

North Tyneside Creates



**A Cultural Plan
2023–2030**

Contents

- 4 Foreword
- 6 Introduction
- 8 Cultural Compacts – a Summary
- 9 Culture, Creativity and North Tyneside
- 12 Building the Cultural Offer
- 13 Meeting Challenges, Maximising Impact
- 17 The Power of Partnerships
- 20 Cultural Compact Networks
- 22 What's Next?
- 23 Acknowledgements and Further Reading



North
Tyneside
Council

HELIX
ARTS.

TYNE & WEAR
archives &
museums

LivingArchive

RenderVox
DANCE

North Shields
Heritology Project

VODA



SALT
Arts productions

PLAYHOUSE
Whitley Bay



globe

BN
HD
GROUP



RR
Remembering the past
Resourcing the future



NT
AS

National
Trust



The Vision

To transform the cultural and creative sector in North Tyneside; to boost pride in local communities; to promote individual and community health and wellbeing; to drive economic prosperity, through increased cultural activity and a growing visitor economy.





Foreword

For many years our aim in North Tyneside has been to make the Borough a great place to live, work and visit. The cultural life of the Borough is key to that aim.

In North Tyneside we have a fantastic programme of events, including the long-running Mouth of the Tyne Festival, combining high profile music with international outdoor arts performance. We are home to many independent cultural initiatives such as Whitley Bay Carnival, Iron Press and Jam Jar Cinema.

In Helix Arts we have the Borough's only Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

We have the Playhouse, Whitley Bay with a fabulous programme of entertainment throughout the year. We have excellent museums at Segedunum, part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site, and at Stephenson Steam Railway, reflecting the significant role of the Borough in the birth of the industrial revolution. At St. Mary's Island we have the iconic and nationally famous lighthouse, a key regional symbol as well as a hugely popular visitor attraction.

However, the consultation undertaken throughout 2022, as part of the work towards this cultural plan, has brought to the fore some key challenges which we need to address in the coming years to transform our cultural offer.

Challenges which have been raised in the consultation process include the uneven spread of cultural venues in the Borough and some inequalities in terms of access to cultural provision. These are areas we want to work in partnership to address.

Some steps are already underway. Our partnership with the North of Tyne Combined Authority is bringing investment to support a more diverse town centre visitor offer, through the Cultural and Creative Zone (CCZ) initiative in North Shields, while our wider regeneration programme across the Borough is ensuring that culture is at the heart of our thinking.

Across the sector there are many cultural organisations, tourism businesses, freelance workers, events organisers and volunteers who contribute to the rich cultural ecology we already enjoy in North Tyneside, supporting the cultural life of our communities. Many are still working to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a significant impact on the cultural and hospitality sectors.

However, we know there are strengths upon which we can build and the key challenges outlined in this cultural plan are the starting point for further development of the sector.

This cultural plan is the first step on an exciting partnership journey, following up on the challenges identified in consultation, to build on our existing strengths and to make sure that we have an outstanding offer that meets the aim of transforming North Tyneside as a cultural centre and ensuring we remain a great place to live, work and visit.

Norma Redfearn

**Dame Norma Redfearn DBE
Elected Mayor of North Tyneside**



Introduction

The development of a unified Cultural Strategy will provide the basis for a transformation of the cultural offer in North Tyneside, promoting new ways of more effectively engaging communities, supporting the wider growth of the cultural sector and contributing towards wider economic recovery and growth.

The COVID-19 pandemic illustrated the vital role of culture in supporting health and wellbeing, when the initial absence of cultural provision was keenly felt and the cultural sector had to find new ways to connect with audiences. The value of shared human experience and the sense of connectedness that cultural activity brings, whether as participant or audience, was key to helping many people navigate and emerge from the darkest days of the pandemic.

Increasingly however, the cultural and creative sector is also recognised as a key economic driver. Creative UK estimate that the cultural and creative industries contributed £115.9bn in GVA to the UK economy in 2019, which is greater than aerospace, automotive, life sciences and oil and gas sectors combined. In addition, the sector is creating jobs at three times the UK average, employing over 2 million people across the UK, while supporting a further 1.4 million jobs across the supply chain, bringing the total number of jobs supported by the creative industries to 3.5 million.

The cultural sector also includes the visitor economy and our key heritage assets. Most recent data indicates that tourism in North Tyneside alone contributed £217m to the local economy, attracting 3.5 million visitors and supporting 2,400 jobs.

