NORTHUMBERLAND, THE CREATIVE LANDSCAPE

Connecting Communities through inspirational Culture

A Cultural Strategy for Northumberland

2016 – 2021
CONTENT

Executive Summary

Introduction

Strategic Context

1. Northumberland – Unique and distinctive
2. Northumberland – Bold and ambitious
3. Vision, aims and cross-cutting priorities
4. Challenges to delivering the vision
5. Opportunities to support our cultural development
6. Partners and platforms to support the Cultural Strategy
7. Outcomes of the Cultural Strategy

Action Plan 2016 - 2021
Executive Summary

This Cultural Strategy has been developed for us all; it is for anyone who takes part in, enjoys or helps provide culture. Included in our definition of culture is: sports and leisure, arts and creative industries, museums and heritage, festivals and events, libraries and cultural education, culture led tourism and parks and open spaces. It will help us work together to build on our rich and unique cultural heritage and deliver a shared vision that will create opportunity for everyone in this amazing and special place; Northumberland.

We will build on the achievements of major cultural projects such as the outstanding Weeping Window, poppies installation at Woodhorn. A great example of culture in Northumberland; raising the profile of what we can do here on a national and international stage, bringing in new audiences and enhancing culture led tourism, attracting regional investment and delivering a wide ranging and meaningful engagement and education programme.

We will make the most of the impressive new projects being developed over the next five years including The Sill, a £14m National Landscape Discovery Centre and the £21m Ashington Leisure Centre to whose programmes will help drive forward the vision and aims of this Cultural Strategy to foster shared ambition, positive action and celebration.

VISION

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

AIMS

1. **Increasing participation and equality of access**
   We will create inspiring cultural opportunities for all Northumberland residents

2. **Maximising partnership and collaboration**
   We will raise our cultural profile regionally, nationally and internationally

3. **Building economic sustainability, benefit and growth**
   We will invest in a strong and dynamic cultural sector together

CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES

- Active engagement of our children and young people
- Developing talent, skills and progression
- Improving health and wellbeing
Introduction

A new North East Cultural Strategy *Case for Culture was* launched in July 2015 receiving extremely positive responses, which were echoed at a national launch in the Houses of Parliament on 4th November 2015. The Minister for Culture Ed Vaizey has held up the *Case for Culture* as the exemplar model that other areas of the country should adopt; and in this context we have developed a new Cultural Strategy for Northumberland. We will align our ambitions and provide a shared vision for the cultural sector to deliver together. It will help us galvanise the vast range of activity that is being delivered countywide and help us to advocate our own case for culture to support inward investment for a stronger creative sector in Northumberland.

Culture 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 on the radio, watching drama on TV, to borrowing a book from our local library, using the gym at the leisure centre or going for a walk in some of our outstanding parks and open spaces. All cultural activity has important benefits and children and young people that learn an instrument at school or take part in regular cultural education do better academically and have less health problems as they develop into adults.

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

- Sports and leisure
- Arts and creative industries
- Museums, archives and heritage engagement
- Festivals and events
- Libraries and cultural education
- Tourism
- Parks and open spaces

The Cultural Strategy draws together a five-year vision for cultural activity. It is about maximising our rich assets and the opportunity for their enjoyment by both Northumberland residents and visitors.
Strategic Context

Active Northumberland has been created as the independent and strategic lead for Leisure and Cultural Services in the county. Active Northumberland has commissioned the development of the Cultural Strategy and will provide ongoing support to help the cultural sector and its partners facilitate its successful implementation. Active Northumberland provides significant services and acts strategically for Northumberland representing and advising the County on all matters Cultural and as a close partner it works towards the Council’s Priorities. It is important therefore that this strategy recognises the vision and values of the Council, together with the supporting vision and Values of Active Northumberland.

Northumberland Corporate Plan Vision:

*Northumberland will be a thriving county where people choose to live, work, visit and invest*

Corporate Plan Mission:

*We will listen and respond to local people and our partners and we will be confident, innovative and fair*

Corporate Values:

*Passionate, Creative, Opportunistic, Customer Driven, Efficient, Consistent, Trustworthy*

Active Northumberland’s mission statement:

*Create opportunities in Northumberland that enrich lives, promote wellbeing, inspire creativity and encourage participation.*

Active Northumberland’s vision:

*Active Northumberland
One County,
One Company,
Endless Possibilities*

Active Northumberland’s values:

*Aware, Creative, Trust, Inclusion, Value, Effective*
1. Northumberland – unique and distinctive

Northumberland is the northernmost county of England, a border county that is steeped in history, rich in heritage and characterised by an exceptional scenic landscape. Visitors to the county enjoy the dramatic coastline with its vast, sweeping beaches, attractive moorland, wide rolling hills and the spectacular National Park. The openness, tranquillity and sense of scale reflect Northumberland as the most sparsely populated county in England.

