially changing priorities from elected members. Interviewees from these councils noted that, while they used the policies to argue for their work, councils do hold responsibility for a range of activity areas which also have active policies, and despite the existence of a policy, there are risks that some policies are subjectively considered more important.

For those without a policy, it is immensely difficult to justify work on public art when asking for resourcing and support, as public art is viewed as a lesser priority than other arms of council work – the same problems felt by some council staff who work with a policy, but further magnified and in one case, made explicit by a senior management colleague. Evaluation of public art work is required to support advocacy in this space, but there is a problematic causal spiral whereby a lack of evidence of value results in a lack of support for evaluation. A lack of evaluation is strongly seen in councils without public art policies, and this results in a lack of support from key decisionmakers such as elected members and senior managers.

Policy development relies, at least on the surface, on evaluation to inform it. However, whether there is a true evidence-based policy environment is debateable. Instead, several interviewees spoke about policy development situations that instead skewed more towards an environment of policy-based evidence making, where a

top-down expression of council values (communicated via conversations with managers and elected members or expressed in broader council communications and overarching strategy) informs the type of value public art is said to provide. Dollery explores this, finding that in situations where there is a power imbalance between the evaluator and the policymaker, there are risks that evaluation will be designed to appease the goals of the political decision makers who must balance competing priorities (2018). For councils who participated in this study, there was a noticeable difference between the value they felt decisionmakers placed on public art, and their own ambitions and values for it as a practice. This provides new empirical evidence that builds on research from nearly 20 years ago which argued that the full value of culture was not expressed within cultural policy, and that there were strong market forces driving the development of arts policy towards an instrumental foci (Caust, 2003; Keaney, 2006). My findings demonstrate the enhanced relevance of these earlier researchers and examine the ways this tendency towards the instrumental effects the public art landscape within local government today.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The origin of this thesis was originally sparked by a personal desire to examine the contemporary use of evaluation for public art work in a council setting. I was, as an advisor in that context, frustrated by what felt like gaps in understanding about what public art was doing for my community – I personally felt the impact of public art projects on me and observed their effects on others (with feelings of greater social connection, a sense of pride in my surroundings, and increased use of active transport routes that incorporated public art), but it was not always possible to translate this public art value into evidence that informed a council decision making process. When looking to research literature for guidance, I consequently found that there was limited work not only in the realm of public art evaluation in a local authority setting, but also more broadly – evidence around the ways public art projects have been evaluated by researchers and practitioners was sporadic, and the broad range of types of value ascribed to public art in policy was not comprehensively examined. Prompted by this experience and this research context, this project has therefore interrogated the state of council public art value measurement, asking the following research questions:

- What is meant by 'value' in a local authority public art context, and how is this used and critiqued by different stakeholders involved in council-connected public art activity?
- What strategies and tools are currently used to measure the value of public art activity by local government staff in Aotearoa and England, and how is the effectiveness of these tools perceived by those who deploy them?
- What impact do value measurement tools have on the provision of public art activity and related policies, from the perspectives of public art staff in local government?

This project has examined strategies used to measure and assess different types of value in public art within a council context, across cases from Aotearoa and England. It offers new understandings about the practical experiences of council staff working on the evaluation of public art, connecting to academic and practical discourse on cultural value, local government policy making and public art. Through examining detailed examples of councils working in this space, via a mixed method approach using questionnaires, interviews, and documentary analysis, it has addressed gaps in literature around the challenges specific to public art evaluation, around temporality, space, breadth of definition and resourcing. Together, the chapters in this thesis contribute new knowledge on public art value measurement, strengthening wider academic discourse on cultural policy.

I have argued that the process of evaluating public art is a critical aspect of ensuring its ongoing viability in a council setting. The concept of value is used in multiple ways by councils to justify their support for public art, using public art as an instrumental tool to ideally deliver a range of outcomes, emotional qualities, and artistic merits for their communities. Staff who participated in this research believe strongly in the ways public art can serve their communities, in particular describing how they feel it can function to enhance social outcomes and develop connections and conversations among their publics. However, there is an ever-present risk that wider organisational management and elected politicians do not share this belief, resulting in tensions when advocating for the increased support for public art. The tools used by councils, formal and informal, to measure value are inconsistent across the organisations participating in this research, demonstrating a variability that indicates a level of customisation to each specific context. However, this is also a symptom of under-resourcing in evaluation tools, with staff all expressing dissatisfaction with the tools currently in use, for different reasons. Finally, it is evident that public art policy has a strong relationship to evaluation, and there is a prevailing environment of reliance on evaluation to support staff advocacy and improved practice.

7.2 Research summary

This project has employed a pragmatic mixed-methods approach to examine public art evaluation in a council setting. Empirical research took place from June 2022 to March 2023 and consisted of a questionnaire survey sent to councils across Aotearoa and England, collection and analysis of publicly available public art policies, and in-depth examination of six council examples (three from each nation) using interviews with staff alongside documentary analysis of policy documents, media releases and internal development documents.

Triangulating multiple qualitative research methods has allowed me to build new understandings of how value is defined in a council public art setting, but also to highlight challenges in collecting evidence of public art's value and the impact this has on policy creation, which itself is the site of contested ways that value is employed. A research approach that combined documentary analysis, a sector questionnaire and nine interviews with council staff working across a variety of roles in six councils, all with an influence on public art, meant that I was able to build layers of connected data that provided new insights into this topic. Grounded theory analysis has allowed me to build new understandings that draw on the practices of different cases and contexts (Denscombe, 2014), providing rich examples from which to connect the subjects of value, measurement tools and policy through the lens of public art.

