

Our North Tyneside

Great Art for Everyone



A Strategy for Arts Development
in North Tyneside 2014-2021



North Tyneside Council

Introduction

North Tyneside Council has a proud record of supporting the development and growth of arts in the Borough. Across all areas of the arts progress has been made over the period of the previous strategy. Our North Tyneside – Great Art for Everyone seeks to build on these achievements and establish North Tyneside as an exemplar of arts innovation and practice.

North Tyneside has become a significant regional venue for innovative visual arts. The stunning delivery of Global Rainbow in March 2012 captured the imagination of the Borough; the immersive film art of Kelly Richardson's Mariner 9 in August 2012 captivated audiences at the Spanish City Dome; and the North Tyneside Shimmer festival has introduced thousands of people to the incredible creativity of digital arts media for three consecutive years.

The renewed Playhouse, Whitley Bay is attracting audiences to experience a diverse range of music and performance art. Audiences have been wowed with performances as diverse as Frank Turner rocking the rafters, the traditional elegance of the Moscow Ballet and the modern beats of the Sadler's Wells Breakin' Convention hip-hop festival.

Literature, poetry and film go from strength to strength in the Borough, as collaboration with independent organisations results in new and exciting work. The Best Event Tyneside at the Journal Culture Awards has recently been won by Whitley Bay Film Festival (2012) and the Iron Age literary festival (2013) reflecting the importance of both encouraging innovation and sustaining partnerships in the arts. The recently established Jam Jar cinema continues to draw new film audiences into Whitley Bay. Cloud Nine's programme of small scale theatre in North Shields is gaining increasing attention as an innovative way to engage audiences with new theatre work.

The long standing partnership between the Council and the Customs House in South Shields sustains a programme of development work with young people in the Borough's schools. Encouraging artists to collaborate with the museums sector; to creatively intervene in the Borough's parks; to engaging with partners in the health sector; and to promoting the arts as part of the Council's wider regeneration agenda, illustrates the range of ways in which imagination and creativity can play a role in making a success of a diversity of initiatives.

North Tyneside Council and our funding partners will have to make tough decisions on how we best invest our limited resources in arts and culture. In order to maintain and grow the arts in the Borough North Tyneside Council will pursue a mixed economy of funding from public and private sources, where public investment is made to work hard as leverage for additional funding. This ensures that limited resources are used to achieve maximum impact.

The period ahead is going to be challenging financially. Overall, we will have less public money to spend. We will work in this period to try and deliver more from the private sector, by improving fundraising skills and the overall culture of giving to the arts, as well as bidding to key funding streams.

However, the conditions for excellence in the arts in North Tyneside do exist. This is evident in the range of engagement in the arts through schools and the number of voluntary and private sector initiatives supporting the arts. It will be important to build on existing achievements and partnerships for the long term good of the arts in the Borough.



The arts now and looking forward

North Tyneside Council has a lead role in developing the arts in North Tyneside.

We work to get great art to everyone by championing, developing and investing in artistic experiences that enrich people's lives.

A 7-year Strategy

We have produced an Arts Development Strategy to focus our work over the next 7 years and encourage shared purpose and partnerships across the arts locally and regionally. It has been shaped by our experience of working with artists, arts organisations, the public and our many other stakeholders and partners.

The strategy will enable North Tyneside Council to work with partners towards positive change in the arts. It will help create the conditions in which great art can be made, experienced and appreciated by as many people as possible. It will support us in realising our vision of North Tyneside as a leading creative and cultural force in the region. It will enable us to focus our investment and achieve even more impact.



Long-term goals

At the heart of the framework are five goals that are based upon those of the Arts Council England strategic framework, Great Art and Culture for Everyone.

We have interpreted these goals as follows:-

Goal 1:

Celebrate excellence in the arts

North Tyneside will be regarded as a pre-eminent centre for artistic excellence.

Goal 2:

Provide an inspiring arts offer

The arts will be at the centre of people's lives – more people are involved in arts in their communities and are enriched and inspired by arts experiences.

Goal 3:

Promote arts which are resilient and environmentally sustainable

Collaborative and networked, the arts will be known for resilience, innovation and their contribution to the Borough's reputation and prosperity.

