

Sunderland
Cultural
Strategy

October
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Sunderland
Cultural
Partnership





Cover image: Kelly Richardson, Orion Tide, 2012
Partially commissioned by National Glass Centre,
Sunderland

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Culture is us. We make it.

It's what we do, what we remember,
what we think and what we feel.
Culture is important to a city and a
strong cultural offer has both social
and economic benefits.



University of Sunderland performance
at Customs House

SECTION 1. OUR CITY AND ITS CULTURE

Sunderland has much to offer its residents and visitors. However, several issues are preventing it from fulfilling its true potential as a thriving, vibrant place to live, work and visit.

Culture is an important part of everyday life - it is made up of many of the things we enjoy. Residents and communities can all benefit from a good cultural understanding. The more we all know about culture the more there is for everyone to like and for everyone to be proud of.

There are other benefits too. Increasingly, employers are seeking individuals with a well-rounded knowledge of the world well beyond the technical aspects of their job. Cultural education contributes substantially to this knowledge and can therefore help create the enterprising workforce of the future to drive forward the city's growth agenda. There are also wider social benefits from us all celebrating our cultural heritage.

Culture is important to the city's sense of pride - which then has far reaching effects on the physical and mental wellbeing of our citizens and their environment. Getting a clear sense of place when you visit Sunderland is one way of understanding the city and appreciating its artistic and heritage composition. In that sense, culture is bundled up with many things that together make up what Sunderland is all about - such as Premier League football - a very important contributor to Sunderland's global image. Culture is also important to Sunderland's economy. In 2010, Sunderland's Economic Leadership Board set out their ambitions clearly in the widely endorsed Economic Masterplan. It describes how Sunderland will become a fundamentally more prosperous city by

enthusiastically entering a new phase in its long history of industrial and commercial prowess and by addressing some of its current weaknesses with renewed determination. Sunderland is widely recognised as a good place to do business but more can still be done.

The Economic Masterplan's Vision is for Sunderland to become 'An entrepreneurial University city at the heart of a low-carbon regional economy'. The city's future is tied to the wider economy and so it must be collaborative and outward looking. The Economic Masterplan has identified five key sectors where transformational growth is likely to take place if its actions are followed. One of these sectors is the Creative Industries. Sunderland has a Creative Industries Strategy which is currently being implemented. Its objective is for those industries to become a much more significant contributor to the reputation, cultural offer, attractiveness and economic development of the city - and in particular the city centre. It is therefore important that the role and contribution of the creative sector to the city's economic development is identified and maximised. We propose that this now be taken forward within this wider Cultural Strategy.

We have adopted the definition of Culture as set out by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in the UK City of Culture 2017 guidance:

"WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CULTURE?"

Culture is generally taken to include the following areas: arts (including visual arts, literature, music, theatre and dance), architecture, crafts, creative industries, design, heritage, historic environment, museums and galleries, libraries, archives, film, broadcasting and media."



National Glass Centre

Sunderland is a major city with a proud history and strong international connections. Its cultural assets are significant and highlights include:

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

National Glass Centre
Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art
Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens
Monkwearmouth Station Museum
North East Land Sea & Air Museum

THEATRES AND MUSIC VENUES

Sunderland Empire
Arts Centre Washington
Stadium of Light Concerts
Pop Recs Ltd
Independent
Royalty Theatre

HERITAGE SITES

St Peter's Church
Washington Old Hall
Hylton Castle
Holy Trinity Church
Penshaw Monument
Sunderland Minster
Washington 'F' Pit
Bowes Railway
Fulwell Mill
Donnison School

LANDSCAPES AND GREEN SPACES

Beach and seafront
River Wear
Mowbray Park

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Sunderland International Air Show
Split Festival

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

University of Sunderland-Faculty of Art,
Design and Media
Sunderland College

Several of the assets draw audiences from across the region and beyond. But the city has often felt that it was a 'cold spot' for cultural investment. That appears to be changing. The rejuvenation of the National Glass Centre, the success of the Creative People and Places bid and the emergence of the Music and Cultural Quarter suggest a new confidence and energy within the city.

Notably, this definition does not include sport and physical activity. We recognise the huge contribution that sport makes to Sunderland's sense of being and the importance of encouraging people to be more active more often to benefit their overall health and wellbeing. Plans and strategies for sport and activity are also being developed with partners, including the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that better health outcomes are achieved across the city.

Further information on how the Cultural Strategy was developed is provided in Appendix 1.

OUR CITY - SUNDERLAND

The city's culture is what it lives and breathes. It's also what it remembers and what it dreams.

A city's culture is rooted in the history of the place and its people. It is the way it

expresses itself – visually, artistically, socially and economically. Culture and creativity can be the 'voice' of a city. Produced and performed well, culture becomes a source of pride and belonging. Culture forms a central component of the attractiveness of a city and in many ways, it is the extent of the cultural offering that distinguishes a city from a large town. In an important city, you would expect to experience a rich mix of touring shows and home grown talent. And in a successful city, some of that home grown talent would be recognised internationally.