My positionality as a researcher informed my initial approach to this project. As someone who has worked in a local government organisation in Aotearoa, with a role that included (but was not solely concerned with) public art, my own value systems and professional experiences were incorporated into my understanding of the issues explored. While this brought insights into the ways public art is valued and operationalised within a council environment, it also brought potential bias in how the resulting research data would be interpreted. This inevitable bias has been mediated by both exploring a strong grounding of critical literature as well as triangulating findings from multiple sources (Reed et al., 2021). In doing so I have aimed to critique my initial understandings as well as those of the interviewees, and

on completion of this project I have found that my personal views have significantly changed. This aligns with the benefits of the pragmatic approach this research has employed, which creates new understandings from data collected during empirical research.

New knowledge around evaluation is presented that is specific to public art, which as discussed in the literature review is particularly challenging to conduct given its nature as a mode of artmaking that sits outside of museums and galleries; defined by Zebracki and Cartiere as "1: in a place freely accessible or visible to the public: in public, 2: concerned with, or affecting the community or individuals: public interest, 3: maintained for or used by the community or individuals: public place, 4: paid for by the public: publicly funded" (2016). This expansive categorisation is difficult to evaluate given its potential to be activated for micro and macro time scales (Usher & Strange, 2011), a lack of audience and participant containment (Zebracki, 2013), and its tendency to be credited with a broad swathe of instrumental values (Caldarola, 2019; Cordes et al.; Gostin, 2009; Hall & Robertson, 2001; Lacy, 1995; Palermo, 2014; Sykes, 2012). These challenges are addressed by participants in this study, and as such it provides specific insight into how council staff respond in practice when conducting evaluation. While this research project therefore has specific appeal for practitioners in this documentation, it moves beyond this to also support critiques of the instrumentalization of culture by researchers, demonstrating the ways this approach strongly impacts policy and public art production across multiple examples. The specific areas my research interrogates, comprising value definitions and production in a political context, the relationship between evaluation and policy, and the formation of tools to measure value, all have wider relevance for questions around broader approaches to cultural value in the current neoliberal policymaking context.

Each participating council has contributed a range of detailed experiences, which both connect and contrast with other participants, together providing a rich and detailed understanding of public art value measurement in local authorities today. Rather than a straightforward record of tools in use, the thesis instead goes beyond this to connect contemporary practice with literature from broader fields of cultural

policy and public art research, ensuring that the practitioner perspective informs a broader understanding of the functions of evaluation and the impact this has on public art activity and policy across England and Aotearoa.

Due to gaps in this area within the field of public art research, the pragmatic theoretical framework for this study has emerged from broader studies of cultural policy – informed by critiques of dominant modes of using economic value measurement to demonstrate the value of culture (Belfiore, 2015, 2020) and the instrumentalization of culture which see evaluation tools used that draw from economic management and marketing rather than those which reflect value on the terms that best suit the arts (Walmsley, 2013). Both of Belfiore and Walmsley find fault with the neo-liberal policy agenda currently present within local and central government organisations, and each propose the development of new evaluation strategies that are creative alternatives to the current paradigm. This research project draws on both arguments and uses public art as a specific lens to interrogate contemporary practice in local government across Aotearoa and England, contrasting the theoretical with the pragmatic reality of work in this area. It examines issues of power dynamics within local government and the impact this has on evaluation, and how values are informed by, and in turn inform, policy design in a council setting.

This thesis responds to theories and research from cultural policy, public policy, and geography to examine the ways value is defined, used, and captured in a council public art setting. This research is significant because it seeks to fill gaps in knowledge about an under-researched area of evaluation in a public art local government context. While it focuses on participant councils in Aotearoa and England, it subsequently uses these as a springboard to provide wider contributions to global research literature on cultural value, public art and policy making. At a micro level it provides insights into the effects of value measurement tools on public art policy and practice, and also connects to broader discourse on the political power inherent in defining 'value', deeper insight into the challenges in operationalising evaluation strategies, and the role of evaluation in cultural policy making. It presents detailed empirical data to examine the ways that public art and policy intersect through evaluation, creating a deeper understanding of the operationalisation of

public art policy. It contributes to literature on rural public art by incorporating the experiences of practitioners working in rural and peri-urban council settings. By triangulating data from multiple sources, it provides insight into not only what is written within existing policies, but the impacts of policy environments within councils on public art work and the workers within these spaces. It gives an in-depth analysis of contemporary public art evaluation, while providing theoretical contextualisation and responses to provocations from literature.

The three research questions have informed the structure of this thesis. Each empirical chapter examines the subject of one research question, which means that over the course of the thesis a connected and interlinked picture is drawn of council attitudes and use of public art value.

Chapter 4 focused on the research question: *What is meant by 'value' in a local authority public art context, and how is this used and critiqued by different stakeholders involved in council-connected public art activity?* It provided a critical examination of the way that value is articulated for public art in local authorities in Aotearoa and England, both in councils with and without relevant policies. It interrogated whether the practical experiences of participants align with the stated values contained within documentary evidence, such as policies and policy development process notes. This chapter was a critical response to the theories put forward by Belfiore (2020) and Walmsley (2013) which analyse and question the instrumentalization of value in the arts more broadly. It found that public art practice in a local government setting was very much focused on trying to demonstrate value in ways that align with dominant neoliberal paradigms, with a focus on value for money and competition with other areas of council practice. Whereas the research conducted by Belfiore and Walmsley focused on the experiences of individual participants in a single project and workers within funded arts organisations respectively, my own instead examined the ways value was expressed within the setting of an organisation that in many cases both funds and delivers public art policy and activity.