However, the impact of COVID-19 on those working in the cultural sector was also significant, with nationally published data suggesting that: “The pandemic had a greater impact on freelance workers, who constituted 62% of the core-creative workforce before the pandemic and only 52% at the end of 2020.” Many practitioners struggle to make a living and take part time jobs to support their creative practice.



Work undertaken in areas such as Hull, Coventry and Bradford, which have had successful UK City of Culture bids, has illustrated the importance of a partnership approach and the need to have broad ownership across communities to enable a cultural vision to come to life. The strength of local provision within communities, where it is developed with those communities, has been clearly evidenced.

The common factor in all of these examples has been the role of culture in defining place and driving transformation. While the approach in each area has been different, due to the different geography and history of these locations, the essential role of culture in the process of regeneration and post-pandemic recovery has been a constant. These are examples from which we can learn in North Tyneside and take inspiration in shaping our own bespoke vision, with and for the residents and cultural workforce in the Borough.

Cultural Compacts



Cultural Compacts are for the 'co-creation and co-delivery of an ambitious vision for culture in a place'. (Arts Council England).



The creation of Cultural Compacts was a key recommendation of the UK Cultural Cities Enquiry, an independent enquiry into the cultural resources of Britain's cities, aimed at developing new models that will help arts and culture thrive in our cities.



Cultural Compacts are partnerships designed to support the local cultural sector and enhance its contribution to development, with a special emphasis on cross-sector engagement beyond the cultural sector itself and the local authority.



The North Tyneside Cultural Compact will outline a plan for culture across the Borough up to 2030, embracing the diversity of our communities, culture and creativity, our residents and our businesses.

Culture, Creativity and North Tyneside

North Tyneside has a rich history of cultural activity and a heritage of which we can be proud.

In music, North Tyneside was the home to The Animals in the 1960s, Sting in the 1970s and, more recently, Sam Fender. The Borough also boasts literary talent in the form of playwright Tom Hadaway, novelist Ann Cleeves; performance talent in the shape of Robson Green, Charlie Hardwick and Andrea Riseborough; and historic visual arts significance as the home of the Cullercoats artists, including the renowned US artist Winslow Homer, as well as North Shields based artist Victor Rainbird.

The Borough is increasingly a location for film and TV production; has an economy worth over £4bn a year; and a growing portfolio of inward-investment from national business.

North Tyneside also has a rich history of community arts and local talent continues to emerge from the area's pubs and clubs.

Creativity and the economy

The UK creative industries are a major economic force, contributing over £100bn to the UK economy each year. The creative sector is one of the fastest growing industrial sectors in the UK, growing five times faster than the national economy. Regionally, the value of the creative industries in the North East has increased by 43% since 2010. The North East Case for Culture has contributed towards a greater profile for the region and a recognition of the value of the cultural sector to the economic life of the region. Tourism alone contributed around £217m to the economy in North Tyneside last year.

Continued support for the cultural and creative sector will ensure a thriving North Tyneside will bring more good quality jobs to the area.



Skills and employment

The creative sector in North Tyneside employs around 2,675 people and is home to about 450 businesses. North Tyneside has a talented and skilled workforce with a mix of freelancers, creative workshops and incubator spaces.

Links with the regional university sector at both Newcastle and Northumbria are being strengthened through the establishment of Cultural and Creative Zones (CCZ) and a network of business support, bursaries and talent development will help support the existing creative sector, as well as nurturing growth for the future. This will be important to nurture both creative talent and the technical skills vital to the sector.

Culture across our communities

As part of the Hadrian's Wall Partnership, North Tyneside is linked with a regional asset of international significance which is defining in terms of place, plays a crucial role in the regional tourism economy and supports community wellbeing.

Work through partnership with Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums (TWAM), the Cultural Education Partnership and the Culture Health and Wellbeing Network all provide support for a range of issues that support our communities, contributing to a caring, family-friendly North Tyneside. The scope to bring these partnerships together in a more focussed borough-wide compact will be vital in the development of the cultural plan for North Tyneside.

Our wide-ranging calendar of festivals and events and many cultural locations, provide opportunities for local residents and visitors to engage with performing arts, music, visual arts, cinema, libraries and heritage attractions across North Tyneside.