Sunderland's culture is constantly evolving influenced by many factors, including physical geography, politics, religion and economy. Sunderland is one of a small number of UK cities by the sea with a beach. Together with its river heritage this lends it a unique and distinctive quality. However, some feel that the geography of Sunderland – a city split by its river and major highway (the A19) – delivers a challenge in relation to ownership of the city's cultural offer. Indeed, the city derives its name from Soenderland, when it was a small fishing village at the mouth of the River Wear. "Soender" is Anglo-Saxon for "to part" – probably a reference to the Wear gorge, across which the city centre lies today.

A recent **PLACE** marketing research study of Sunderland confirmed that pride in Sunderland as a whole is high overall and that pride in the coastline, the automotive and manufacturing industry, the educational institutions and the city's history is especially high. The research also found that in order to persuade friends to move to the city, residents would most often argue Sunderland has 'friendly people', is a 'nice place to live', has a 'coastline' and is 'welcoming'.



Grayson Perry, The Agony in the Car Park, 2012, part of The Vanity of Small Differences

RECENT CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN SUNDERLAND

- Sunderland Cultural Partnership is set up in June 2013, led by University of Sunderland and Sunderland City Council with support from Arts Council England, and working with key cultural organisations and individuals in the city to create an ambitious new vision for culture in Sunderland
- Cultural Spring is awarded £2m from Arts Council England's Creative People and Places programme, for a 3 year programme starting in Jan 2014, to radically change the way that people in North Sunderland and South Tyneside experience excellent art
- National Glass Centre re-opened in June 2013 after a major £2.3m capital re-development. Since re-opening NGC had welcomed over 280,000 visitors, an increase of over 70% on the previous year.
- Turner Prize winner Grayson Perry's Vanity of Small Differences opens in June 2013 at Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens, attracting over 123,000 visitors in three months
- Sunderland City Council is awarded £153,000 Round 1 Development Grant from Heritage Lottery Fund to develop a heritage-led learning and educational resource centre at Hylton Castle
- The North East Photography Network (NEPN) launched The Social, the first international celebration of photography in the North East from 18 October – 16 November 2013, which saw Sunderland as a hub of creative events with photographic work brought out into public spaces, attracting national and international critical acclaim
- Arts Centre Washington is awarded £39,000 by Arts Council England to run Sunderland Stages; a new project running until Summer 2015 to programme more theatre, dance and spoken word performances into venues across Sunderland and provide more quality performances across the city for residents to enjoy.
- Cultural Spring launches its programme on the Great North Passion at Bents Park, screened live on BBC1, Good Friday 2014
- Sunderland Cultural Partnership is awarded £30,000 from Bridge North East for cultural venues and schools to work on collaborative projects
- North East Photography Network is awarded £100,000 by Arts Council England in June 2014 for their next round of programming

Sunderland has a long and successful industrial history based on glass making, ship building and coal mining. These have been replaced in recent decades and the city is now renowned for its automotive manufacturing. Manufacturing past and present have placed the city at the forefront of industrial developments over many centuries. Today, Sunderland has its own music scene, a university with an Arts, Design and Media Faculty recognised for the quality of its research, museums and galleries of national importance, a theatre bringing shows fresh from London's West End, new creative businesses starting up in the city and a growing digital sector.

In recent years Sunderland has become renowned in the arts for music, glass making and photography, all of which are popular with residents and visitors alike. In the same period, the University of Sunderland has emerged as a strong contributor to the city's cultural development. Sunderland also has a well established reputation for festivals and events that attract audiences from far and wide.

In addition to the industrial heritage the city has a rich physical, social and religious heritage that can be further promoted and recognised and whose potential can be drawn upon to further enhance the city's cultural offer.

As well as the rich historical heritage, the city continues to look forward and has developed strong international cultural relationships with Washington DC in the USA, Essen in Germany, Saint-Nazaire in France and Harbin in China. These have the potential to be developed further and create new cultural linkages. Sunderland's



Dickson-Sarmiento, Emotional Leak

many international companies also offer the potential for further cultural relationships to be explored and developed, as does its increasingly diverse population with connections to the Indian sub-continent, Africa, the Middle East, the Far East, the Americas and Central Europe.

WHAT WILL THE STRATEGY ADDRESS?

Our consultations with a wide range of individuals and organisations identified the following specific issues that the cultural strategy needs to address:

- The city has a strong historical narrative (that is perhaps under-celebrated), but one that is harder to define looking forwards



Split Festival 2014, Mowbray Park



Summer Streets, part of The Cultural Spring 2014

- The “whole experience” of the city feels incomplete and disconnected. Too often visitors and residents leave a venue or event wanting more but aren’t sure where to find it
- The city centre evening experience is narrow and appears to serve a particular age group, unintentionally excluding others
- Having gained leadership in visual arts when the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Arts (NGCA) was first established, the arrival of MIMA in Middlesbrough and BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead mean that Sunderland’s offer could perhaps become more distinctive, focusing on photography as a key strength. A collaboration between National Glass Centre, NGCA and Sunderland Museum could further develop a contemporary art collection and exhibition programme for Sunderland, utilising available funding to source additional investment.
- The performing arts offer is also partial, with one very large commercial theatre space (Sunderland Empire), two-medium sized ones (Arts Centre Washington and City of Sunderland College) and some under-used smaller and amateur venues