A key contribution of this thesis concerns the formation of theories of value around public art. For those working in a political context such as councils, there was a strong awareness of needing to balance personal views on the value of public art with broader organisational and political beliefs. Value was determined, and assigned or denied to public art, by specific people with power to then act upon this determination – this dynamic informed the ways policy is designed, through political actors in decision making roles forming policy in line with a range of influences. Belfiore notes that while researchers have sought to articulate non-economic values for UK-specific cultural activity in the decade since 2010 (which covers the same time period as this research project), the dominant central government framework of policy making has focused on the contributions of culture to the economy (2020). This project has demonstrated that contemporary public art work within councils absolutely falls into the instrumental focus which Belfiore critiques, and that for public art in a council setting, there are differences between what council public art staff focus on as a deliverable value from public art (typically social value, but also more support for inherent value and interlinked matrices of value typologies) and what they perceive to be of relevance to elected members (a focus on the economic potential of public art, or other values expressed in economic terms). Evaluation programmes were strongly influenced by this understanding, with a diminished focus on certain values over those that are understood to matter to decision makers.

Major themes that emerged from this chapter included the conclusion that value is a malleable concept which public art staff wielded in different ways for different purposes. Interviewed staff articulated that they ascribed public art with a range of potential values, mainly instrumental but also in some cases inherent. They strongly believed that public art is valuable for their communities and an important part of their work, focusing on the social value and community development potential of public art; staff shared examples of projects that they felt created opportunities for social connection, prompted public conversations and enhanced broader community development aims of their councils. However, while this belief was strong for the respondents in this project, they were not convinced that this belief was shared with those in positions of power within their local government organisations, such as senior management and elected councillors. This meant that advocacy for public art

work was sometimes compromised or made difficult – although, as subsequent chapters demonstrated, the agency of some staff to interpret decision maker value priorities and adapt their evaluation to suit these shows a level of creative application of value and a complex environment of motivations for evaluation.

Chapter 5 addressed the research question: *What strategies and tools are currently used to measure the value of public art activity by local government staff in Aotearoa and England, and how is the effectiveness of these tools perceived by those who deploy them?* In doing so, through analysis of empirical data, it argued that tools used by councils are many and varied and their approaches vary across geographic, demographic, and contextual differences. Temporality, which in this context describes the relationship things have with time, was a significant concern for research participants, who noted the complexity inherent in applying evaluation across projects that span different timescales, a lack of their own time in which to conduct evaluation, and determining the point at which it is most appropriate to use value measurement tools during a project or policy life cycle to understand specific impacts.

The formality of tools to measure value was placed in a hierarchy, dictated by both perceptions of decision maker preference for typologies of resulting evidence as well as the beliefs of council staff. Participants all utilised, with different levels of acknowledgement, informal conversations as a tool to evaluate their public art work. This was the only consistent tool used across councils, but conversely was not recognised by many as a form of evaluation which could be used in policy making processes without a level of formalisation. This demonstrates a new confirmation of similar frustrations expressed by Belfiore (2010b, 2020) and Walmsley (2013), in that there is a lack of willingness from powerful stakeholders to change from a decision-making framework that privileges specific forms of evidence over a holistic approach that incorporates evaluation that seeks to understand the multiplicities of value potentially contained within public art. This research demonstrated that the specific conditions of local authority public art work create additional complexities in creating new evaluation tools on top of those identified by Belfiore and Walmsley – in particular, that pressures to provide comparability with other areas of council

activity (which have their own evaluation standards) while also being vulnerable to budget pressures, mean it is difficult to agitate for change.

Chapter 6 answered the research question: *What impact do value measurement tools have on the provision of public art activity and related policies, from the perspectives of public art staff in local government?* It focused this question on the specific contexts of councils in Aotearoa and England, triangulating data from public art policies sourced online, from participant interviews, and from documents provided by participants to argue that, at the point of the research taking place during 2022 and 2023, there was a significant relationship between evaluation and public art policy in a local government setting. For participating councils across Aotearoa and England, there was a prevailing policy making environment that relies on evaluation to inform practice and decisions, which strongly influenced the ways council staff conducted evaluation as well as advocated for their work. It found that, in line with literature on broader local government approaches to policy making (Dollery, 2018; French, 2018; Geyer, 2011; Marston & Watts, 2003; Strassheim & Kettunen, 2014), the interplay between evidence and policy was not singularly directional, with evidence sometimes informing policy and policy sometimes directing the type of evidence collected – or a mixture of these approaches. In the case of public art, the overarching consciousness of what elected members are perceived to desire strongly informed the evaluation activity undertaken (or in some cases, not taken).

A strong theme emerged around the risks of lacking public art policy. Participants working within councils that had public art policies of some kind felt supported in work that explored a range of potentials for public art in their communities, as well as pride over their existing work. Policies were used as justifications for decision making and specific interventions, as well as tools for advocacy to senior colleagues and councillors. In contrast, for councils without a policy, it was difficult to provide justification for allocating work time to public art, as without a policy it was understood to be less of a priority than other areas of council activity which were either legislatively required or had policies of their own.

