

# Our Creative Landscape

A Cultural Strategy  
for Northumberland  
2018-2030



## FOREWORD



Northumberland is enormously proud of its unique and diverse arts, heritage and culture. The most northern county in England our culture and identity are interwoven, built on our very own traditions, our own flag, tartan, and musical instrument; the Northumbrian pipes. This culture is an all encompassing energy that allows us to express and celebrate who we are as creative, diverse and contemporary people.

**Foreword by  
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for Culture, Arts,  
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Through our arts, heritage and culture we showcase a county that has a strong sense of identity, a Northumberland cultural rhythm that is echoed across our stunning landscapes and awesome coastline. This stems from the rich tapestry of our shared history – we marked a Northern frontier of the Roman Empire, we were an Anglo-Saxon Kingdom that stretched to the Humber (hence the county's name meaning "the land of the people living north of the River Humber"), we are recognised as the "cradle of christianity", our Border Reiver ancestors were part of the Debatable lands before England and Scotland unification, and our coal mines and associated industries played a key role in the Industrial Revolution. History runs through the veins of our cultural offer. We believe this unique cultural rhythm should be amplified, shared and celebrated nationally and internationally.

This Cultural Strategy for Northumberland 2018-2030 sets out our vision and we aim high with ambition for our people and for the future.

By 2030 Northumberland will be recognised as a cultural leader, the rural destination in England and a place acknowledged for its creativity and world class cultural offer.

We believe investing in arts, heritage and culture is a commitment to a healthier, more fulfilled and prosperous Northumberland.

# INTRODUCTION

This Cultural Strategy marks a hugely exciting time of change in Northumberland as a new North of Tyne devolution deal has been agreed and the Borderlands Growth Initiative gathers momentum. The county can use these to strengthen its position as an international destination for culture, heritage and the arts within the context of Britain leaving the European Union. At no time in the last decade has Northumberland's place geographically and politically felt so opportune.

*Culture continues to expand the UK's influence, promotes trade and investment and attracts visitors to experience the beauty of our landscapes, the treasures of our national heritage and the life of our towns and cities. This respect and influence gives us status in global networks and international organisations. In turn, those networks give us the opportunity to promote our cultural and creative talent.* Culture White Paper, Department for Media, Culture and Sport, (March 2016)

Engagement with culture, arts and heritage results in a strong and dynamic society that is forward looking, active and ambitious. It is a fundamental part of people's lives and every day we connect to it through listening to music, watching drama on TV, borrowing a book from our local library and experiencing our outstanding visitor attractions. All cultural activity has important benefits and children and young people that learn an instrument at school or take part in regular cultural activities do better academically with greater confidence and a sense of wellbeing as they develop into adults.

**Within our cultural landscape we have defined culture within these broad areas:**

- **Arts (including design) and creative industries**
- **Museums, archives and collections**
- **Festivals and events**
- **Libraries and cultural education**
- **Built and natural assets and heritage development**

# STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This Cultural Strategy is part of a suite of strategies that relate to each other under the Council's overarching Corporate Plan.

The Corporate Plan for 2018-21 is committed to ensuring that all residents:

- **feel safe, valued, and part of their community**
- **live in distinctive vibrant places, which they value and in which they feel proud**
- **can easily get to work, to learning, and to the various facilities and services they want to use**
- **regardless of their age, have the right qualifications and skills to secure a good job that pays well and provides the prospect of a rewarding career**

In addition, it pledges that the Council will do everything in its power to create the right conditions for economic growth. This will involve working hard to support existing businesses to invest and grow, whilst also seeking to attract major investment externally to create not just more jobs but better, higher earning opportunities across the county.

Culture and heritage has a considerable role to play in realising this vision.

*Culture no longer simply means being familiar with a select list of works of art and architecture, but the accumulated influence of creativity, the arts, museums, galleries, libraries, archives and heritage upon all our lives. When we talk about our 'cultural sectors', we are referring to an extraordinary network of individuals and organisations, that together preserve, reflect and promote who we are as a nation, in all our rich diversity. And each community has its own culture – its own history, museums and traditions. In this global, interconnected economy, what is local and unique has a special value and should be supported and encouraged. We know that investment in culture not only has immense economic value; it also has a wide range of benefits that touch all our lives every day. We can see the difference that culture has on children's education, and we are beginning to understand better the profound relationship between culture, health and wellbeing.*

Culture White Paper, Department for Media Culture and Sport, ( 2016)

This Culture Strategy recognises this and as such seeks to give everyone the chance to experience culture, participate in it, create it, and see their lives transformed by it.