But the history of Northumberland is far from tranquil. As an edgy, border county, Northumberland has been the last outpost for the Romans, an ancient Anglo-Saxon Kingdom, the cradle for Christianity in England, and a dividing territory that resulted in the building of seventy protective medieval castles. Today Northumberland remains a border county, bridging the Tyne and Wear conurbation with the fells of Cumbria to the west and the Lowlands of Scotland to the north.

Throughout Northumberland there are extraordinary cultural assets and activities that together contribute to the distinctiveness of the county’s unique cultural landscape and to its economic strengths and independent spirit.

The historic town of Berwick is today host to the international Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival. The glories of Hexham Abbey (founded by St Wilfrid in 674) can be enjoyed as part of engaging with the annual Hexham Music and Arts Festival. The Alnwick Garden offers exciting leisure experiences for the whole family including a series of stunning William Pye interactive water features. In the west of the county Kielder Water and Forest Park provides a superb platform for water sports, cycling and walking and has an internationally renowned and award winning Art & Architecture programme, whilst south-east Northumberland presents an inspiring heritage from mining communities that includes rapper sword dancing and the annual Miners’ Picnic.

Northumberland is a county with its own traditions, flag and unique musical instrument; the Northumbrian pipes. It has iconic heritage with Hadrian’s Wall Britain’s greatest Roman monument and is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site ‘Frontiers of the Roman Empire’. Lindisfarne Priory and Holy Island and Alnwick Castle are just a few examples that allow us to claim an inspiring and fascinating cultural identity.

Northumbrians are great historic figures from “Capability” Brown born at Kirkhale, who took Northumberland’s landscape out to the rest of the country through his dramatic garden designs, Armstrong who developed the first hydro-electric house in the country at Cragside to The Charlton brothers and Jackie Milburn of international football fame. Today there are many remarkable people that choose to live and work in Northumberland where they acknowledge and celebrate this distinctive and extraordinary county.

Here are some examples of our achievements with the understanding that there are many, many more:

**Sports and leisure**

1. Significant levels of investment continue to be made into Northumberland leisure assets with a £3.5m investment for the redevelopment of Concordia Leisure Centre, £1m in Blyth Sports Centre and over £600,000 for Waterworld, Prudhoe. The new £21 million Ashington Leisure Centre includes
a new 25 metre, six lane swimming pool, a multi-functional six courts sports hall, state-of-the-art fitness studios, gym facilities, a luxurious spa, a dedicated studio cycling room, and soft play area for the under-8’s.

2. £127,000 of special funding from Sport England’s Inclusive Sports Fund has facilitated an extensive county-wide programme of new participative sports experiences for disabled people, offered as part of the wide-reaching Ability 2 Play programme.

3. Over a period of 3 years a total of 9,427,945 visits were made to our Leisure Centres across the county.

**Arts and creative industries**

4. The economic impact of the Arts in Northumberland in 2012 was £31.8 million exhibiting growth of 25% of direct impact between 2009 and 2012. Over £1.6m of Arts Council funding has been awarded to the 5 National Portfolio Organisations based in Northumberland for 2015 - 18 and over £900k of Grants for the Arts has been successfully achieved in the last 18 months.

5. Northumberland’s reputation for the visual arts is built on extraordinary projects such as Belsay Hall’s contemporary arts programme curated by Arts & Heritage, including work by international Artists Thomas Heatherwick, and Julian Opie. Peace Camp commissioned by Artichoke at Dunstanburgh Castle and two award winning public art projects; the first offshore sculpture in the UK, Sean Henry’s *Couple* at Newbiggin by the Sea and Charles Jencks’ *Northumberlandia* landform parkland.

6. Over 155 commercial creative industries are based in Northumberland, including - architects’ practices; graphic design companies; photographic businesses; and digital and media companies, making up 33% of the overall creative sector in the county.

**Museums, Archives and Heritage engagement**

7. Woodhorn, a former colliery, is a mining museum and visitor attraction that delivers a nationally relevant heritage and contemporary arts exhibition programme and provides a home for the Northumberland Archives. As well as winning North East Museum of the Year in 2014, Woodhorn has attracted £3.4m of Arts Council funding to engage local people with the arts through the bait project and was the first venue in England to tour the *Weeping Window* poppies installation, which welcomed over 125,000 visitors in seven weeks including 6,000 school children.