- (Royalty Theatre and North Shore). Despite the massive audiences attracted to the Empire Theatre’s West End shows, Sunderland residents only make up a small proportion of nightly audiences. Conversely, the smaller venues sometime struggle to attract people from anything wider than a limited local catchment area.
- Sunderland has built up a community of artists and creative businesses over the years – most evidently in the Sunnyside district within the city centre. However, there is continuing evidence of successful artists leaving the city and choosing instead to operate in other nearby clusters, particularly the Ouseburn Valley in Newcastle.
 - Sunderland has a loyal community of musicians, producers and promoters, mainly concentrated in popular music. Several bands have achieved national success and have done much to promote live and recorded music locally. Yet the local and regional “pull” of many live music events remains limited. There is also little by way of classical music, although a number of current initiatives could see this change.
 - The career development pathways for practising artists and musicians are typically unclear. The breadth of activity



© Juliet Chenery-Robson, Portraits of a Postmodern Illness, part of The Social, 2013

- that is often required in today’s world for an artist to make a living is not always recognised.
- The approach taken to commissioning public art in particular has sometimes been rather traditional. More interesting results could be obtained by setting a challenge for the local artistic community to address. However, given Sunderland’s nature and history, it will be important for many forms of art (public or other) to remain ‘grounded’ and accessible to many residents if they are to win over wide appeal.
 - Sunderland’s Museums have been extensively refurbished and extended in the last decade, but it is recognised that the Museum & Winter Gardens now need to be updated. Excellent relationships with

- national museums has seen world class exhibitions come to the city, including the BP Portrait Award 2014 from National Portrait Gallery, but regularly attracting audiences from further afield should be a focus going forward.
- Several significant heritage projects including Hylton Castle and Roker Pier are currently being progressed. Together with other developments like St Peter’s Church, Holy Trinity Church, the Donnison School and the MAC Trust there is an opportunity here for a more co-ordinated approach to programming, promoting and adding to Sunderland’s unique heritage.
- Our strategy addresses these issues by building upon Sunderland’s considerable strengths.



As a partnership we firmly believe that people in our communities should have access to great art.

Glass-blowing at National Glass Centre

SECTION 2. SHAPING THE CITY'S CULTURAL OFFER

WHAT WILL THE STRATEGY ACHIEVE?

The city's aspiration is for Sunderland to be a great city to be in. A place that people of all walks of life want to live and work in and are proud to bring their friends and family to. As a partnership we firmly believe that people in our communities should have access to great art. All of this adds up to people having a great time in Sunderland.

For this to happen, we all need to work together to transform the way that Sunderland's culture develops, is enjoyed and celebrated. The culture of the city is constantly evolving. Each generation brings along a new set of changes and developments in the culture of that society. Individuals and organisations in the cultural sector need to work together towards the same goal. This will create new opportunities and experiences through better programming, fundraising, marketing and much wider participation. Sector-led

projects frequently capture people's passions for cultural activities. We believe this will play an important role going forward.

By playing to Sunderland's strengths, the city can focus its efforts on those areas where greatest impact can be generated. The cultural sector offers an opportunity to attract more people into Sunderland, and in particular to the city's currently underpowered city centre, thereby helping it to drive business growth.

We recognise that new developments in Sunderland give rise to important opportunities for creativity: new buildings, new events, developments in education or the media can all play a part. It is our ambition that when such opportunities arise, now and in the future, every opportunity is taken to ensure that where possible our culture and heritage are reflected. We will explore new approaches to commissioning which will provide

BUILDING ON THE PAST – THE FORMER VAUX BREWERY SITE

Some of these aspirations are already being realised with the development of St Mary's Boulevard and a new public square – Keel Square – in the city centre. Derived from the longest ship ever built on the Wear, the Nordic Crusader, 292m, 'The Keel Line' will demarcate this space. A new series of public spaces are now being developed along the length of 'The Keel Line' to divide the space naturally into three different zones. The first of these is the new public square. The Keel Line itself is a 500mm wide band of honed granite into which are blast, in chronological order, the names of ships built on the Wear. A major new public artwork 'Propellers of the City' will demarcate the beginning of 'The Keel Line'.

John Kippin, Ships that Pass (detail), 2013



opportunities for local artists, and use culture to create an enterprising, creative and innovative business community.

Despite the wealth of examples and experiences that form the city's cultural offer, it is often said that Sunderland's culture is difficult to articulate. Many say that not enough is done to celebrate our past, but few people find it easy to describe what Sunderland's culture has become.

It is clear that the city's cultural strengths are not exploited to the full. This strategy makes the role of culture clear and gives it direction. Through it we hope to harness the power of creativity to the benefit of the city and its people.

It is generally easier to interpret the cultural offering of those places that have highly visible assets – something iconic to point at – or whose cultural institutions have already achieved international renown. For places like Sunderland where many of the iconic images that helped define the city in the past have gone – such as the half-built ship or the pit head winding gear – the task of interpreting the city becomes more difficult. The challenge is to assist that reinterpretation and develop a view that looks back with pride and forward with optimism. Cultural activity in the city has a clear role to play in this.