## VISION

We want Northumberland to be internationally recognised for our exceptional arts and heritage and for local people to benefit fully from a range of cultural experiences that enhance quality of life, health and well-being making Northumberland an outstanding and special place to live, work and visit.

## AND GOALS

### **Placemaking and Identity**

– We will celebrate our natural landscape and heritage for the future

### **Education and learning**

– We will develop talent and skills progression for our children and young people

### **Health and Wellbeing**

– We will ensure access to arts and heritage to support our residents' fulfilment

### **Economy and Growth**

– We will invest in a strong and dynamic cultural sector together

### **Partnership and collaboration**

– We will raise our cultural profile regionally, nationally and internationally

## GOAL 1

# PLACEMAKING AND IDENTITY

**WE WILL CELEBRATE OUR  
NATURAL LANDSCAPE AND  
HERITAGE FOR THE FUTURE**

*Cultural placemaking can shape the fortunes of our regions, cities, towns and villages*

The Government's Culture White Paper (2016)

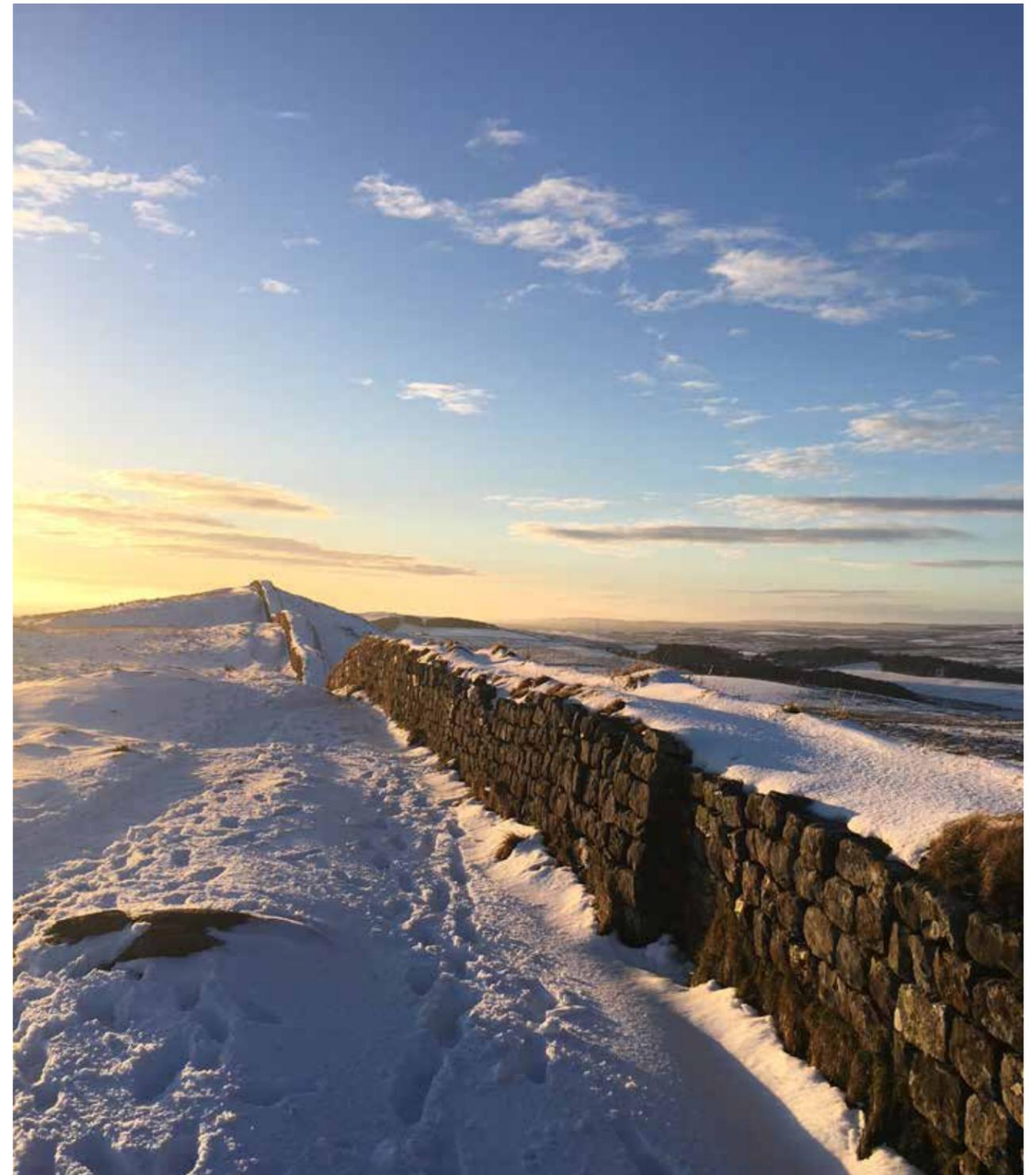
Cultural placemaking brings partners from all sectors; public, private and community to work together and strategically shape both the social and physical characteristics of a neighbourhood, town or region led by arts, heritage and cultural activities. Cultural placemaking animates spaces, rejuvenates streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety and brings diverse people together for the economic and social benefit of an area.