Tourism and culture
combined employ

5,108

people in North Tyneside



In the cultural sector
alone there are

450

businesses in
North Tyneside

Over
71%

of residents engaged
with arts, museums or
public library activity at
least once in the past
12 months

Tourism alone
contributes an estimated

£217m

to the local economy





Building the cultural offer

Cross-cutting challenges

A number of cross-cutting challenges were identified as part of the Cultural Strategy consultation. These were:

- Climate change – the cultural sector must strive to reduce its carbon footprint and be a leader in contributing to net zero carbon targets.
- Digital offer – building upon the breakthrough in use because of COVID-19, and still a presence in many cultural contexts, we must ensure the online and virtual offer provides greater access while still developing live audiences.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion – the cultural offer in the Borough should reflect the diversity of its population and aim to invest in a more inclusive cultural programme.

Seven sector challenges

Following the consultation work undertaken on the Cultural Strategy, seven challenges were identified as being key to developing a fully-fledged strategy for the Borough. These were as follows:

- Developing networks to bring the sector together
- Recognising super-localism
- Supporting creatives to access funding
- Embedding Culture, Creative and Tourism in Masterplans
- Developing skills and career opportunities
- Culture promoting health and wellbeing
- Addressing inequity in accessing culture

How these challenges are to be met and the transforming impact we anticipate is outlined on the following pages.

Meeting Challenges, Maximising Impact

The following pages will outline how we intend to meet the challenges facing the cultural sector in the coming years and the impact we anticipate in addressing them.

1. Climate change

Partnership – work with partners locally and nationally to develop ways to reduce carbon emissions across all buildings and events.

Outputs – a practical plan aiming to meet net zero carbon targets across the cultural sector.

Impact – Culture and creativity as a lead sector in addressing the climate change agenda.

2. Digital offer

Partnership – working across the public and private sector, and looking to skills from Higher Education and Further Education to explore how the digital offer can increase access and diversify audiences for culture.

Outputs – digital options assessed as part of all creative production and included where practical.

Impact – cultural activity drives digital innovation and the audience base is developed.

3. Equality, diversity and inclusion

Partnership – work with organisations representing the range of people with protected characteristics to ensure programme diversity and improved access to the cultural offer.

Outputs – co-ordinated programme planning and mutual promotion of opportunities and best practice.

Impact – cultural engagement increases across the diversity of communities represented in North Tyneside.

4. Developing networks to bring the sector together

Partnership – building a coalition of the willing to connect cultural activity across North Tyneside, to develop an active cultural compact with a clear action plan.

Outputs – co-ordinated research and evaluation, dialogue between stakeholders and communities with an annual conference.

Impact – cultural activity is central to policy development in the Council and between partners.

5. Recognising super localism

Partnership – address the specific sense of place in North Tyneside's towns and villages with neighbourhood cultural leads.

Outputs – four cultural production hubs to expand workspace and develop making spaces for production, rehearsal, heritage development and incubator activity.

Impact – culture as a key driver of community development.

6. Supporting creatives to access funding

Partnership – work in partnership to secure high quality income generation training and deliver cultural growth.

Outputs – a hundred individuals a year access training to build confidence, skills and networks.

Impact – creative industries thrive and strengthen the economic base in North Tyneside.

7. Embedding Culture, Creative and Tourism in Masterplans

Partnership – raise the profile and voice of the cultural sector in Masterplan work across the Borough.

Outputs – cultural compact reps with expertise in creative industries.

Impact – culture is the driver for a thriving visitor economy and town centre regeneration.

8. Developing skills and career opportunities

Partnership – recognising Cultural and Creative Zone activity as a catalyst for the wider engagement in the sector.

Outputs – build capacity in the cultural sector and creative industries mentoring a new generation of producers, programmers, curators.

Impact – culture and creative activity is a clear career choice for young people.

9. Addressing inequity in accessing culture

Partnership – increase opportunities with cultural audiences, makers and volunteers to explore diverse heritage and identity.

Outputs – venues programme of 12 cultural events per year, reflecting the cultural diversity and inclusiveness of North Tyneside.

Impact – culture is the catalyst for social change, addressing inequality and challenging barriers to accessing the sector.

10. Culture promoting health and wellbeing

Partnership – collaborate with health partners, through the National Centre for Creative Health (NCCH) structures, to actively promote cultural provision across the life course.

Outputs – outdoor-based cultural events across North Tyneside focussing on specific need, such as child obesity and social isolation.

Impact – culture is embedded in the Equally Well strategy and brings together a unique public and voluntary sector partnership to promote cultural engagement.



The Power of Partnership

North of Tyne Combined Authority

Work with our partners across the region has already brought benefits in terms of additional investment in the culture, creative and tourism sector in North Tyneside. We will look to build upon this relationship and extend it further once the proposed North East Mayoral Combined Authority is established.