Culture can and will make significant improvements to the vitality and prosperity of the city, and benefit residents and visitors and support businesses. The importance of the economic value culture can bring, especially in relation to inward investment, quality of life and the city's reputation as a visitor destination is great. Just as Sunderland's economy continues to

We do not want to forget our past; rather we want to harness the enthusiasm of our past to create a positive future for our communities.

change, so too must its living and cultural offer adapt and develop.

Sunderland remains a successful industrial city and manufacturing is a source of pride for our residents. However, if the city is to benefit fully from its past, present and future then we must provide a balance between celebrating the achievements of our past whilst looking forward to our future. We do not want to forget our past; rather we want to harness the enthusiasm of our past to create a positive future for our communities. A good example of this approach is offered by Sunderland's recent bid to host the Tall Ships Race in 2018. This internationally significant event has the potential to help celebrate Sunderland's seafaring past, connect the waterfront more effectively to the city centre, bring large audiences and trade to the city and enhance the economic potential of the Port and riverside through the necessary dredging.



North East Rising, part of Sunderland Stages 2014

This strategy will also support and complement the North East Cultural Partnership's framework for inclusive investment "Towards a case for Culture", and contribute to the delivery of the priorities and outcomes of the Strategic Economic Plan of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership.

Erwin Eisch Exhibition at National Glass Centre,



OUR APPROACH – DEVELOPING ARTISTS, AUDIENCES AND VENUES

Our analysis of these challenges and opportunities has led us to an approach that brings together the demand side (audiences) with the supply (venues, artistic content and artists). Great art and great performances inspire people to take part. We want more people to enjoy Sunderland's cultural offering as a participant as well as a spectator.

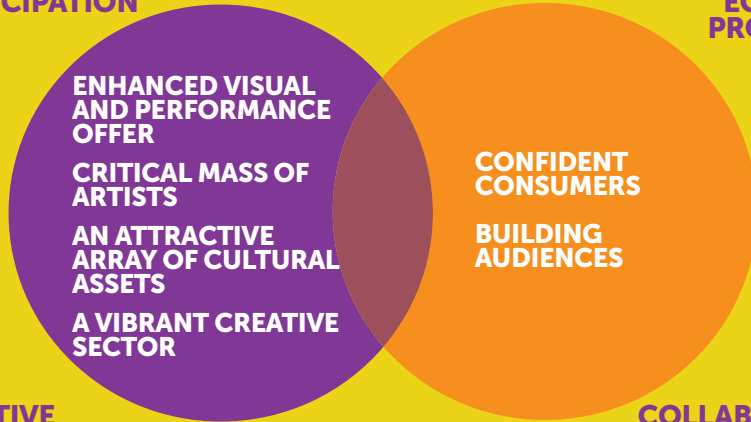
Firstly, we all need to become confident 'cultural consumers'. Everyone enjoys culture more if they know what they are looking for and keep an open mind for the unusual or surprising. This will mean better working with schools, college and university to establish, enhance and sustain opportunities and experiences for children and young people with cultural venues and institutions. Young people especially are often inspired to participate through experiencing culture, so in parallel it will be important for improved and clearer development pathways to be in place to support those who wish to participate in creative activity and take things further. This more intensive engagement in cultural activity will naturally build more confidence

PARTICIPATION

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

CREATIVE EXCELLENCE

COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION



among young residents and therefore develop future audiences who feel more confident to engage in culture, explore and experiment.

Secondly, we need to build those audiences across the city so that there is a stronger 'pull' that will motivate and generate more artistic endeavour. This will mean identifying audience groups and the intelligence currently held on them. It will require that we identify and address the barriers to engagement and attendance that currently exist, which could include perception, geography or price.

We also need to co-ordinate our messages and develop stronger links between different activities so that audiences are encouraged to widen their experiences over time. This will require a much clearer picture of what is on offer and for it to be presented in an exciting way for each target audience.

On the supply side, we need to achieve a critical mass of artists. Our aim is to keep talent in the city where possible. This will mean each institution and some major employers looking at more work opportunities, placements and support for graduates and emerging artists. It will mean identifying the support needed by artists at each stage in their career. It also means doing specific things to attract talent to the city and helping it flourish.

We will ensure that Sunderland has the best possible visual arts offer. We need to define Sunderland's Unique Selling Proposition (USP) in this regard. For example, the NGCA is a recognised asset but has the potential to be much more. Its future potential could be redefined based on the city's current and emerging strengths in glass, photography and media and supported through the transition. A public art and art events 'offer' that is led more by artists should also be considered.



Gilly Rogers and Aly Stoker, Bed of Roses, Cultural Spring, 2014



Sanctuary at The Minster, Sunderland Minster, 2014

Improving the performing arts offer is another area requiring attention. Consideration must be given to the city's approach to venue space. There are some gaps (e.g. medium sized performance venues, especially for music) but also many underutilised spaces. There is also the potential to use novel spaces on a temporary basis to entice new audiences. Clear development paths and support for emerging artists and new graduates will underpin the venue offer and ensure that a good proportion of local talent appearing is home-grown. City-wide partnerships will need to be put in place to achieve maximum leverage over scarce resources.