8. Hadrian’s Wall is Northumberland’s only World Heritage Site and is used by Visit Britain in marketing campaigns as one of its premium Hero Brands, recognition of its ability to attract large numbers of international visitors. The wall corridor stretches from the Tyne to Solway and the economic impact of the Wall in this area in 2014 was £1.8 billion, up by 2.2% on 2013, this spend supports over 27,000 jobs. The central section of the Wall, in Northumberland’s National Park is the most visited section of the wall.

9. The Holy Island of Lindisfarne has been a place of pilgrimage for hundreds of years and today the Islands attracts 650,000 visitors annually. The Islands marks the end of two popular walking trails; St Cuthbert’s Way and St Oswald’s Way. Christian heritage is integrated throughout the county with
many significant sites, monuments and religious buildings. Hexham Abbey has recently undergone a significant £3.8 million restoration funded by HLF and NCC equipping it to accommodate the thousands of visitors it attracts annually.

**Festivals and events**

10. Northumberland hosts over 200 festivals and events covering sport and physical activity, cultural and arts events, landscape events, heritage and community events celebrating elements of Northumberland life. The Morpeth Northumbrian Gathering involves 60 different musical events over three days. It is a celebration of traditional Northumbrian music and attracts approximately 10,000 people every year. The Rothbury and Hexham gatherings’, on a smaller scale, contribute to a thriving traditional music scene in the County.

11. 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 2014 8,000 people attended the Festival, with over 50% of respondents coming from outside the area. The Festival generates £6.02 for every £1 of public money spent. To date the Festival has showcased 400 works from 35 countries.

12. Images of Northumberland’s landscape were broadcast to 166 countries following Northumberland’s successful staging of the Tour of Britain. Race organisers hailed the Northumberland leg as the best two days that they have had in the history of the event. 95,000 spectators watched the Tour of Britain cycling race through the county in September 2015 with 10,500 children from 63 schools involved in cultural activities leading up to the event. Over the two day race 900,000 people viewed it through live broadcast in the UK.

**Libraries and cultural education**

13. The Northern Poetry Library (NPL), based at Morpeth Library, is the largest collection of contemporary poetry in England outside London, all of which can be used and borrowed free of charge. The NPL is part of a large network of 34 libraries across the county. Literature and reading is also given national profile in the county through the annual Hexham Book Festival now in its tenth year.

14. In the last three years, the libraries have had 2,944,951 visitors and have issued 3,791,913 library loans. Library customers have spent 260,293 hours using library computers for access to information and the library has run 1829 hours of digital support sessions since 2014 to help people get on line. 5333 events have taken place in libraries to support the love of reading and lifelong learning.

15. Northumberland Arts Development (NAD) is the arts development delivery service for the county funded by Active Northumberland. It is a partnership of The Maltings (Berwick Visual Arts), Alnwick Playhouse, Queen’s Hall and Doorstep Pictures, Hexham Book Festival, Highlights Rural Touring Scheme working with Mortal Fools and Music Partnership North with support from Arts Council England. In the last two years, over 30,000 children have taken part in cultural education opportunities through, visual arts and film, dance, literature, drama and music.

**Tourism, Parks and Open Spaces**
16. Tourism and the visitor economy injected £765m into Northumberland’s economy in 2014 with 9.3m visitors and supported 13,400 jobs and is continuing to grow. In two successive year’s Northumberland has won the silver award in the Category Best UK Holiday/County Destination at the British Travel.

17. Northumberland International Dark Sky Park covers an area of 1,483 square kilometres and is Europe’s largest area of protected night sky. It was awarded gold tier designation by the International Dark Sky Association, making it officially the best place in England to view the night skies.

18. The prestigious international publication Condé Nast Traveller placed Northumberland National Park first in the list of its five ‘best’ national parks around the world, alongside other iconic destinations including Pembrokeshire Coast National Park in Wales, Gran Paradiso National Park in Italy, Pirin National Park in Bulgaria and Greece’s Olympus National Park.