Within public art research, this thesis provides new insights into Aotearoa-specific information. Literature on public art is dominated by research focusing on the UK, the USA and Europe. Given this, my research is likely to be particularly of interest for Aotearoa readers, with specific understandings and data from practical, on-the-ground experiences with local relevance. However, it also brings additional layers of knowledge to a global base of literature, with both Aotearoa examples and the inclusion of English councils providing additional diversity to a field that currently lacks insight into local authority experiences of public art policy and delivery. Aotearoa and England, while similar in many of their political structures and connected through a history of colonialism, are separated by vast distances and cultural contexts. In exploring connections and disparity across councils in both countries, it is clear that the challenges present in council public art evaluation cross national borders.

7.3 Conclusions and suggestions for the future

This thesis has built up a set of new understandings on the specificities of measuring the value of public art from within a council context. While making contributions to research literature and broader discourse around cultural policy, public art and local government, it also provides a grounding of new knowledge on which to take further methodological directions to examine issues that could not feasibly be the present study due to space.

This project was concerned with the perspective of council staff, and more broadly, the organisations they represent, on public art and value. Public perceptions of the value of public art did not form part of this study, and while there is some literature in this area (Hall, 2003; Her & Hamlyn, 2009; Iannelli & Marelli, 2019; Krause Knight & Senie, 2012; Lacy, 1995; Senie, 2008; Zebracki, 2013) none of it is specific to the context of Aotearoa. This project has demonstrated that there are many commonalities between the experiences of councils across the two states but has not had the scope to pursue research on the perspectives of other agents who engage with public art in different ways, such as audiences. It would be worthwhile to build on the findings of this research with a comparative study that examines

audience perspectives internationally, including an Aotearoa perspective, to provide additional global diversity to research on public perceptions of the value of public art.

The outcomes of this empirical study have also highlighted opportunities to pursue research that seeks further insight into the comparative nature of local government policymaking, and opportunities for changed approaches to competition in this environment. A prevailing feeling across interviewed council staff noted the challenges of operating within a policy making environment that has an intricate relationship with evidence, when public art is produced in conditions that make it difficult to evaluate. The perception of participant interviewees was that this challenge was not shared in the same way by other arms of council activity, but it is not clear from research reviewed as part of this project whether this is assuredly the case or whether this is merely the way public art staff perceive other departments. As it stands, public art is required to operate in a comparative way to other activity areas of council (such as social care, roading, parks, and taxation) to ensure fairness of decision-making around long term strategic planning (Fahy et al., 2023; Redwood et al., 2023). Determining the dynamics of this would ensure future practitioners are equipped to advocate for their work with a strong understanding of overall council evaluation priorities and approaches, but also provide contributions to theory around local government practice.

There are additional opportunities for researchers to better understand the ways that cultural specificity informs the values placed on public art. From my own context as a Pākehā researcher, it was clear that within Aotearoa there are gaps in current critical and research literature on Māori public art. In conducting this research from my own positionality as a non-Māori researcher, I have been unable to provide insights on Māori cultural values and approaches to public art. Greater insight into culturally specific value understandings and expressions would enhance both the field of public art, but also provide opportunities for enhanced advocacy in an Aotearoa local government setting, where as this research project has demonstrated, issues of identity, expression and public narratives are a particular focus for public art staff within councils.

Finally, further research opportunities exist to interrogate the attitudes and approaches of key decision makers in a council public art setting. During this research project I was able to speak with one elected member from Aotearoa, who was open about their personal support for public art as well as the compromises they make while at the council table making decisions on budgets and policy interventions. As local authorities are significant funders of the arts, and more specifically, public art (Hamilton et al., 2001), this project's critical appraisal of operational staff perspectives could be supplemented by complementary understandings of the ways value is conceived by councillors and senior managers, the ways they utilise the results of evaluation and subsequent reporting, and how this affects their decision-making around policy. This comparison would provide a rich opportunity for comparisons and provide practitioners and researchers with a strong understanding of multiple perspectives that influence practice on the ground.

This thesis has ultimately examined the value of public art for councils, the tools used to measure value, and how this impacts policy and other public art activity within a local authority context. Its results provide a detailed understanding of the perceived value of public art by councils, including the pressures staff face in balancing available value measurement tools with expectations around evidence and policy, their own beliefs in the value of public art, and the practical limitations of how they currently operate. The dominant focus on instrumental value of public art, and in particular, economic expressions of value, combines with a scarcity environment financially to create immense difficulty in operating to a level that supports current public art activity, let alone having the space to change the dominant decision-making paradigm. While initially my hope was to find councils undertaking comprehensive and expansive public art evaluation, to address previous professional frustrations, my thinking has instead shifted to focusing on understanding the distance between the state of current practice (informed by a neoliberal policy context, which can be either evidence-based or evidence supported) and the opportunities for change in policy-making attitudes at a macro level that would allow public art staff to conduct evaluation which provides new, interconnected and

holistic understandings about their work without the pressures of comparability with other council activity arms.

My research has comprised multiple methods, including questionnaires, interviews, and documentary analysis, which have resulted in findings that clearly demonstrate the difficulties council public art staff face in their work on public art evaluation. The cycle of policy making requires adherence to an overall organisational approach to evaluation, and if this is lacking, there is immense risk in decreased or no support for public art activity by decisionmakers. Public art staff work in a constant state of compromise, appeasing the perceived or expressed requirements of the decision-making environment in which they operate, as well as reckoning with their own understandings of public art value. While staff currently use multiple formal and informal tools to gather information about the impacts of their public art work, this does not necessarily translate into compelling evidence for support. This context of competing priorities is that in which this thesis has engaged.