It will be important over time to ensure that the city possesses an attractive array of cultural assets. There is much here already, as the above assessment shows, but attraction is a competitive game and Sunderland needs to keep abreast of – or preferably ahead of – developments elsewhere. New facilities cannot be created overnight and when they are, they need to be financially viable if they are to be sustained. One-off and regular events are in certain respects simpler, but they too require investment and are not always

self-sustaining. In order to complement city growth in general, new cultural assets, be they events or facilities must drive footfall and animate key localities, particularly the city centre.

Much of what is described immediately above will support the development of a vibrant creative sector in the city. Since 2012, City Council has been implementing the Creative Industries Strategy approved by the Sunderland Economic Leadership Board. Its goal is for Sunderland's creative industries to become a much more significant economic contributor, with more new enterprises and innovation as well as stronger, more successful businesses in the sector and more people working in it.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

We have established a set of design principles to guide the strategy and the development of strategic commitments and projects to take it forward. They are: Economic Prosperity, Creative Excellence, Collaboration & Communication and Participation. They will underpin our new approach to culture and upon which action

planning through the Cultural Partnership will be built. We will achieve Economic Prosperity and Creative Excellence through greater and stronger Collaboration and Communication and increased Participation.

By applying each of these design principles to project selection, we will ensure that the strategy is able to achieve our goals. In assessing new proposals, we will be looking for the following features – among others – under each design principle.

- 1. PARTICIPATION: Everyone in the city is enriched by culture and excited by the cultural opportunities available to them**
 - Raise awareness of existing activities
 - Maximise participation in creative and cultural activities
 - Involve local artists
- 2. CREATIVE EXCELLENCE: The city's cultural excellence is internationally recognised**
 - Provide the best creative and cultural activities for all
 - Develop and enhance the city's reputation locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
 - Nurture and mentor a critical mass of locally based internationally recognised talent
- 3. ECONOMIC PROSPERITY: That culture plays an even more important role in creating wealth and jobs in the city**
 - Realise the value of culture to the local economy and its contribution to economic growth and regeneration
 - Expand the business base and promote greater commercial viability for all our artists
 - Maximise external investment from both public and private sector resources
- 4. COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION: That we do it together**
 - Strong leadership, clear vision and improved infrastructure
 - Improved connectivity and communications; within the sector and to audiences
 - Working alongside local artists and supporting their ideas

HOW WILL THE STRATEGY WORK?

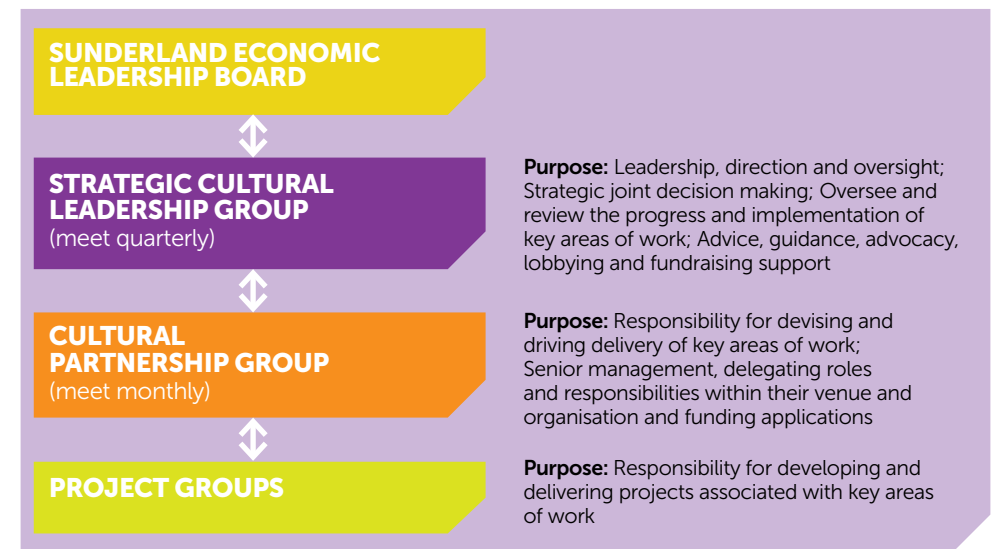
This strategy sets a clear direction for the city's cultural development for a 12-15 year period. Like Sunderland's other city-wide strategies, it is based upon an honest assessment of the city's existing strengths and the range of opportunities that need to be grasped utilising the resources that can be brought to bear. Sunderland has many cultural strengths; its history and heritage, the nature of its people, its cultural and educational institutions and the endeavour of individual artists and creative businesses. New developments give rise to important opportunities for creativity: new buildings, new events, changes in education or the media, etc. By matching Sunderland's strengths to these opportunities, the city can focus its efforts and generate the greatest impact. This strategy and the associated actions will give a confidence to the city which will allow future interest in

considering how wider recognition, such as the UK City of Culture, could be explored.

HOW WILL THE STRATEGY BE MANAGED AND MONITORED?

The future governance for **Sunderland Cultural Partnership** is outlined in the diagram below.