2. Northumberland – bold and ambitious

There is an impressive amount of iconic projects and programmes planned in Northumberland over the period to 2021 despite the recent years of economic challenge. Through these developments and capital commitments the Cultural Strategy can be driven forward to achieve our Vision. This list of 20 projects isn’t exhaustive but provides us with a great starting point in our mission to join up and promote what is being achieved over the next five years. These include:

- The opening of The Sill: national landscape discovery centre
- Delivery of the £1 million Peregrini Project on and around Lindisfarne
- Development of new £Multi-Million leisure and sports facilities in Morpeth and Ponteland
- Refurbishment of the Union Chain Bridge in Horncliffe
- Proposed new museum developments in Berwick and Morpeth
- Major refurbishment of the Concordia Leisure Centre in Cramlington
- Establishment of a new Visitor Centre at Kielder Castle
- Creation of a new Northumberland Wildlife Trust facility at Hauxley, Druridge Bay
- Ambitious National Trust plans to develop the visitor experience at Seaton Delaval Hall
- Proposed development of the Headway Arts ArtSpace base in Blyth
- The Council’s estate transformation programme; including facilities in Alnwick, Berwick and Hexham
- The iNorthumberland programme bringing fibre broadband to approximately 90% of homes and businesses in Northumberland by December 2015
- Re-opening of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line – creating connectivity to the City region
- Wi-fi rollout to all our public libraries
- The Tall Ships Regatta in Blyth 2016
- Tercentenary celebrations for Lancelot “Capability” Brown in 2016
- The Roman Calvary Exhibition as part of the Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site celebrations in 2017
- The Tour of Britain Stage Race in 2017
- 50th Northumbrian Gathering 2017
- 50th anniversary of the Northern Poetry Library 2018
- The Blyth Tall Ship project and the expedition to Antarctica 2019
3. Vision, Aims and Cross-Cutting Priorities

Resulting from consultation with the cultural sector through focus groups, one to one interviews and a survey we have distilled the overriding themes related to what people have articulated to us. It reflects the essence of ambition and passion that came out strongly through the process.

Some of the feedback included:

- Northumberland is about partnerships and networks
- Landscape is very special and unique and it’s about celebrating that
- Culture is everything and everyone; it should be inclusive of young people because future generations need a sense of ownership
- Increasing levels of activity should be a priority

This document is to help bring us together through a shared set of principles that will support us to work in unity and be informed by a clearer understanding of each diverse area of culture in the context of a distinctive County. Each and every person in the cultural sector has a responsibility to play their part in positively working for the greater good of culture in Northumberland to help us all achieve our full potential.

VISION

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

AIMS

1. Increasing participation and equality of access
   We will create inspiring cultural opportunities for all Northumberland residents

2. Maximising partnership and collaboration
   We will raise our cultural profile regionally, nationally and internationally

3. Building economic sustainability, benefit and growth
   We will invest in a strong and dynamic cultural sector together
CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES

- Active engagement of our children and young people
- Developing talent, skills and progression
- Improving health and wellbeing

Aim 1: increasing participation and equality of access

We will create inspiring cultural opportunities for all Northumberland residents

There are barriers to access and participation, which currently mean some of our communities, and people are not able to appreciate, enjoy and benefit from the full range and opportunity of cultural experiences.

We want to make sure that people understand culture is for everyone and have the potential to develop skills, confidence and support health and well-being.

Five objectives to support delivery of this aim:

1. To develop quality cultural facilities countywide and substantially increased level of participation and engagement in the full range of cultural activity and events in south east Northumberland e.g. bait project

2. To work with Culture Bridge North East, libraries and schools to ensure young people have the opportunity to do Arts Award, experience a diverse cultural education (supporting the Cultural Education Challenge) and gain knowledge of potential careers in the cultural sector.

3. Through quality facilities and effective programmes we will encourage more people to be inspired to become active in our leisure centres and our parks and open spaces. We will innovatively challenge the barrier of time to “create active time” to fit in to people’s daily lives

4. With our heritage and community partners and further and higher education institutes develop a pool of local champions and volunteers as key advocates for culture, providing appropriate personal development, accreditation, reward and professional development opportunities for creative industries

5. Maximising the outstanding heritage of Northumberland to create county wide and accessible engagement opportunities
Aim 2: maximising partnership and collaboration

We will raise our cultural profile regionally, nationally and internationally

In addressing the challenges of communication and connectivity between different parts of the sector and between different cultural communities, we will actively develop our public, private, voluntary and community sector partnerships.

Engagement with cultural organisations and networks in the North East, Cumbria and Borders of Scotland, including with the North East Combined Authority and North East Culture Partnership, will create new opportunities and collaborations, increasing our capacity to develop and deliver bold and adventurous new activity.

Four objectives to support delivery of this aim:

1. To establish an effective new Northumberland Culture Partnership, where key stakeholders and partners meet regularly to support Cultural Strategy delivery, providing a cross-sector platform for communication, collaboration and development.