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Appendix 1: Ethical Approval

AREA 21-104 Study Approval May 2022

Rachel Prinn <R.Prinn@leeds.ac.uk>
Wed 5/11/2022 3:46 PM
To: Riah King-Wall <gyrkw@leeds.ac.uk>
Cc: ResearchEthics <researchethics@leeds.ac.uk>
Dear Riah

AREA 21-104 - Made to Measure: public art value measurement strategies and their impact on local government arts policy and planning

NB: All approvals/comments are subject to compliance with current University of Leeds and UK Government advice regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.

I am pleased to inform you that the above research ethics application has been reviewed by the School of Business, Environment and Social Services (AREA) Committee and on behalf of the Chair, I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion based on the documentation received at date of this email.

Please retain this email as evidence of approval in your study file.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the original research as submitted and approved to date. This includes recruitment methodology; all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. Please see https://ris.leeds.ac.uk/research-ethics-and-integrity/applying-for-an-amendment/ or contact the Research Ethics Administrator for further information researchthics@leeds.ac.uk if required.

Ethics approval does not infer you have the right of access to any member of staff or student or documents and the premises of the University of Leeds. Nor does it imply any right of access to the premises of any other organisation, including clinical areas. The committee takes no responsibility for you gaining access to staff, students and/or premises prior to, during or following your research activities.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, risk assessments and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited.

It is our policy to remind everyone that it is your responsibility to comply with Health and Safety, Data Protection and any other legal and/or professional guidelines there may be.

I hope the study goes well.

Best wishes

Rachel Prinn
On behalf of Dr. Matthew Davis, CHAIR, AREA

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Rachel Prinn, Research Ethics Administrator, The Secretariat, University of Leeds, LS2 9NL, r.prinn@leeds.ac.uk
Please note my current working days are Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday am.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire Design

Jisc Online surveys

Public Art Value Measurement

When creating your survey, we recommend the use of a privacy notice, this should explain to survey respondents about how you plan to use any personal information you collect, and how long you intend on keeping it. Your organisation's data protection officer may be able to provide advice and guidance on creating a suitable privacy notice for your survey.

p. 1 Information about this survey:

Add item

You are being invited to take part in a PhD research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the project?

This research will look at the strategies and tools used to measure the value of public art in local authorities. There is a lack of existing scholarship on how the different ways public art projects are evaluated impact the day-to-day work of arts managers and other staff within councils, across both New Zealand and the United Kingdom. In particular, this project is interested in how different value measurement tools produce results that are used to communicate to stakeholders, advocate for public art activity, and inform policy and programming. It also seeks to find out how these tools could be improved and what pressures might impact their implementation.

We aim to publish the results upon completion of the analysis, and hope that the information gathered will be a useful resource for both other researchers and public art practitioners.

Do I have to take part?

No, deciding to take part is entirely up to you. If you wish to withdraw, you can do so at any time up until two months following the closing date for responses. Withdrawing will not result in any penalty. You do not have to give a reason to withdraw.

What do I have to do?

You will fill in an online questionnaire, which will have a range of questions on how your organisation measures the value of its public art activity. This questionnaire should take between 15-30 minutes to complete.

You will be asked to describe your role and relevant background information on your organisation, such as size, whether you have a public art policy, and number of staff involved in public art. This is to help the researcher contextualise your answers and will not be used in any publications.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

We do not foresee any disadvantages or risks in taking part in this project, other than the one-time time investment of the questionnaire.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those who participate in the project, it is hoped that this work will improve the understanding of public art value for councils and provide insights into the practical, real-world use of value measurement techniques. In sharing the practical realities of your own work, others in the field will be able to build on this to develop appropriate useful tools to support improved public art advocacy.

Use, dissemination and storage of research data

The data collected in this questionnaire will be stored in a database that is only accessible to the researcher for a maximum of 3 years after the end of the project. Your data could potentially be shared outside of this project with peer researchers, following anonymisation.

More detailed information of the general privacy regulations of the University of Leeds can be found at https://dataprotection.leeds.ac.uk/research-participant-privacy-notice/.

What will happen to my personal information?

All the contact information that we collect about you during this research will be kept strictly confidential and will be stored separately from the research data. We will take steps wherever possible to anonymise the research data so that you will not be identified in any reports or publications. However, as projects discussed may be identifiable to those with existing knowledge of the field, it may not be possible to completely anonymise the data.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

It is hoped that the results of this research project will be useful for both researchers and practitioners in the field of public art. We will therefore publish the results in relevant academic outlets but may also use it as the basis for presentations to a wider audience, for example at conferences or at events organised by organisations such as Arts Council England or Creative New Zealand.

Who is organising/ funding the research?

This project is part of PhD research funded by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission – project code NZCR-103-2020.

Contact for further information

Should you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us using the details provided below:

PhD researcher:	Supervisor:
Riah King-Wall, MMHS	Dr Martin Zebracki
@leeds.ac.uk	@leeds.ac.uk
	Irene Manton Building
	University of Leeds

Thank you for taking the time to read through this information sheet and considering participation in this project.

Add item

p. 2   Consent to participate   ✏ ● ⚙

Add item

📝 **By submitting this survey, you confirm the below:**   ✏ ⚙

That you have read and understood the information on the previous page about the research project.

That you understand participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time up until two months following the closing date of this survey.

That if you wish to withdraw, you will contact Riah King-Wall at gyrkw@leeds.ac.uk and that if you withdraw, any data related to you that has already been collected up until that point will be deleted, and this data then will not be used in this project in any way.