Northumberland is a place with a unique and distinct identity. It is set on an international stage with Hadrian's Wall part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire' World Heritage Site. Roman Vindolanda contains both a modern world class museum using the latest interpretation techniques and ancient buried forts regarded as one of Europe's most important and richest archaeological resources. The UK's National Landscape Discovery Centre, The Sill opened to the public in summer 2017. Set within the county's stunning National Park expands deepened learning, understanding and enjoyment of Northumberland's rich and varied landscape. Two places that explore our culture, arts and heritage.

In our many towns from Berwick to Blyth, Morpeth to Hexham, Prudhoe to Haltwhistle there is a vibrancy and passion for cultural activity that has shaped the places they enliven. Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival is an international celebration of the art of film, a series of installations creates a visual and cultural spectacle throughout the small borders town. In 2017, over 9,400 people attended the Festival, with over 60% of visitors coming from outside the area. To date the Festival has showcased 400 works from 35 countries.

**Three priority objectives are central to delivering this goal:**

- **Animate Hadrian's Wall through the arts to celebrate our World Heritage Site, connecting communities and attracting international profile**
- **Support innovative arts and science programmes e.g. Kielder and Allenheads as part of Northumberland's Dark Skies status**
- **Prioritise culture within regeneration and masterplanning. e.g. the historic border town of Berwick upon Tweed to be an international cultural tourism destination on the main eastline route from London.**







## GOAL 2

## EDUCATION AND LEARNING

### WE WILL DEVELOP TALENT AND SKILLS PROGRESSION FOR OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

*The arts empower children. Access to the arts and culture is access to our national life, and is the universal right of every child. Every child's entitlement should be met. Cultural capital – the factual knowledge, intellectual skills and emotional intelligence that are gained through exposure to the arts – is acquired over time, as children are introduced to the ideas, images and values that constitute the culture of their families, their communities, and the wider world.*

The Cultural Learning Alliance in its Imagine Nation report on The Value of Cultural Learning. (2017)

**We have pledged our support for the 5 principles of the Case for Culture for Children and Young People:**

- **Quality:** Ensure cultural opportunities for children and young people are always of the highest quality
- **Voice:** Give the voice of children and young people weight when developing new work
- **For All:** Focus on engaging disenfranchised children and young people
- **Supporting Talent:** Be aware of, and seek to support, the development of skills and confidence in the children and young people you are working with
- **In Partnership:** Work in partnership across, and beyond, the arts, cultural and heritage sectors

As the North East continues to have some of the lowest literacy rates in the country linking cultural programmes to improved literacy outcomes will be a priority. These programmes will be made available to people of all ages but we'll also ensure that our children benefit from national programmes such as READ North East. Partnerships with Northumberland College and the CVS to ensure that everyone has the support to reach their full potential.