2. To increase the opportunities arising from national and international initiatives e.g. The Tall Ships Regatta 2016

3. To encourage crossover activity in the cultural sector through a wider creative use of leisure centres, libraries, heritage facilities, village halls, churches, business spaces, pubs and other community venues for a range of different cultural activity.

4. To work with international partners where learning, sharing and collaboration can enhance the county’s profile and increase social and economic opportunity e.g. Rhur Valley, Germany

Aim 3: building economic sustainability, benefit and growth

We will invest in a strong and dynamic cultural sector together

Northumberland’s cultural organisations already have a good track record in securing inward investment, for some capital and mainly revenue projects. However, the next five years will witness further reductions in public sector funding and increased competition for resources. Many of our buildings are struggling for sustainability and the dispersed and rural context of the county means that we haven’t had the funding that some cities have received. We will therefore capitalise on our plans for increased collaboration by pooling knowledge, sharing expertise, delivering to our strategic priorities, and building partnerships to maximise the potential for increased inward investment
Our approach to Lottery funding and Higher Education opportunities will be coordinated by the new Culture Partnership and we want the range and number of successful applications to increase, as indicated in our detailed Cultural Strategy Action Plan. But we need more expertise and fundraising support. We will also look to increase cultural sector ability to build earned income streams (for example, visitor weddings are a significant contributor to the local economy and present an opportunity for the cultural sector in terms of tourism and creative industries).

Six objectives to support delivery of this aim:

1. Implementation of a strong and coherent case for inward investment, using this Strategy as advocacy (supporting both new initiatives and the conservation/sustainability of existing assets) led by Active Northumberland.

2. Enhancement of earned income and commercial support streams to achieve greater sustainability for cultural organisations and projects and further development of commercial creative industries.

3. Ambitious development of adventurous, bold and innovative arts, heritage, sports, tourism and cultural education initiatives, maximising opportunities through planned projects and opportunities to develop relationships with a range of new national and international partners.

4. Work with Higher Education and Further Education providers to increase opportunities for training and skills development in the cultural sector and to build the county platform of creative industries.

5. Enhanced marketing of Northumberland’s cultural offer, both inside the county and to the visitor market, supporting wide awareness of the distinctive cultural identity, the opportunities available and the quality of delivery.

6. Development of effective advocacy to the private sector, to businesses, to elected members, and to the wider public to demonstrate the value of cultural activity.

This Cultural Strategy is the launch pad for a five year plan to increase economic sustainability for the sector and to maximise economic benefit for the county. Economic benefit will be demonstrated by:

- Increased inward investment in the county
- Higher visitor spend do you know what it is now per head?
- More job opportunities in the cultural sector (e.g. through creative industries development)
- Increase in creative business start-ups and success rates
- Higher proportion of earned income generated by the cultural sector
- Achievement of accreditation for personnel in the cultural sector (including volunteers)
- Measurable impact on Northumberland resident health and well-being

This Aim will particularly contribute to cross-cutting themes of health and well-being, and skills and talent development. Healthier communities brings economic benefit in terms of increased productivity, less time lost in sickness leave, and reduced health care costs. Through skills and talent
development the opportunity to develop the valuable creative industries sector and to build the wider cultural offer will be maximised.

Cross-cutting priorities

Commitment to our cross-cutting priorities will be embedded in the activity delivered in response to each of the three Key Aims. The priorities are:

- Active engagement of children and young people
- Improving health and well-being
- Developing talent, skills and progression

The following goals inform how we will meet our cross-cutting priorities and are integrated in the Cultural Strategy Action Plan:

1. We will work with Culture Bridge North East (managed by Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums), the education sector (through schools, further and higher education) and support the Cultural Education Challenge to help increase the number of Artsmark accredited schools and the number of our young people achieving all levels of Arts Awards.

2. We will encourage and help establish new placement, internship and apprenticeship opportunities in the cultural sector, to help build and retain young talent and support the cultural sector to offer curriculum linked programmes.

3. We will work with Youth Services and young people to design a 1001 voices survey to ensure that we are listening to young people and broaden their cultural knowledge and experiences.

2. With partners we will identify indicators that illustrate the benefits of cultural activity in enhancing health and well-being and demonstrate why our cultural offer is fundamental to the quality of life for people in Northumberland.

3. Through the Northumberland Culture Partnership we will encourage joined-up initiatives with health and social care providers, and seek new inward investment (through sources such as Lottery and private charitable trusts) to facilitate new activity that will achieve health and well-being objectives.