Goal 4:

Develop a diverse and appropriately skilled workforce in the arts

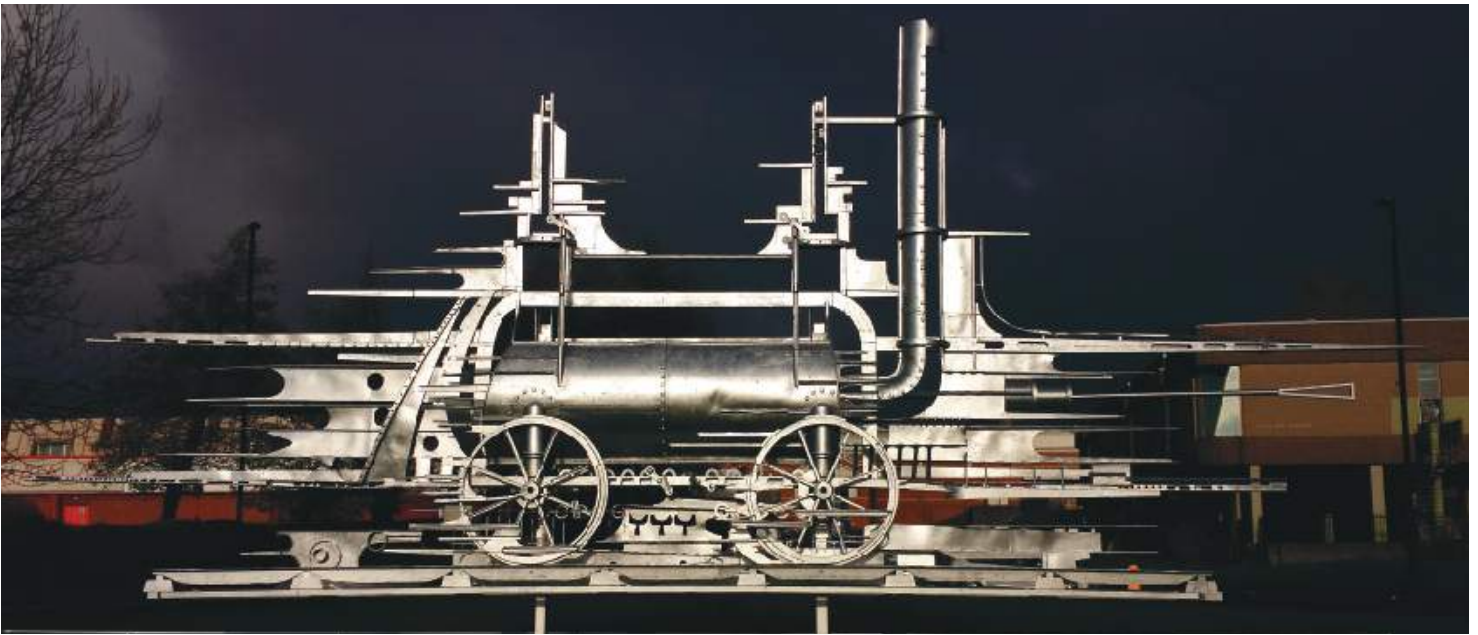
The diversity of the arts workforce will reflect the diversity of society and artistic practice in North Tyneside. Outstanding arts leaders will play a wider role in their communities.

Goal 5:

Encourage children and young people to access the arts

Children and young people will have the best current and future artistic lives they can have where they are able to develop their artistic capabilities and engage with, and shape, the arts.

Within each goal, we set out why it is an important area of work, what we will do and what success looks like.



Realising our vision

Achieving these goals will require collaboration between the Council and its many partners. This will mean changes in the way that we work and change from the arts organisations we support.

We will commit to champion the arts: using advocacy, research, the media and broadcasting to demonstrate their broader impact.

We will maintain our development role. We will use the goals to identify challenges and opportunities that could develop the arts in North Tyneside.

Evaluating success

We will have discussions with artists, arts organisations and our partners and stakeholders in order to assess progress and encourage innovation and new ideas.

We will support the use of research to provide a longer-term evidence base for policy making and demonstrating public value. The Rebalancing Our Cultural Capital paper, published in October 2013, is an excellent example of how research can both highlight the inequality of arts funding distribution and the absolute decline in arts funding over recent years.

The ongoing work of the National Campaign for Arts to demonstrate the wider value of arts investment will also be vital while the regional Culture Partnership has a vital role in advocating for increased support for culture in the region.