The projects that form the action plan for this strategy will first be endorsed for inclusion by the Sunderland Cultural Leadership Group and allocated to one of the strategic commitments. Once the purpose, approach, resource plan, targets and timescales are clear, each project will be allocated a "champion" from within the Leadership Group or Partnership Group. The champion will help promote the project and ensure its success, reporting to the Cultural Partnership on progress.



Inspire greater participation in Sunderland's cultural experiences



Ben Wilson 'The Chewing Gum Man', Street Arts Heroes, Cultural Spring 2014

SECTION 3. OUR COMMITMENTS - STRATEGY INTO ACTION

It is imperative that this strategy demonstrates how it will meet each of the design principles and support the city's ambition to fulfil its true potential as a thriving vibrant place to live, work and visit. The Sunderland Cultural Partnership Leadership Group and wider partners have identified the following three strategic commitments to meet the ambitions of this strategy and achieve cultural growth in the city:

CELEBRATING SUNDERLAND – to raise awareness and understanding of the diverse cultural offer in the city to the widest possible audience

DEVELOPING AUDIENCES AND CONFIDENT CONSUMERS – to inspire greater participation in Sunderland's cultural experiences and develop confident cultural consumers

NURTURING CREATIVITY – to develop and expand the cultural offer and assets to enhance the economic and social benefits for all and use culture to create an enterprising, creative and innovative local economy.

The strategic commitments form a cycle of growth. There is no specific starting point on this continuum, project activities and ideas can commence at any point in the cycle and support the overall growth and development of the city's future cultural identity, offer and reputation.

The diagram shown at the back of this document illustrates the range of activities for each of these strategic commitments that form the starting point for our strategy. It shows how our ambitions will be achieved and crucially how everyone can be a contributor to achieving this strategy.



It is our intention that when a project is completed, it will be removed from the action plan. New projects that meet the strategy's objectives and design principles can be added at any stage. It will be the job of the Sunderland Cultural Partnership to decide what projects are included and to support their delivery.

The next stage will be for the Sunderland Cultural Leadership Group to work up the detail of each project, allocate responsibilities for delivery key actions and timescales. The Sunderland Cultural Leadership Group will then oversee the programme.



©Disney

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

We are keen to hear from individuals and organisations working in the cultural sector who want to know more or get involved, particularly as projects progress.

Visitors and residents interested to take part in projects can find out more about what is being planned and where across Sunderland.

Find out more about Sunderland Cultural Partnership activities at www.sunderlandculturalpartnership.co.uk



Summers Streets, The Cultural Spring, 2014

“I told me mam I’d become art today, she said I always had been.”

Great North Passion, The Cultural Spring, 2014

APPENDIX 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

WHY PRODUCE A CULTURAL STRATEGY?

Sunderland’s existing cultural strategy, “Culture...What’s Yours?” (2003) is now out of date in terms of an action plan, but several of the findings of its background research remain valid: citizens’ interests are very varied, but many feel the same sense of pride in the city’s roots and its traditions, from the ship building and coal mining heritage to supporting the football club or walking the beach. A fresh strategy will provide:

- A clear direction, with actions and responsibilities that identify a small number of significant initiatives and define the areas where we need to work together more effectively
- Ambitious goals and targets which will improve performance
- Integration with other strategies so that actions are mutually supportive and responsibilities are clear

WHO WILL BENEFIT?

The region, the city and its residents, businesses in general, entertainment and tourism related businesses in particular – and the people that work in them – individual artists, creative firms and cultural institutions should all benefit.

THE POLICY CONTEXT

This strategy offers a particularly good fit with national, regional and local policies. At a time of significant economic hardship and uncertainty, particularly within the public sector, it could be considered extravagant to think about arts and culture. However it is interesting to reflect how a number of significant cultural regeneration programmes have been conceived and

planned within the midst of economic hardship (London’s South Bank in late 1940s, Bilbao and Glasgow late 1980s, Gateshead and Saint-Nazaire 1990s, Liverpool with its European Capital of Culture award in 2008).

NATIONAL

Arts Council England (ACE) is the national development agency for the arts, museums and libraries in England and a custodian of public investment. Following the announcement that ACE would take on responsibility for museum and library development, as well as statutory responsibilities for protecting cultural treasures, it updated and launched the 2nd Edition of its 10 year strategic framework ‘Achieving Great Art for Everyone’ in 2013.

ACE has set out five goals, refreshed to incorporate their new areas of responsibility:

1. Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries
2. Everyone has the opportunity to experience and to be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries
3. The arts, museums and libraries are resilient and environmentally sustainable
4. The leadership and workforce in the arts, museums and libraries are diverse and appropriately skilled
5. Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries

Heritage Lottery Fund’s (HLF) strategic framework for 2013-2018 sets out plans designed to deliver long term and sustainable benefits in response to the newly emerging needs facing the heritage sector. The goal is to make a

communities and the strategic framework identifies the range of outcomes they want to achieve with their funding.

REGIONAL

To meet the vision of one million people in employment as set out in 'More and Better Jobs - A Strategic Economic Plan for the North East', (April 2014), the North East must see its economy grow by some 100,000 jobs over the next ten years.