3. There will be updated Memorandums of Understanding with Higher Education partners that will support creation of new opportunities to facilitate sector training and professional development; develop formal accreditation for volunteers; and refine methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of Cultural Strategy delivery.

4. We will work with Northumberland College to support its innovative initiatives (including development of a rural tourism academy) to deliver new tourism focused training
programmes and skills development, and encourage other developmental activity that will provide a bridge to encourage cultural engagement and training for young people post school, helping identify and support young talent.

Our cross-cutting priorities strongly complement key aspirations in the regional Cultural Strategy, 

*Case for Culture* which focuses on

- Participation and Reach
- Children and young people
- Talent and progression
- Economic value
- Distinctiveness and innovation

### 4. The challenges to delivering our Vision

Consultation has drawn out many challenges and aspirations that the cultural sector is enthusiastic to embrace as it looks forward to the next five years of development and opportunity.

There is huge potential that can be maximised to enable the sector to achieve its Vision. Working to key themes and identified aims, the delivery of this Cultural Strategy will be the responsibility of all those working in the sector, supported through guidance and facilitation from Active Northumberland.

From the consultation barriers to access and participation in cultural activity in Northumberland have been identified as:

- Economic disadvantage
- Rural isolation
- Lack of knowledge and understanding of cultural opportunities
- Low level literacy in some communities
- Disability and access
- Lack of time

Wider barriers to achieving the vision have been identified:

- Communication and connectivity
- Perceptions of culture
- Decline of traditional funding sources (including Local authorities)
- Retaining young talent
We will work to overcome the challenges by:

- Making connections – bringing people and organisations together
- Seeking collaborations – identifying the right partners to help us achieve our aims
- Thinking creatively - continually looking and trying new ways of working and delivering
- Advocating – raising our message to join up approaches to champion the wealth of cultural activity and opportunity across the county

5. Opportunities to support our cultural development

There are important externally led strategies and opportunities (including new ways of funding the cultural offer and increasing access to culture), either in place or on the horizon, that align with our Vision and that can help us to enhance and advance a rich, vibrant and sustainable cultural sector in Northumberland:

Culture Minister Ed Vaizey has indicated that the Government’s new *White Paper for the arts, culture and heritage* (due to be published in early 2016) will put “culture at the centre of place making”. The White Paper is expected to explore four key themes – place making - the role that culture plays in creating places that people want to live, work and visit; engagement; financial resilience; and internationalism - culture as a tool for promoting Britain abroad. Vaizey highlighted that “a lot of cultural organisations do not talk to each other and do not see how the whole can be greater than the sum of the parts.”

The aspirations of the Northumberland cultural sector complement the focus of the White Paper, providing an opportunity for the sector to demonstrate a policy alignment and joined-up approach as it seeks new inward investment.

The North East *Case for Culture* highlights five key aspirations to 2030 – participation and reach; children and young people; talent and progression; economic value; and distinctiveness and innovation. This statement of intent, developed through a “bottom-up” approach, provides the region with an overarching set of agreed priorities.

The Case for Culture highlights what will be achieved through collaboration and through:

- The continuation of the North East Culture Partnership (NECP), with a move towards a formally established organisation to provide a voice for the cultural sector in the North East.
- Using committed investment in the region to lever further funds - with a target of £300M over the next five years
In Northumberland we can align with the *Case for Culture* (providing input to that formal partnership) to help strengthen a joined-up, collaborative approach that will reinforce our unique cultural identity and landscape and open doors for new investment.

The *Warwick Commission* identified five goals to ensure that the Cultural and Creative Industries can fully enrich Britain, including the development of a thriving digital cultural sphere, and a world-class creative and cultural education for all. This policy statement supports Northumberland ambitions for use of new technology and digital engagement and for enhanced cultural education, especially (though not exclusively) for children and young people.

The new DCMS overarching *Strategy for Sport* will be finalised before the end of 2015 with ten priority themes that include – participation; physical activity; and children and young people. The draft Strategy indicates a strong emphasis on getting more people active, a key aspiration for Northumberland. Sport England has indicated that implementation of the Strategy will lead to new opportunities for grass roots sport, including new investment of public funds. In Northumberland there is an opportunity to maximise this potential alongside major plans for leisure centre development.