That you give permission for members of the research team to have access to your anonymised responses. You understand that your name will not be linked with the research materials, and you will not be identified in the report or reports that result from the research.

That you agree for the data you provide to be archived at the Research Data Leeds Repository.

That you understand that other genuine researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

That you understand that other researchers may use this data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

That you understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study, may be looked at by auditors from the University of Leeds where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. You give permission for these individuals to have access to these records.

That you agree to take part in the above research project, and that you have permission to do so from other staff in your organisation if required, and will inform the lead researcher should your contact details change during the project and, if necessary, afterwards.

Add item

p. 3   Background information   ✏ ● ⚙

Add item

1   ⊙   Is your Council located in: ✏ ⚙

England

New Zealand

Add item

a   ⊙   What type of local authority is your organisation?   ✏ ⚙

County council

District council

Unitary authority

Show all (5)

Add item

Add item

b   ⊙   What part of England is your local authority located in?   ✏ ⚙

London

North East

North West

Show all (9)

Add item

Add item

c ⊙ What type of Council is your organisation?

City council

District council

Regional council

Show all (4)

Add item

Add item

Add item

2 ⊙ What population size does your Council serve?

1 – 5000

5001 – 10,000

10,001 – 50,000

Show all (10)

Add item

Add item

p. 4   Public art activity in your Council

Add item

3 ⊙ How many staff in your organisation have roles that are dedicated to public art?

0

1

2-5

Show all (5)

Add item

Add item

4 ⊙ How many staff in your organisation have roles with a portion of responsibility for public art activity? This includes staff with other responsibilities, for

instance wider cultural programming, parks and recreation management, or planning.

0

1

2-5

Show all (5)

Add item

Add item

5 T What is your (the respondee's) role/job title in your organisation? ✏ ⚙

Add item

a T What team/department do you work within? This could include culture, planning, parks etc. ✏ ⚙

Add item

Add item

Add item

6 ⊙ Does your Council have an active public art policy or strategy, or has it had one recently? This may include dedicated public art policies as well as the inclusion of public art in other relevant policy documents, such as cultural policy, parks and open spaces policy, or planning. ✏ ⚙

Yes

No

Add item

a ☰ If this is publicly available, please provide a URL below: ✏ ⚙

Add item

Add item

Add item

7 ⊙ Does your organisation have a budget for public art? This could include portions of broader budgets (for instance, contestable cultural funds that have supported public art activity, or maintenance funds for public art within wider asset management budget lines) ✏ ⚙

Yes

No

Add item

Add item

8   Does your Council provide funding to another organisation to deliver its public art activity? If so, please detail the type of organisation and what aspects of public art programming they deliver:

Add item

Add item

p. 5   Evaluation and measurement part 1:

Add item

9   Do you currently measure the value of public art projects or programmes supported by your Council?

Yes

No

Add item

a   What types of public art value and impact do you currently measure? Some examples of each type of value are included.

Economic value: tourism growth, economic output (such as increased housing prices, higher local sales turnover, hospitality spend), employment, return on investment, poverty statistics, sustainability, urban regeneration

Social value: short and long term community development, social inclusion, political engagement, crime and public safety, personal development, access to resources and facilities, placemaking

Education value: public pedagogy, formal and informal education, engagement with the education system, engagement with civic identity and local community heritage, effects on education outcomes, enhanced visual literacy

Show all (6)

Add item

i   If you selected Other, please specify: *

Add item

Add item

Add item

b 📝 What tools do you use to measure value and impact of your Council's public art activity? This could include population or audience surveys, economic monitoring data, focus groups, public forum consultation, social media monitoring, etc.

Add item

Add item

c ☑ What parts of public art programming are evaluated?

Individual projects (this could include one-off commissions, sector support workshops, and other public art events)

Multi-part projects (this could include programmes comprising multiple individual projects, public art festivals, public art trails etc)

Long term programmes (this could include recurring public art events, projects with regularly changing or refreshed elements, residency programmes etc)

Show all (7)

Add item

i 📝 If you selected Other, please specify: ✳

Add item

Add item

Add item

Add item

10 ☑ What types of public art value and impact would you like to measure?

Economic value: tourism growth, economic output (such as increased housing prices, higher local sales turnover, hospitality spend), employment, return on investment, poverty statistics, sustainability, urban regeneration

Social value: short and long term community development, social inclusion, political engagement, crime and public safety, personal development, access to resources and facilities, placemaking

Education value: public pedagogy, formal and informal education, engagement with the education system, engagement with civic identity and local community heritage, effects on education outcomes, enhanced visual literacy

Show all (6)

Add item

a 📝 If you selected Other, please specify: ✳

Add item

Add item

Add item

p. 6   Evaluation and measurement part 2   ✏ ● ⚙

Add item

11 ⊙ If your Council has a public art policy, does it outline the types of value it   ✏ ⚙
wants to derive from public art activity?

Yes

No

Add item

a ▤ What desired values or impacts are described in the policy?   ✏ ⚙

Add item

Add item

Add item

12 ☑ What are some of the strengths of your organisation's current public art   ✏ ⚙
evaluation activity?

You are able to effectively advocate internally for public art support

You are able to effectively advocate publicly for public art support

You and your colleagues feel confident evaluating public art programming

Show all (6)

Add item

a ▤ If you selected Other, please specify: ✱   ✏ ⚙

Add item

Add item

Add item

13 ☑ What are some areas your Council could improve on when it comes to   ✏ ⚙
measuring the value of public art activity?