In this way the framework offers a powerful means both to recognise better our collective achievement and to drive ambition for the future success of the arts in North Tyneside.

Our commitment to excellence and diversity

There is an increasing blurring of boundaries between different art forms, as well as the emergence of new kinds of practice and presentation. Artistic hybrids have evolved in response to the new and unusual spaces in which art is taking place, and the opportunities created by digital technology. New relationships with audiences are developing, and people can become involved in the creative process itself.

Connecting art with people

The arts are popular, with ambitious programmes really making a difference. Our commitment to building arts audiences is given renewed energy by the knowledge that this effort can have such a positive impact.

Yet we know that much work remains to be done because only a minority of the population engages with the arts on a regular basis. A big challenge lies in addressing levels of engagement between different sections of the population. Currently those that are most active tend to be the most privileged. A further challenge is presented by demographic change. It means that arts engagement can only be successful if it is based on a real understanding of how communities are evolving.

Changing lives and communities

Public policy is increasingly focused on meeting the needs of communities at a local level. There are major opportunities for the arts to become even more integral to local life, with the arts often vital to regeneration and meeting the health needs of local people. There are long-lasting benefits to the communities involved, whether as audience members, amateurs, professionals or volunteers.

The next creative generation

The digital revolution is fuelling a democratisation of culture. Young people are leading the charge, they are equipped and skilled to make and debate their own art. Evidence points to the importance of early arts involvement in building tomorrow's artists and arts audiences. The arts are crucial to a rounded education that values creativity and nurtures talent. Music education in particular has surged in the past decade, bringing with it government investment to support instrument tuition and singing in primary schools.

Young people in the most challenging social and economic circumstances are the least likely to participate in the arts. New research, which demonstrates the impact of the arts on children's learning, lies behind our commitment to ensure that every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts.

Mission and goals

Mission

Our mission is Great art for everyone.

Long-term goals

We plan to focus our activity, working with and alongside many partners, to achieve a small number of long-term goals. The goals are interconnected and contingent upon one another.

Goal 1:

Celebrate excellence in the arts

Why this goal?

Great art inspires; it encourages people to value the arts. Without a dedicated pursuit of excellence, the achievements of artists and arts organisations would diminish and audiences would suffer. It means supporting strong arts organisations, networks, training and spaces.

What will we do?

We will:

- champion artists and companies who seek to expand their artistic horizons
- explore new ideas
- reflect the rich diversity of communities and are open to international perspectives.
- celebrate and promote the achievements of North Tyneside's artists.

Recent support for the Whitley Bay Film Festival, the Iron Age and Shatila Project are examples of these commitments.

What will success look like?

- The diversity of our artists and companies, and the innovative work they make, are widely celebrated and valued.
- There is an increase in the public's appreciation and enjoyment of excellent art, experienced live and through broadcast and digital means.

Success will be measured through regular audience feedback and an annual survey of artists and arts organisations in the Borough. Innovative use of the arts to support public health and develop the regeneration agenda will be vital.



Goal 2:

Provide an inspiring arts offer

Why this goal?

The arts enrich people's lives. Everyone should have the right to benefit from access to the arts. To achieve this goal, we want to ensure that the arts have an even stronger focus on building audiences for excellent work and that the needs of audiences and communities are at the heart of our partnerships.

What will we do?

- We will build collaborations between arts organisations and cultural partners to encourage sustainable arts programmes in places where engagement in the arts is low
- We will champion the value of the commercial, amateur and voluntary arts sectors in encouraging people to take part in the arts

Ongoing support for the network of organisations utilising the Playhouse, Whitley Bay; the links with national companies such as Sadler's Wells; and engagement with the heritage sector to develop arts projects illustrate these commitments.

What will success look like?

- More people engaging in the arts in places where participation is currently low
- An increased likelihood of people's engagement in the arts, irrespective of their socioeconomic or educational background
- More people value the arts as being important to the quality of their lives and are actively involved in shaping provision in their communities

Success will be measured by increased take up from areas of economic deprivation; targeted work with young people not usually given the opportunity to engage with the arts; and positive audience feedback.



Goal 3:
Promote arts which are resilient and environmentally sustainable

Why this goal?