*Arts Council England* (ACE) has responsibility for libraries and museums as well as the arts and continues to promote its 2020 Vision of Great Art, Museums and Libraries for Everyone. ACE has made a formal commitment to redressing the balance of its grant making, with greater allocation directed to the regions and away from London. Funds can be sourced through the open funding streams of *Grants for the Arts* and Grants for the Arts Libraries. In addition new strategic funds (open application) include *Ambition for Excellence* with a focus on enabling adventurous, high quality activity outside London. There will also be further opportunities for capital funding.

*The Society of Chief Librarians’* vision puts emphasis on digital innovation, a theme echoed by *Arts Council England*, which has identified - digital and creative media; skills development for staff; and libraries as community hubs, as key priorities for the library sector. *Grants for the Arts Libraries Fund* offers an important opportunity for multi-use development of library spaces.

*The Historic England* Heritage at Risk Register helps focus the options for investment from funding bodies including the *Heritage Lottery Fund* (HLF). HLF through its Heritage Awards and Heritage Enterprise Fund and BIG Lottery (through Reaching Communities Buildings) continue to provide substantial opportunities for capital investment. The Heritage Enterprise Fund has potential to support Northumberland creative industries initiatives.

Both HLF and BIG also provide project and programme support (through Our Heritage, Young Roots, Reaching Communities and Awards for All) for a range of potential creative applications. Young Roots offers a particular opportunity for Northumberland to increase heritage engagement with young people, and Awards for All could be maximised to enhance local cultural activity and place making.

Charitable Trusts and Foundations, working nationally, regionally and locally, are increasingly supporting the cultural sector with twelve national trusts identified as strong best match options for the sector to approach. Recent changes at the *Paul Hamlyn Foundation* have focused new priorities on widening access to and participation in the arts and improving education and learning through
the arts. Aspirations of the Northumberland cultural sector could be supported through the new Paul Hamlyn funding streams.

The European Union Creative Europe fund has a substantially increased budget from 2016 to 2020 and there is a significant track record of success in accessing the fund from the UK. Creative Europe has audience development as one of five key priorities, a priority that is new to the EU and one in which the UK is more experienced than its European counterparts. There is an opportunity for Northumberland organisations to build European (and other international) partners as a prelude to accessing this and other European Union funds. The value of sharing authentic local culture also features in the Creative Europe fund guidelines.

Other European Union funds have potential to bring further inward investment to the cultural sector in Northumberland, including European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) programme and LEADER support to bring additional resources to creative industries development.

NESTA has previously offered developmental support for ambitious cultural use of new technology through a Digital Innovation Fund. Currently NESTA Impact Investments supports the development of new products and services that help improve the health and well-being of children and young people in the UK, in particular targeting innovations which:

- Increase educational attainment
- Improve employment readiness and employment rates
- Increase positive contributions in communities and society overall; and
- Improve physical and mental well-being

Our cultural sector aspirations for engagement of children and young people can be supported through this source.
6. Partners and platforms that will support Cultural Strategy delivery

Active Northumberland (formally predominantly a Leisure Trust) is a Culture and Leisure Charitable Trust, and Limited Company. On 1st April 2015 Council Services responsible for the leadership, management and development of culture, tourism, heritage and libraries transferred to Active Northumberland (AN). Active Northumberland is delivering the Leisure, Culture, Heritage and Library services on behalf of the Council. It is financially supported through a management fee from Northumberland County Council, income generation, funding through commissioned services and grant support.

Active Northumberland manages, operates, runs and supports:

- 20 leisure sites across Northumberland (including 10 swimming pools), 5 smaller community leisure facilities, 2 sport facilities on school sites, 2 outdoor sports facilities and 1 disability riding centre
- 34 Libraries, 3 mobile libraries, 2 prison libraries and a home library service for the housebound
- 11 Tourist Information Centres
- A countywide Exercise on Referral Service commissioned by Public Health, offering 1,935 places across 11 leisure centres and 5 community venues.
- 34 Walking for Health walking groups led by 187 active volunteer walk leaders
- Regular grant funding for 12 external sport and cultural organisations including 4 arts centre hubs and Museums and Archives Northumberland
- A Sports Development service with 26 members of staff
- Northumberland Arts Development and strategic development for the creative industries
- The management of 21 Urban Parks, 8 County Parks and 44 Playing Fields

Active Northumberland is also developing new Multi-Million Pound leisure and sports facilities in Morpeth and Ponteland and leading refurbishment of the Concordia Leisure Centre in Cramlington.

