



# Culture Durham Partnership

## Durham Cultural Vision and Action Plan

### Refresh 2018

This refresh of the Culture Durham Partnership's 2016 Vision and Action Plan for culture and heritage in County Durham sets out our priorities for 2018 to 2020. It builds on work carried out since 2016 and the learning taken from that. It responds to our evolving cultural environment and illustrates the Partnership's sharpened focus.

### Funding and economy

#### Advocacy of the importance of culture to the economy.

We will take the following actions to develop the local, regional and national understanding of our vision of the important socio-economic role of culture and heritage in the county by:

- Presenting our vision and action plan and data showing the economic value of culture and heritage tourism to the county, the growth of offer, ambition and the skill gaps to the County Durham Economic Partnership to influence its direction;
- Inviting the chair of the Economic Partnership to attend and address one of our board meetings annually;
- Increasing the interplay and communication between the Culture Durham Partnership and the work of the North East Culture Partnership through Culture Durham Partnership members who are leading the North East Culture Partnership Case for Culture Economic Value working group through regular agenda items for our board;
- Influencing the refresh of the region's strategic economic plan being carried out by the North East LEP by ensuring the Culture Durham Partnership's views on the value of culture and heritage in County Durham's competitiveness are discussed at our board meetings and board member organisations' representatives involved in the North East Culture Partnership and the North East LEP are briefed accordingly.



## Regeneration.

To support and extend the economic and social regeneration of the county we will:

- Promote the opportunities presented by the arts and creative industries as potential careers amongst young people by working with the County Durham Cultural Education Partnership to influence school governors and teachers through an agreed communications strategy;
- Coordinate responses to major funding opportunities to secure additional external resources for development and delivery of collaborative projects that meet the aims of the vision and action plan to develop cultural assets and activities through collaborative work.

## **Marketing and Reputation**

To generate increased enthusiasm and energy about cultural developments over the coming years in the county we will:

- Develop the role of the Events Forum to collaboratively coordinate programmes and promotion of cultural venues and activities across the county;
- Celebrate good work and best practice;
- Identify new ways of engaging with NECP and NELEP, aligning with the region, to promote the county's outstanding heritage and excellent cultural contribution to the vibrancy of the county as a place to live and invest;
- Adopt a collaborative approach to sharing information about each other's organisations through digital channels, an agreed signposting strategy and distributing information through communications lead staff;
- Take forward our education priorities in discussion with the County Durham Cultural Education Partnership;
- Explore the potential for/barriers to joint ticketing through VCD and discuss at our board meeting in May 2019.

## **Audiences and Programme**

To develop audiences for the county's cultural offer we will:

- Learn from the work on audience diversity carried out by NPOs in the county through reports to and discussions at the board;
- Learn from work on engaging local communities carried out by East Durham Creates and Northern Heartlands to increase engagement in and audiences for cultural activity in the county;
- Scope out the value of and possibility of county level collaborative work and continue collaboration at a regional level through NECP to increase our international cultural and heritage profile and audiences;
- Discuss and agree at board level the potential benefits of collaborative national relationships;
- Explore ways to increase accessibility to cultural collections within the County, following on from developing the greater understanding of our audiences;
- Adopt a place-based focus for developing local audiences across the County.



## Priorities from the 2016 document to be taken forward through alternative channels

<p><u>County Council</u> to consider and inform partners on the public funding landscape providing insight into future investment opportunities, both in and across the Council, as well as from external bodies.</p>	<p>On-going work, working with national, regional and local partners.</p>
<p><u>Churches and Chapels.</u> Work with churches and ecclesiastic spaces across Durham to create a plan to increase cultural activity in communities across the county.</p>	<p>Support and learn from Northern Heartlands work and explore extension to other parts of the county.</p>
<p><u>Funding Applications.</u> Identify agencies with grass roots connections across the county who can work with communities to offer funding advice and support and really drive up the number of applications to lottery funds and other trusts and foundation funding.</p>	<p>Opportunities to be highlighted through newsletters and on-going contacts. This is mainly carried out by individual partners rather than the partnership.</p>
<p><u>Business Advice.</u> Build on the work of Durham Creatives to ensure new and emerging creative individuals and SMEs can access practical advice on business plans and attaining charitable status.</p>	<p>New and emerging creatives and SMEs are signposted to Durham Creatives, Business Durham, enterprise agencies, County Durham Community Foundation etc.</p>