Our museums and libraries will be contemporary 21st century knowledge centres and provide new ways for people of all ages to be inspired by a love of lifetime learning that is fundamental in today's world of fast paced new technologies development.

Three priority objectives are central to delivering this goal:

- Deliver quality arts engagement, with a particular focus on literacy e.g Hexham Book Festival literacy programme with Children's Centres
- In partnership with Culture Bridge North East, ensure young people experience a diverse cultural education by supporting the Cultural Education Challenge e.g Start programme
- Our Northumberland museums and libraries will be at the forefront of utilizing new digital technologies to expand access and new ways of learning for all ages

## GOAL 3

# HEALTH AND WELLBEING

### WE WILL ENSURE ACCESS TO ARTS AND HERITAGE TO SUPPORT OUR RESIDENTS' FULFILMENT

*Culture and the arts can enable people to take greater responsibility for their own health and wellbeing and enjoy a better quality of life. Engagement with the arts can improve the humanity, value for money and overall effectiveness of the health and social care systems.*  
The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing Inquiry, in Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing, (July 2017)

Public Health, Adult Social Care and Children's Services will work with us to engage with health and wellbeing partners including NHS England and the Clinical Commissioning Group to provide the linkages to arts and culture.

The bait Project, an Arts Council Creative People & Places funded programme eligible to areas of low arts engagement is based at Woodhorn Museum. Through a recognised data analysis system, this initiative has demonstrated that 75% of people report an increase in sense of wellbeing when they take part in an arts project. There is also a significant change in the numbers of people whose scores move from below the national average to a higher ranking.

This impact targeted across south east Northumberland is reinforced by qualitative evidence of increased confidence, aspiration and social connections. There are also examples of people's progression, building on the skills and experience gained through taking part in the arts; achieving qualifications, joining college courses and moving into employment. People who take part in the arts are 38% more likely to report good health states the Culture Learning Alliance.

This is all part of an overwhelming evidence base that there are clear benefits in engaging with culture and the arts to our health. It can help keep us well, aid our recovery and support longer lives better lived. It can help meet major challenges facing health and social care: ageing, long-term conditions, loneliness and mental health. On this basis, participation in culture and the arts can help save money in the health service and social care.

**Three priority objectives are central to delivering this goal:**

- **Commission pilot programmes adopting community focused approaches demonstrating the impact of culture to the quality of life for our local people e.g. *Empowering Communities project***
- **Arts, heritage and culture are utilised in preventative health programmes and campaigns**
- **Embed health and wellbeing in cultural programmes e.g. *bait programme, south east Northumberland***

## GOAL 4

# ECONOMY AND GROWTH

### WE WILL INVEST IN A STRONG AND DYNAMIC CULTURAL SECTOR TOGETHER

**Three priority objectives are central to delivering this goal:**

- **Working with our universities, our creative industries / SME's will be a leading force for innovation in the sector e.g *Creative Fuse North East***
- **Stimulate strategic investment support to enable greater sustainability for our cultural venues e.g *National Lottery funding***
- **Maximise the profile of Northumberland's distinctive offer for local audiences and national/international tourism. e.g *Produced in Northumberland***

*For every £1 of GVA generated by the arts and culture industry, an additional £1.30 of GVA is generated in the wider economy through wider indirect and induced multiplier impacts of the industry.*  
CEBR's report for Art Council England, Contribution of the arts and culture industry to the UK economy, (November 2017)

The UK's Creative Industries are a recognised national and international success. They contribute more than £92bn a year to our economy and accounting for more than 2.9 million jobs – more than those in the finance or advanced manufacturing sectors. And their share of the economy is projected to rise to 20% of the economy by 2020. In Northumberland, the contribution the arts makes to GVA is estimated at being over £21 million. Continued and increased funding to our National Portfolio Organisations (in excess of £5.2 million over the next four years) by Arts Council England will support the further growth of the sector. The Council invests over £1m into the cultural sector including Northumberland's Museum Service delivered by Museums Northumberland.