More staff time for evaluation

More staff training

The provision of useful tools to measure impact

Show all (7)

Add item

a 📄 If you selected Other, please specify: * ✏ ⚙

Add item

Add item

Add item

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p. 7   Final comments   ✏ 👁 ⚙

Add item

14 📄 If you have any further comments on public art value measurement, please   ✏ ⚙
outline these here:

Add item

Add item

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p. 8   Further research   ✏ 👁 ⚙

Add item

📄 Following analysis of these survey results, a select number of Councils will be invited to   ✏ ⚙
take part in a more in-depth interview to explore your experiences of public art value
measurement. If you or a colleague would be happy to participate in this further stage of
this research project, please provide the below information. This information will not be
shared with anyone outside the research team.

Add item

15 🅣 Name   ✏ ⚙

Add item

Add item

16 T Job title

Add item

Add item

17 T Email address

Add item

Add item

p. 9   Final page

Add item

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this survey. If you would like more information or to be kept updated with any publications that follow this research, please contact Riah King-Wall on gyrkw@leeds.ac.uk.

Add item

Appendix 3: Case Study Reference Table

This case study table provides some context for the quotations used within this thesis. Each participant took part under the conditions of anonymity, so details within this table are intended to maintain this while also situating their perspectives within an understanding of geographic location, council size, and existence of a guiding policy to inform public art, and arts practice more generally. Quotations within this thesis will be attributed to participants using their case study and participant numbers – for instance, 'Case Study 3.2'.

Case Study and Participant	Role	Population served*	Council country	Has public art policy	Has arts and culture policy	Urban, peri-urban or rural
1.1	Manager of Arts and Culture	80,000	Aotearoa	No	Yes (Cultural Strategy)	Rural
2.1	Community Arts Advisor	90,000	Aotearoa	No	Yes (Cultural Strategy)	Urban
2.2	Policy Analyst					
3.1	Strategic Lead Creative Industries and Arts	50,000	Aotearoa	Yes (Public Art Strategy)	Yes (Cultural Strategic Plan)	Both (includes city and rural areas)
3.2	Creative Communities Advisor					
3.3	Deputy Mayor					

4.1	Public Art and Cultural Events Coordinator	290,000	England	Yes (Developer Advice Note)	No	Peri-urban
5.1	Senior Regeneration Officer and Urban Designer	100,000	England	No	No	Rural
6.1	Arts Officer	500,000	England	Yes (Community Plan)	Yes (Arts Strategy)	Urban

(rounded to nearest 10,000)

Appendix 4: Case Study Participant Information Sheet

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Participant Information Sheet
Invitation for interview: measuring the value of public art

You are being invited to take part in a PhD research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the project?

This research will look at the strategies and tools used to measure the value of public art in local government. There is a lack of existing scholarship on how the different ways public art projects are evaluated impact the day-to-day work of arts managers and other staff within councils, across both New Zealand and the United Kingdom. In particular, this project is interested in how different value measurement tools produce results that are used to communicate to stakeholders, advocate for public art activity, and inform policy and programming. It also seeks to find out how these tools could be improved and what pressures might impact their implementation.

We aim to publish the results upon completion of the analysis, and hope that the information gathered will be a useful resource for both other researchers and public art practitioners.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen following the results of an earlier web questionnaire that explored baseline data on public art value measurement in council settings. Following your indication of willingness to take part in further research from that questionnaire, you have been approached as a subject-matter expert in public art. We hope to interview staff members from at least four organisations across New Zealand and England to get a diverse set of opinions and would very much value your input.

Do I have to take part?

No, deciding to take part is entirely up to you. If you wish to withdraw, you can do so at any time up until two months following the interview date. Withdrawing will not result in any penalty. You do not have to give a reason to withdraw.

What do I have to do? What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to participate, we will try to find a suitable date for an in person or online interview, whatever is most agreeable to you. The interview will consist mostly of open questions on the topic of your public art programme, and how the value of it is measured. The interview will only take 30-45 minutes.

During the interview, you will be asked to shortly introduce your role and any relevant background information on your organisation, such as size, length of involvement in public art activity and number of staff involved in public art. This is to help the researcher contextualise your answers and will not be used in any publications.

The goal of these interviews is to gather your expert opinion on public art value measurement in a local government context. You will have the opportunity to ask questions. You will also, if comfortable, help the researcher to access relevant supporting documents. These will be at your discretion and could include policy documents that refer to public art, reports on projects or programmes, or other information as you see fit. Access to supporting documents can be provided at any point before or after the interview.

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What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

We do not foresee any disadvantages or risks in taking part in this project, other than the one-time time investment of the interview and provision of relevant documents, if applicable.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those who participate in the project, it is hoped that this work will improve the understanding of public art value for councils and provide insights into the practical, real-world use of value measurement techniques. In sharing the practical realities of your own work, others in the field will be able to build on this to develop appropriate useful tools to support improved public art advocacy.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

Yes, the interviews will be recorded. Only the audio will be recorded of the in-person interviews; if the interview takes place over a video call, the video will also be recorded. You will be asked to sign a consent form for this before the start of the interview.

The audio and video recordings made during this research will be used only for analysis and for illustration in presentation and talks. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will have access to original recordings.

Use, dissemination and storage of research data

The recordings of the interview, along with the summaries of the interviews, any documents provided and the consent forms will be stored in a database that is only accessible to the researcher for a maximum of 3 years after the end of the project. If you are comfortable with data being shared outside of this project, following anonymisation, you will be able to provide written consent for this on the consent form. If you would like to limit your data sharing to solely this project, this is also an option on the consent form.