Opportunities for growth are derived from national and international changes in business and consumer demand, changes in technologies, and trends in national and global markets. The North East Strategic Economic Plan has identified major growth sectors and opportunities within a 'New Economy' recognising that the North East has a very strong cultural and creative base and technology, media and telecoms companies are well represented. This includes a strong software base and a growing creative industries sector.

The new European Strategy allows local partners to take up the challenge of 'More and Better Jobs'. With European Regional Development Funding available to support business growth and innovation (a major theme in the economic review) and European Social Fund available to support some of the skills and young people challenges, the economic review helped set the framework for developing the new programme.

In addition, the recently launched Culture Partnership for the North East acknowledges that culture has been a key factor in the economic and creative growth of the North East and "captures the clear enthusiasm for building on this; for culture



being integral to society and economy, recognising the contribution it brings to our communities and their well-being, making the North East more resilient and ensuring that it is a place where people want to live, work, visit and invest in."

LOCAL

The Sunderland Cultural Partnership Leadership Group has considered a range of cultural opportunities and challenges alongside the Sunderland Economic Masterplan, Sunderland's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the city's emerging Education & Skills Strategy. The Cultural Strategy has been set within the context of the city's economic growth ambitions and will complement and contribute to the successful achievement of a wider set of the city's strategic goals which include Education & Skills and Health.

We have also incorporated the city's Creative Industries Strategy (2012) into this Cultural Strategy because Creative Industries are such an important part of the city's culture. With 440 Creative & Cultural Industries firms in Sunderland, 2,510 people employed in Sunderland's Creative & Cultural Industries (including self-employment) and a

£136m turnover per annum, the strategy's ambition is that by 2025: Sunderland will be recognised regionally and nationally for the quality and breadth of its creative industries, driving growing economic prosperity across the city through collective ambition, innovative individual practice, and entrepreneurial vision.

Sunderland's creative businesses and practitioners will be at the forefront of helping to position creativity and culture at the heart of place and community, with the sector acting as a strong attractor to the city and in particular the city centre.

The Creative Industries Strategy is underpinned by three objectives:

Objective 1: Sunderland's creative industries become a much more significant contributor to the reputation, cultural offer, attractiveness and economic development of the city, and in particular the city centre.

Objective 2: There will be more new enterprises and innovation as well as stronger, more successful businesses and organisations within the creative industry sector offering opportunities for employment and/or productivity growth.

Objective 3: There will be more people working in the creative industries in the city

The Creative Industries Strategy will now be delivered as an essential component of the Cultural Strategy.

WHO HAS PRODUCED THIS STRATEGY?

Sunderland City Council, the University of Sunderland and Arts Council England (ACE) North East formed the Sunderland Cultural Partnership in June 2013 involving

a variety of others with a clear role to play in improving Sunderland's cultural offering. The partnership has led the development of this Cultural Strategy for the city which provides that shared goal and a framework for key organisations and individuals to help shape the future cultural landscape for the city.

HOW HAS THE STRATEGY BEEN DEVELOPED?

The Cultural Strategy has been set within the context of the city's economic growth ambitions alongside the aims of existing city-wide strategies and within the wider policy context described below.

The Sunderland Cultural Partnership Leadership Group, determined to promote shared ownership and responsibility for the strategy, recognised the importance of the involvement of all stakeholders in its development and as a result held a number of stakeholder strategy development workshops.

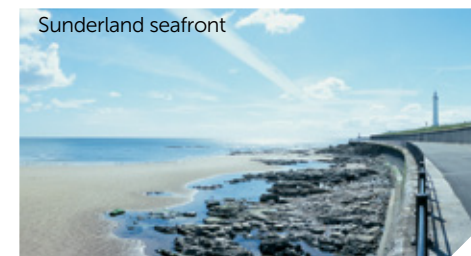
The stakeholder workshops, attended by local and regional and strategic and operational sector representatives began by identifying the following 'headline' priorities:

- Stronger leadership, clear vision and improved infrastructure to support and promote culture
- A clearer and stronger arts offer
- The need to create critical mass of artists and arts activity
- Nurturing and retaining talent
- Improved connectivity and communications, within the sector and to audiences

.....all of which would contribute to and be reinforced by a positive image for the city.

APPENDIX 2: PROJECT OUTLINES

Here we describe the proposed initial set of projects that will help deliver the Sunderland Cultural Strategy, arranged under each of the three strategy commitments. Some projects are confirmed to go ahead, some are still in development and more will be added as the strategy progresses, existing work is completed and new ideas come to light. Each project will contribute to the strategy via the four design principles described in the main document.



Sunderland seafront

1) CELEBRATING SUNDERLAND

Develop new and maximise our existing physical assets

We will support the development of future and ensure the success of existing plans to regenerate and develop key sites within Sunderland.

Music Arts and Culture Quarter - a vibrant quarter for music, art and culture around the Empire Theatre and support the MAC Trust's bid to utilise the former Fire Station and other heritage buildings.

Keel Square - the newly created public square will be the heartbeat of Sunderland city centre's revival, including a dynamic programme of creative activity.