Cultural and Creative Zone

A key investment benefit from our regional work is being part of a network of Cultural and Creative Zones (CCZ), funded through the North of Tyne Combined Authority. Alongside Newcastle and Berwick, we have a CCZ in North Shields, which will support cultural and creative businesses, help people develop skills to find jobs in the sector and help drive the redevelopment of the town. Investment in The Exchange, Globe Gallery and a transformed Cultural and Creative Business Centre will be key to this initiative.

History and heritage

North Tyneside is rich in history from the Romans to the Stephensons, the rich history of the fishing industry, coal mining and electrical engineering. A celebration of this history, with an eye to how it can help inform the future, will be a vital part of our cultural plan.





Creative industries

Making North Tyneside a great place to set up and deliver a cultural business will be a key part of the work in the CCZ, but must be reflected across the Borough. This fast-growing sector can help drive economic development, as well as providing exciting new cultural activity for visitors and residents. Finding locations which can support, sustain and aid the development of cultural and creative businesses across the Borough will be a key challenge.



Tourism and hospitality

North Tyneside has been a major tourism destination for many years, boasting fabulous natural assets, a diverse events programme, a range of heritage attractions, including its museums and St. Mary's Lighthouse, and a growing hospitality sector. Building from a successful base will ensure the continuation of growth in this sector well into the future.

Events

An established events programme which includes Mouth of the Tyne Festival, Whitley Bay Carnival, North Tyneside Art Trail, North Sea Weekender and many others will be encouraged to grow and extend the offer to both residents and visitors. This will include making use of town centre developments, which offer new events spaces; extending the events offer at existing sites such as Segedunum and Stephenson Steam Railway; and working with local communities to deliver bespoke events for their areas.



Libraries

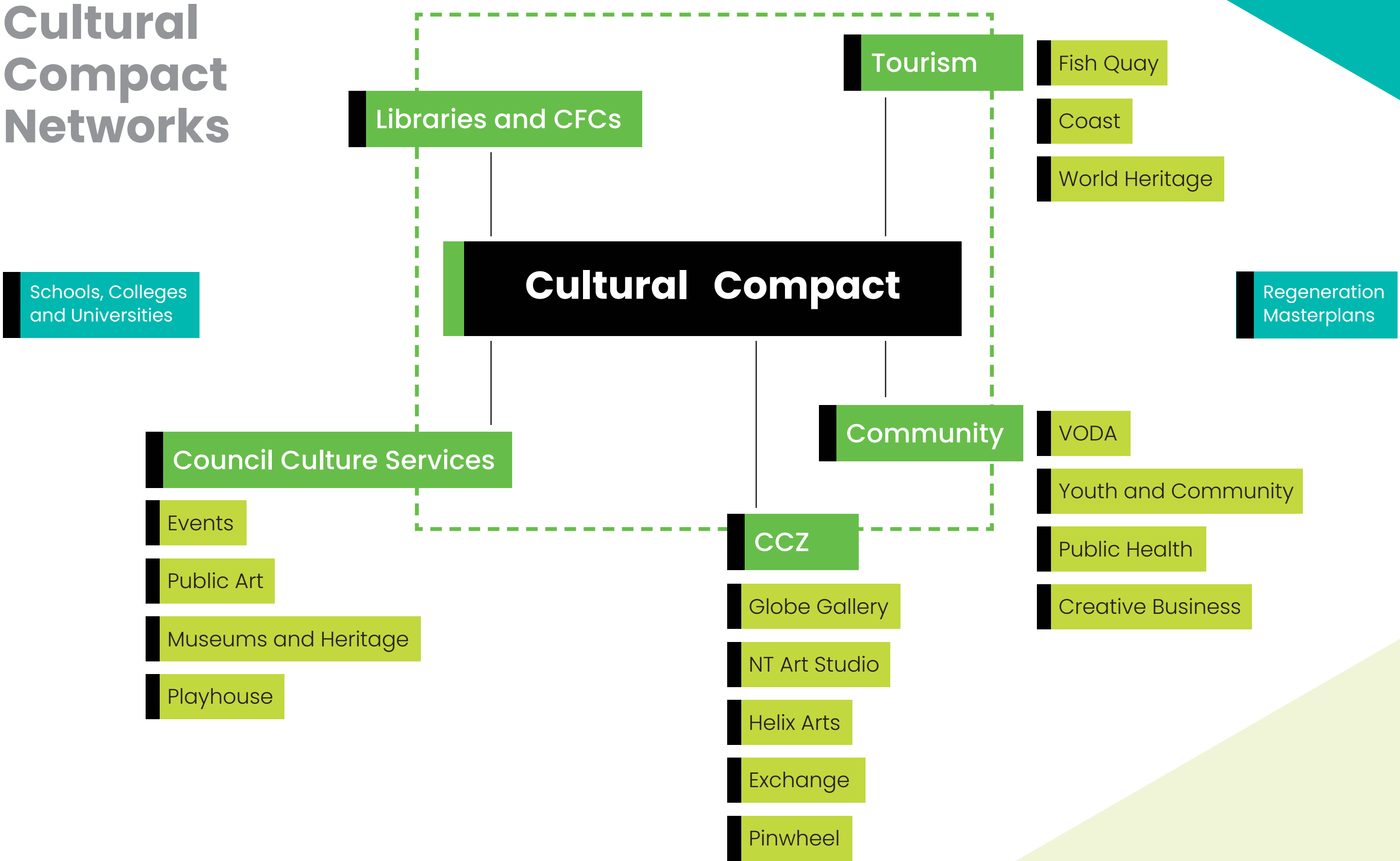
The network of libraries and Customer First Centres across North Tyneside continue to be key access points for literacy, literature and learning, the building blocks of any cultural experience. Author engagement through face-to-face events and promotion, such as through the Northern Children's Book Festival, will be key to ensuring cultural activity is sustained across the life course.

Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

Both through the Voluntary Organisations Development Agency (VODA) or independent arts organisations such as Salto Arts, North Tyneside Art Studio and Helix Arts, work with the VCS is vital to the cultural life of North Tyneside. The recent Heritage Action Zones (HAZ) initiative is a good example of co-operative working, as is collaboration with the North Shields Fishing Heritage group to commission public art. These relationships will be vital going forward as the cultural plan is translated into action.



Cultural Compact Networks



What's Next?

"We know those who have the arts and museums, libraries and culture more generally in their lives live happier, healthier lives. There is real scientific data that shows that."

Darren Henley CBE, Chief Executive, Arts Council England.

The partners who have signed up to this Cultural Plan will work together to meet the challenges outlined, and deliver the impacts indicated, to improve the cultural life of the residents of North Tyneside.

That will require the creation of a dedicated cross-cultural sector partnership, including those in the business and education sectors, to ensure that the Cultural Plan is translated into action. Progress will be measured from an agreed baseline and regularly monitored through the partnership.

The extent to which culture has an impact upon all walks of life and across a range of services has been illustrated throughout this plan. Encouraging these sectors and services, which benefit from culture, to help refresh, regenerate and invest in the cultural offer will also be vital to the Plan's success.

North Tyneside Creates will be the starting point of an exciting partnership journey, improving the cultural life of all and boosting the growth of the cultural sector

Acknowledgements and Further Reading

Consultation

The consultation process which led to this Cultural Plan was initiated in April 2022, with Iain Watson OBE and Catherine Hearne leading the design and sectoral workshops. Iain's experience of the museum and heritage sector as former Director of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, alongside Catherine's background with the BBC and as former Director of Helix Arts, was an invaluable combination. Thanks to both for their efforts in getting us to this point.

Photography

Cover and back cover – **Paul Norris**
P3, p4-5, p8 (bottom) and p16 – **John Millard**
P7 and p11 (bottom) – **North Tyneside Music Education Hub**
P8 (top) – **Nigel John**
P8 (second) – **North Shields Heritologists**
P8 (third) – **Pinwheel/North of Tyne Combined Authority**
P9 – **Paul Norris**
P10 – **SRM/Colin Davison**
P11 (top) and p19 (bottom) – **Carl Joyce**
P12 – **Paul Levitt**
P17 – **Stephen Taylor**
P18 (top) – **Tynemouth Markets**
P19 (top) – **Libraries Connected**

Further Reading

North Tyneside Council: Our North Tyneside Plan
my.northtyneside.gov.uk/page/19679/our-north-tyneside-plan

Arts Council England: Let's Create Strategy
www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030

Arts Council England: Creative Health and Wellbeing
www.artscouncil.org.uk/creative-health-wellbeing

Arts Council England: A Hight Street Renaissance
www.artscouncil.org.uk/high-street-renaissance

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing: Creative Health
www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/appg-inquiry

Historic England: Heritage and Society
www.historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/heritage-and-society

Libraries Connected: Health and Wellbeing
www.librariesconnected.org.uk/universal-offers/health-wellbeing

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