In addition to its direct delivery, Active Northumberland will provide ongoing support to help the cultural sector facilitate successful implementation of the Cultural Strategy. Support will include:

- Initial coordination to help establish the Northumberland Culture Partnership
- Secretariat services for the Cultural Partnership
- A role, alongside other cultural partners, in task group development work in response to specific objectives within the Cultural Strategy Action Plan

Delivery of the Cultural Strategy is the responsibility of the Northumberland cultural sector. A newly established Northumberland Culture Partnership will play a key overarching role in driving Strategy delivery and reviewing progress. Northumberland Culture Partnership will be a forum and platform for all cultural organisations in the county. However, there are a number of key organisations and
agencies whose active engagement will be vital to ensuring the Cultural Strategy Vision can be delivered. These include
Northumberland County Council
Northumberland Tourism
The Woodhorn Trust (Museums and Archives Northumberland)
The North East Bridge (managed through Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums)
Northumberland College
Newcastle University
Northumbria University
English Heritage
Historic England
The National Trust
Arts Council England
Sport England
Heritage Lottery Fund

Many other key organisations will play a crucial role through development and delivery of some of the important, highlighted projects and programmes planned for 2016-21. These include:

- Northumberland National Park Authority opening The Sill: national landscape discovery centre and delivering the Roman Calvary Exhibition as part of the Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site celebrations in 2017
- The Northumberland Coast AONB delivering the Peregrini Project
- Kielder Water and Forest Park establishing a new Visitor Centre at Kielder Castle
- Northumberland Wildlife Trust creating a new visitor facility at Hauxley, Druridge Bay
- Headway Arts creating a new ArtSpace base in Blyth
- Four key arts venues/centres in Hexham, Blyth, Alnwick and Berwick

This strategy has been informed by the following:

- Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan 2013-2017
- Northumberland County Council Economic Strategy 2015-2020
- Northumberland County Council Core Strategy/Local Plan (Draft)
- Northumberland Destination Management Plan 2015-2020
- Northumberland Sport Strategic Plan 2014-2017
- Strategic Plan for Physical Activity 2010-2015
- South East Northumberland Arts Development Study 2012
- bait Business Plan
- Case for Culture North East
- Consultation with a cross-section of the Northumberland cultural sector
- Plans for a Government White Paper for the arts, culture and heritage sector, due to be published in early 2016
7. Outcomes of the Cultural Strategy

Delivering the Cultural Strategy will result in the achievement of outcomes that make a fundamental contribution to delivering our Vision.

Outcomes that we expect from the work in the period 2016-2021 include:

- Greater knowledge and awareness throughout the cultural sector of the activities, events, projects, programmes and opportunities that make up and inform the cultural landscape.

- New collaborations between partners working in the cultural sector

- New connections established, resulting in joined-up activity between cultural events that might naturally seek partnership, and crossover between different parts of the cultural sector where an opportunity exists to enable audience development, increase engagement and participation, and build sustainability

- A wider range of cultural activity taking place within venues and cultural spaces

- More spaces developed and being used for cultural activity and events

- Activity being delivered through the establishment of vibrant cultural hubs in south east Northumberland

- Enhanced facilities providing higher quality spaces for excellent cultural activity

- Increased profile for authentic and traditional Northumberland cultural activities with more local people and visitors engaging

- A measurable increase in participation and engagement in a range of cultural activity from residents across Northumberland (using Taking Part Survey criteria) and from identified target segments

- More local volunteers and champions with enhanced levels of training and skills

- More accessible heritage activity enabling a wider range of local people to have an active involvement and knowledge of the county’s heritage

- More external funding applications submitted seeking higher levels of investment and more inward resources levered

- Earned income streams being more productive in the cultural sector and new commercial opportunities developed and exploited
• New national and international partnerships in place

• Ambitious and bold new activity, projects and programmes being developed

• A better trained and skilled cultural workforce

• More children and young people achieving Arts Awards, attending further and higher education courses linked to culture, engaging as apprentices and interns in the cultural sector, and staying or returning to work in the cultural sector

• Increased understanding of the value of culture for health and well-being with more delivery of cultural projects to support health and well-being initiatives

• Improved awareness across the UK and beyond of the quality and attractiveness of Northumberland’s cultural offer

• More private sector support for cultural activity

• Greater appreciation of the strength and value of culture, and support for cultural activity and investment amongst both Elected Members and the wider Northumberland public

• Increase in numbers of creative industries start-ups and successful development of creative industries businesses (encompassing both rural artisans and small urban businesses)

• Increase in the number of jobs supported across the cultural sector, with more opportunities for people to work in the cultural sector in Northumberland

We aim to develop a strongly connected sector that works together to maximise impact and creates a cultural brand that puts Northumberland at the forefront of cultural development.