This goal is about ensuring the sustainable growth and success of the arts. With public investment in the arts reducing, it is also about developing resilience, as arts organisations extend their roles and responsibilities within the wider cultural landscape. For arts organisations to thrive in a mixed economy, they will have to be even more enterprising. Our vision depends on arts organisations continuing to innovate, collaborate and evolve to sustain the excellence of their work and to make a wider contribution to the Borough's well-being and prosperity.

What will we do?

- We will work with partners, to encourage and enable a higher level of private giving to support the arts.
- We will encourage innovation through recognising the value of research and development in the production, presentation and distribution of art.

Prioritising support for arts initiatives from key Council partners and illustrating the social and promotional value of supporting the arts will be important in this area of work.

What will success look like?

- The arts are known for resilience – with organisations building sustainable business models that include a greater diversity of income streams.
- There are more partnerships between arts organisations, the wider public sector and the commercial sector.

Success will be measured by the level of corporate financial and in-kind support for the arts and sponsorship of arts activities by the private sector.

Goal 4:
Develop a diverse and appropriately skilled workforce in the arts

Why this goal?

Unless the arts workforce is diverse and highly skilled it will not reach its potential. Diversity in the workforce is important to fostering diverse arts practice; it is also important to ensuring that artists and arts organisations can understand and reflect the values of their local communities.

What will we do?

- We will promote equality within the arts, focusing in particular on encouraging equal opportunities to enter the arts workforce.
- We will encourage skills development, collaborative working and knowledge sharing, including enabling the arts to realise the potential of technological change.

Recent support for the development of pathways into arts employment, in collaboration with the Customs House, illustrate how this work can be encouraged. We will look to encourage more placements with arts organisations to develop skills.

What will success look like?

- The arts leadership and workforce will reflect diversity in the Borough professional development is regarded as essential to the health of the arts.

Success will be measured by the range of placements on offer with arts organisations and the range of professional development opportunities for arts practitioners.



Goal 4:
Encourage children and young people to access the arts

Why this goal?

The arts fuel children's curiosity and critical capacity. They are every child's birthright. It is vital that children engage with the arts early in their lives. The arts contribute to the development and well-being of children and young people. They inspire future audiences and the next generation of artists and arts leaders.

What will we do?

- We will invest in the development of arts practice and programmes that are produced for, with and by children and young people.
- We will champion high-quality opportunities for children and young people to enjoy the arts in and out of school.

The ongoing programme of work with Customs House to support work in schools; opportunities for the networks of dance organisations to perform at Mouth of the Tyne Festival; and ongoing engagement with young people's theatre through the Playhouse, Whitley Bay all provide examples of commitment in this area.

What will success look like?

- More children and young people have access to excellent art and are shaping their future arts provision as creators and critical consumers.

Success will be measured through the number of young people engaged in schools based arts programmes; out of school arts projects engaging young people; positive feedback from young people in the Borough about the arts offer.



Evaluation

How will we know if we are succeeding?

We want our community to be confident we are performing well and succeeding in achieving the things we set out to do.

Using the framework as the starting point in our approach to evaluation, for each goal we will ask a number of key questions, which will consider audience take up, customer satisfaction, engagement outcomes, partnership working and longer term impacts. Seeking to answer these questions will enable us to have the best sense of whether the goals are being achieved and to what extent. This will enable us to judge the effectiveness of our work and consider whether alternative courses of action are needed. We will gather or request information or data from arts organisations and partners when we know it will help us to answer these questions.

We will also use the framework to renew our commitment to research. Robust evidence will be important, both to inform effective policy making and to demonstrate the impact and value of the arts.



Conclusion

North Tyneside has a proud tradition of creativity and innovation in the arts.

Of course, much art in North Tyneside takes place outside the operations of the Council. However we are a significant part of the cultural life of the borough. We support investment in both art and artists. In renewing our Arts Development Strategy we have set out both our goals and our priorities for the next seven years.

In seeking to achieve our mission, great art for everyone in North Tyneside, we will support, encourage and appreciate artists. Children and young people must learn about and love their culture if they are to carry it on. Art itself must be enriched by the contribution of local artists reflecting our vibrant and changing borough.

'Our North Tyneside – Great Art for Everyone' is an essential part of what defines our borough. The arts are necessary for a successful economy and to support our prestige and our mental health. Art is vital to our social cohesion, to our sense of identity, our happiness and our well-being. Art in all its forms can simply have a resonance that is both uniquely individual and collectively inspiring and enhances the quality of life of a place.



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