Working within the context of both the North of Tyne and the Borderlands, Northumberland aspires to become a national exemplar for rural growth and productivity whilst respecting our considerable natural and cultural assets. Creative industry and tourism are at the heart of this vision. We want all our cultural businesses to flourish and grow and as a county we're prepared to develop new ways of working that will scale up our individual enterprises and their collective supply chains and increase the quality and sustainability of the jobs available to our residents.

The North of Tyne devolution deal will formalise our relationship with Newcastle and Northumbria universities. As new pioneering technologies progress rapidly we want to ensure that our people have the creative digital skills and access to infrastructure to have equal advantage and have the potential to be at the forefront of innovation, echoed in the Industrial Strategy (2017)

## GOAL 5

# PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

**WE WILL RAISE OUR CULTURAL PROFILE REGIONALLY, NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY**

Northumberland's strong sense of identity is optimised by its appetite to collaborate and work in partnership. Only by harnessing all of our interests will the full power of our cultural, heritage and arts assets and attractions may be unleashed. This Strategy provides us with a vehicle for further deepening and expanding this in order to improve the wellbeing and prosperity of our residents and give our visitors the experience of their lives.

**Our collaboration and working in partnership takes place at all levels of geography:**

- international and national – Northumberland's World Heritage Site is part of the Frontiers of Roman Empire that includes Hadrian's Wall, the Upper German – Raetian Limes and the Antonine Wall in central Scotland. Cultural organisations e.g. Kielder Art & Architecture programme and Allenheads Contemporary Arts have long standing relationships with globally recognised Artists
- regional – North East Culture Partnership – supported by the North East region's 12 local authorities, 5 universities, the North East Chamber of Commerce and the arts and heritage sectors. Together they make the case for the cultural sector and the valuable contribution it makes to the region's economy
- sub-regional – Northumberland is a full and active partner in both the North of Tyne and Borderlands Initiative which involves collaboration with neighbouring local authorities on common economic and cultural issues – and we fully contribute and shape the work of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership
- County – Great Northumberland – commitment to support the cultural sector and celebrate talent and creativity and to showcase a series of spectacular events across the summer in the Great Exhibition of the North year
- Towns and communities – Northumberland Arts Development (NAD) is a partnership of cultural venues and organisations that engages people of all ages in artforms; music, dance, visual arts, literature, youth theatre and drama

**Three priority objectives are central to delivering this goal:**

- Establish a Northumberland Culture Partnership to harness creativity and showcase achievement e.g Great Northumberland programme
- Strengthen our international work e.g Memorandum of Understanding between Hadrian's Wall and the Great Wall of China
- Support an ambitious cultural capital programme to attract new visitors from across the world e.g Lilidorei, a state of the art play experience at Alnwick Garden

**WE WILL RAISE OUR CULTURAL PROFILE REGIONALLY, NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY**



## CULTURAL DELIVERY

A Northumberland Culture Partnership of strategic organisations will support:

- a strategic fundraising plan for capital projects and programmes
- a joined up sharing of marketing and programme collaborations e.g. national/international touring of theatre productions or exhibitions
- reaching and engaging with more individuals and diverse communities

In addition, the Council will continue to collaborate with all organisations with a shared vision as to how our cultural and heritage assets can make a difference to our lives – from our landed estates and large landowners to community-based groups working in an estate or a village, and from our trademark businesses such as Barbour and Doddingtons whose products are synonymous with Northumberland to individual artists and performers. We all have a part to play.

## CULTURAL IMPACT

Key indicators of success:

- World class cultural venues and attractions
- A culture led tourism profile of international standing
- Confident and entrepreneurial local people leading innovation and growth in the creative industries

## CULTURAL FLOW

Cultural Policy >

- Cultural Strategy
- Tourism Alliance
- NE Case4Culture
- Government White Papers

Cultural Funding v

- Northumberland County Council
- North of Tyne / NELEP
- Borderlands Growth Deal
- Arts Council England
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Government Funding

Cultural Delivery ^

- Northumberland Culture Partnership
- Theatre
- Museums
- Festivals
- Heritage Sites
- Creative People & Places

Cultural Impact <

- Audiences
- Participants
- Children & Young People
- Visitors
- Placemaking & Identity
- Education & Learning
- Health & Wellbeing
- Economy & Growth
- Collaboration & Partnership



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