More detailed information of the general privacy regulations of the University of Leeds can be found at https://dataprotection.leeds.ac.uk/research-participant-privacy-notice/.

What will happen to my personal information?

All the contact information that we collect about you during this research will be kept strictly confidential and will stored separately from the research data. We will take steps wherever possible to anonymise the research data so that you will not be identified in any reports or publications. However, as projects discussed may be identifiable to those with existing knowledge of the field, it may not be possible to completely anonymise the data. Where this is likely to happen upon writing up the project, the researcher will contact you to ensure you are comfortable with any presentation that may result in your identification.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The hope is that the results of this research project will be useful for both researchers and practitioners in the field of public art. We will therefore publish the results in relevant academic outlets but may also use it as the basis for presentations to a wider audience, for example at conferences or at events organised by organisations such as Arts Council England or Creative New Zealand.

Who is organising/ funding the research?

This project is part of PhD research funded by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission – project code NZCR-103-2020.

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Contact for further information

Should you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us using the details provided below.

PhD researcher:
Riah King-Wall, MMHS
gyrkw@leeds.ac.uk

Supervisor:
Dr Martin Zebracki
m.m.zebracki@leeds.ac.uk
+44 113 343 3331
Office 10.130, Irene Manton Building
University of Leeds

Finally

Thank you for taking the time to read through this information sheet and considering participation in this project.

Yours sincerely,

Riah King-Wall

Appendix 5: Interview Question Sample

The below questions follow a standardised format to ensure I gathered a broad range of information, but have been adapted to suit the council staff member being interviewed based on their answers to the questionnaire, their role and the type of council department they are in.

For the example below, the interviewee worked at an economic development agency which forms part of the council in their local area.

Measuring the value of public art in local government
Riah King-Wall, PhD Candidate
gyrkw@leeds.ac.uk

Interview questions:

This interview will explore your experiences of public art value measurement in a local authority setting. I am really interested in the types of value or impact that you think public art can have, whether you have any tools to measure these, and opportunities for the development of methods to measure things better. We will also talk about how these tools can connect to your organization's public art policies or strategies, and whether they could be or are useful for advocacy within and outside your local authority.

1. Can you please introduce yourself – your name, job title, and where you work?
2. Approximately how many people does your local authority serve as a local population?
3. How many people in your organization work on public art?
4. Can you please describe public art activity in your organisation – the type of work [council organisation] is involved in, whether this has changed over time, any goals you might have for future involvement in public art? What

role does public art play in your wider work as an economic development agency attached to a local authority?

5. Does your local authority fund any external organisations to deliver public art activity? If so, can you please describe how this relationship works? This could include public art funded by housing developers, arts organisations with a formal funding relationship with your council, or ad hoc organisations engaged for specific projects.

6. Could you speak about your own responsibility for public art – how does this intersect with other work you do, how large a part of your role does it constitute, and what are the benefits or challenges in this way of working?

The next few questions will explore your understanding of the value of public art activity in a council controlled organisational setting.

7. Do you currently measure the value of public art projects or programmes?

This could include formal and informal evaluation – for instance, conversations with colleagues about projects could be a form of evaluation, although not formally logged. Are there unrecorded but still significant value measurements underway, such as reading social media (but not conducting formal analysis), feedback from artists, conversations with elected members?

Formal evaluation might include information collected in other community engagement delivered by your council, such as regular population surveys or focus groups and advisory committee meetings.

8. If so, what types of value do you measure?

This could include economic value, education value, social value, health and wellbeing value, environmental/ecological impact, or other types of value.

The next questions will explore the connection between value measurement and policy design and implementation:

9. Are these types of value described in any policies or other guiding documents? How are the values set?

10. If applicable, what tools do you (or will you) use to measure this value?

11. How does the data you do or don't collect on the value of public art inform policy design, if at all?

12. How does the data you do or don't collect on the value of public art affect advocacy for public art programming within your local authority organization?

The next questions will explore challenges in measuring value.

13. What are you not currently measuring that you would like to?

14. What are the challenges that impact on measuring the value of public art activity?

15. How could improved value measurement tools and capacity affect your ability to deliver public art programming?

Do you have any further questions or points you would like to raise?

Appendix 6: Case Study Consent Form

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Consent to take part in interview investigating public art value measurement tools	Add your initials next to the statement if you agree
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 13.10.2021 explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences, up until two months following interview. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. If I wish to withdraw, I will contact Riah King-Wall at gyrkw@leeds.ac.uk. I understand that if I withdraw, any data related to me that has already been collected up until that point will be deleted, and this data then will not be used in this project in any way.	
I give permission for members of the research team and peer researchers to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified in the report or reports that result from the research, including those published by other researchers.	
I give permission for audio or video recordings made during this interview to be used for analysis.	
I give permission for audio or video recordings made during this interview to be used for illustration in presentations and talks made about this research.	
I agree to take part in the above research project, and that I have permission to do so from other staff in my organisation if required, and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change during the project and, if necessary, afterwards.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	Riah King-Wall
Signature	
Date*	

*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant.
Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/ pre-written script/ information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be kept with the project's main documents which must be kept in a secure location.

Project title	Document type	Version #	Date
Made to Measure: public art value measurement strategies and their impact on local government arts policy and programming	Consent form for interviews	3	14.04.2022