

Case Study

Understanding Sheffield's Creative and Digital Industries

Client: Sheffield City Council



Outcomes and value

TBR was commissioned by Sheffield City Council to conduct an audit of the shape and size of the Creative and Digital Industries (CDI) in Sheffield to inform the development of an action plan for the sector.

The client was particularly keen to understand the financial performance of the CDI at a local level and analyse how this varied by sub-sector. One of the reasons why TBR was commissioned to conduct this research was our ability to go beyond the constraints of publicly available data, especially in terms of mapping sectors that are not covered by SIC codes.

The real value for the client in the examining variables that cannot be analysed at a sub-sector level using publicly available statistics, such as GVA by sub-sector at a local level, allowing the client to see which elements of the sector were generating the most wealth. Our research also found that Sheffield's CDI sector is more productive than the UK average.

Our analysis revealed interesting features of Sheffield's CDI sector. For example, compared to other UK cities, Sheffield has particular strength in craft and design activities, perhaps as a legacy of Sheffield's manufacturing heritage. Following on from the research, the client was able to set up a network of local design firms called 'Designed in Sheffield'. Sheffield has also subsequently submitted an application to UNESCO to become a city of design, based upon the findings of TBR's research.

Economic Development Officer and Client Lead, Diana Buckley said:

"TBR are customer focused and are very easy to work with, responsive and flexible"

Our solution

In order to measure the CDI sector accurately, TBR used TCR, the UK's largest longitudinal business dataset, fully owned by TBR. Through the application of our CDI sector definition to TCR, we produced sub-sector analyses for the following key variables for a number of years within the past decade:

- Number of firms
- Number of employees
- Turnover
- GVA output
- GVA per employee
- Turnover per firm
- Location Quotient analysis of firms and employment

TBR mapped each CDI firm within the sector to highlight 'hotspots' of activity within particular sub-sectors and visually represent areas of Sheffield City region where there was a clustering of CDI activity. Location Quotient analysis was also used to highlight the sectors in which Sheffield exhibited distinctiveness and outperformed other major UK cities with strong creative sectors, especially during the economic downturn.

A detailed report containing maps, charts and graphs was compiled to synthesise and distil the key messages derived from the audit of the CDI sector was delivered to Sheffield City Council. This work formed part of a broader work programme, and fed into Sheffield's Local Economic Assessment, which sought to identify key sectors capable of generating wealth and creating employment. It has been used by the client as an evidence base for future strategies and engagement with the sector at local and city region level.

tbr knows... **economics**, **creative**, **skills**, **environment**