## Appendix 1 – Process for Carrying Out the Review

1. The Vision and Action Plan was completed in 2016 and has structured the work of the board through to 2018.
2. Work has been driven forward by the board through task and finish/working groups. Progress has varied across different themes. The experience has enabled the board to develop a deeper understanding and clarity of thought about what the focus of the Partnership now should be.
3. A workshop on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018, facilitated by Mark Robinson of Thinking Practice, reviewed the Vision and Action Plan, took stock of achievements and learning so far, considered the role and necessary form of the partnership and addressed priorities for 2018-2020.
4. At the board meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2018 it was confirmed that:

We will:

- Refresh the Vision and Action plan by stating our priorities moving forward in a paper that can be read in conjunction with the original Vision and Action Plan;
- Consider the substance of the paper by correspondence over the summer, without fixating on detailed wording;
- Agree the paper, which will be presented as a covering paper for the Vision and Action Plan, at the board meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

## Appendix 2 – Partnership Progress 2016-18

A series of task and finish/working groups have taken forward various elements of the Vision and Action Plan.

1. International working group – has met once in March 2017 and started to scope the existing international networks and activities and areas of potential interest both geographic and thematic. The group is also exploring coordination and complementarity with North East Culture Partnership international activity. A second meeting has proved difficult to organise due to availability of members. Further dates will be considered.
2. Events Forum – has met five times with varying levels of attendance. It has provided an arena for sharing information about events, cultural and heritage activity and has identified opportunities for collaborative marketing for the county. Work to produce a comprehensive calendar of cultural events in the county and thereby identify scope for collaboration proved to be of limited value given the available capacity to prepare and maintain within partnership resources so it was agreed that this strand of work would not be taken forward but the group would find other ways to achieve the same outcomes. There is potential for this to develop into identifying scope for collaborative planning through discussion sparking ideas. It has also provided a starting point for consideration of annual conferences. It is felt that attendance is patchy because of the timings of meetings and agreement has been reached that two meetings a year, one in March and one in October, may be better attended.
3. Audiences, Programmes and Art Forms – one very positive meeting was held in March 2018 which generated ideas for collaborative work. The general consensus was that the focus of the group's work should be cultural engagement and participation, and focusing on people living in County Durham. A start was made to mapping the extensive work, both amateur and professional, across all cultural forms and across the county's geography. Interesting examples emerged where proactive arts venues act as hubs within a local community. Significant developments in the pipeline were noted, and really interesting ideas were proposed for new innovations in products and services – particularly involving digital – such as a rural Uber service. The need to consider gaps in activity was identified. The two high profile and well-resourced projects running in the county, supported by key funders and focused on cultural engagement - East Durham Creates and Northern Heartlands – were viewed as learning opportunities about what works (and doesn't) in cultural engagement to build on across the county, looking at the 'how' not the 'what'. This has not been taken further so far, partly because many members have been heavily involved in other partnership work and partly pending the review of the Vision and Action Plan.
4. Education – this strand of the Vision and Action Plan is being taken forward through the work of the County Durham Cultural Education Partnership which works independently but closely and in parallel to CDP. Work has been undertaken to explore how the concept of how a 'cultural passport' could be implemented. Through detailed examination of the idea the group decided that a deeper understanding of children and young people's cultural activity was needed before developing a tool of this kind. To this end the group commissioned a data mapping exercise to identify how County Durham schools are engaging with cultural organisations in the county which was completed in

June 2018. Work is underway to identify lead governors for cultural education for every school in the county and then provide training on promoting the importance of cultural education within their own school. Creative Learning Week was held in June to promote and share best practice in cultural education within the county. These works streams have been valuable in promoting cultural education but have also helped to shape priorities for the partnership's work programme for the coming year. Top priorities include: professional development for schools; advocacy of cultural education; young people's voices.

Other work taken forward outside of working group/task and finish group activity has included:

5. Evaluation Methodologies - Durham County Council commissioned work to evaluate its festivals programme which it shared with board members through a workshop held in April 2018. Exploration of the potential to develop a common approach across the partnership will be taken forward to help develop a fuller understanding of what works and why to help inform future work.
6. Developing Cultural Activity in Churches, Chapels and Community Heritage Buildings – following discussions with Northern Heartlands work is being piloted to hold exhibitions in 6 different churches/chapels within the Northern Heartlands area.
7. Culture Durham Partnership Website – completed November 2017
8. Cultural Audit – completed November 2017
9. Annual Conferences – successful events held in March 2016 and November 2017 which celebrated cultural activity in County Durham, showcased collaborative work, shared information and best practice and created networking opportunities.
10. Newsletters – ad hoc newsletters highlighting new opportunities for training, funding and collaboration circulated to the wider partnership.
11. Future work already developing – future activities under discussion have included: Year of Culture; Year of Pilgrimage; county wide collaborative Expression of Interest to be developed for the Cultural Development Fund.