St Peter's Church - the beauty and drama of this internationally important heritage site will be harnessed with careful and thoughtful enhancements to the landscape around the church.

Holy Trinity Church - the creation of a new heritage, performance and learning centre for the people of Sunderland by the Churches Conservation Trust, through the regeneration of Holy Trinity Church; one of the oldest and most cherished historic buildings still standing in the city.

Beacon of Light - the Foundation of Light's brand new venue for people of all ages and backgrounds to come together and realise their potential through sport, education and improved health and well-being.

The beach and seafront - a major regeneration project for the coastline and beaches at Roker and Seaburn as key assets for the city and region, and exploiting their potential for showcase events.

Hylton Castle - the transformation of the 14th century castle from an empty shell into a living, working building, as an educational, community and visitor attraction.

Increased inward cultural investment for Sunderland - we will work with funders, including Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery Fund, to identify and secure further strategic investment in Sunderland.

Celebrate the past, embrace the future
We will forge an ambitious new future for museums and heritage; creating projects that recall our industrial past, whilst celebrating current and future strengths; telling a fresh narrative.

A new vision for Sunderland Museums and Heritage Service - A new service telling the story of Sunderland - responding to public appetite and demand, using rich collections

RashDash present Oh I Can't Be Bothered,
part of Sunderland Stages, 2014

and unique settings to celebrate the distinctiveness of the place and its people.

Digital heritage and regeneration trail - a project which tells the story of the amazing transformation Sunderland is undergoing using digital archive, QR codes and mobile devices at key sites across the city, to help residents and visitors share in the journey.

Treasured Memories, New Art – an engagement project working with the city's older residents to capture the unknown stories and hidden gems which make Sunderland unique and celebrate them through new creative work to share with the whole city.

Redefine contemporary art in Sunderland
We will create a distinct unique selling point for Sunderland around our current and emerging strengths of glass, photography, media, film and digital and music.

Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art - an options appraisal for NGCA to decide and action how its location and offer will maximise its value to Sunderland.

North East Photography Network – capitalising on the increasing profile and critical reputation of photography as an area of expertise within the city.



Students at Northern Centre of Photography

2) BUILDING AUDIENCES AND CONFIDENT CONSUMERS

Sample Sunderland

Working with both public and private sector partners we will provide a range of incentives for both residents and visitors to 'sample' the numerous cultural experiences that happen in Sunderland.

West End Live - we will work with Sunderland Empire to bring elements of their programme to wider community audiences so they can experience elements of the West End spectacle the theatre specialises in.

Year-long citywide music programme - working with music talent in Sunderland to support the promotion and development of existing activity and create new programmes for a full year celebration of music.

Public experiences and events A dynamic programme of art 'experiences' and events in the public realm.

This could include:

Sunderland Culture Crawl/Sunderland Lates - using the national 'Museums at Night' initiative as a trigger, connecting the main cultural venues to partner with artists to create a city-centre to St Peters programme of evening art 'experiences', and working with other strategic partners to ensure that programme is well supported through a strong food and shopping offer.

International Glass Festival - National Glass Centre working in partnership with Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art are working towards presenting GLASSTRESS - Europe's major biennial presentation of artists working in glass. GLASSTRESS

will be the critical heart of a glass festival which will include an artist-led community programme including the first mobile Hot Glass Studio in the North of England; masterclasses, talks and workshops, and a conference.



Mortal 8, part of Great North Passion, The Cultural Spring, 2014

Culture – engaging and enriching

We will raise participation and engagement for all of our audiences and communities in the city; connecting them with great art in accessible places.

Sunderland Stages - support, build upon and create legacy for this new project set up to bring more theatre, dance and performance into alternative venues across Sunderland, attract new audiences to participate and develop talent.

Cultural Spring – a lasting city-wide legacy for the three year Cultural Spring programme, working with residents in ten wards in Sunderland and South Tyneside, to deliver inspirational performances, exhibitions and shows.

The city as a learning zone

We will strive to improve the prospects, lifelong learning and quality of life of everyone who lives in Sunderland; through an on-going programme and strong

connections between schools, cultural venues and organisations.

First world war cultural project - a year-long inter-generational film, music and performance programme with schools, young people and key partners across the region, to create a commemorative piece for the city, which will be performed live at a showcase event in Sunderland.

Cultural passport scheme - cultural venues and organisations across Sunderland will work together to motivate and incentivise, share best practice and audience insights, to drive families across the best of the city's offering, and create targeted events and content especially for family audiences.

Ambitious target for Arts Awards - We recognise the value of a high quality offer and continuity of delivery for children and young people and will strive to increase the number of Arts Awards practitioners, participation and attainment.

Family arts festivals - Driving up participation from families through a clear programme of co-ordinated city-wide offers at key points during the year.

Development pathways to formal learning - Ensuring those who foster an interest in the arts and a potential creative career have clear access to the pathways which will enable them to progress

3) NURTURING CREATIVITY

Support creative hubs - We will utilise areas of real expertise, enable networks, develop pathways, help graduate businesses and emerging talent to base themselves and succeed in Sunderland.



Summer Streets,
The Cultural Spring, 2014

Workspace for artists and designers -

The Enterprise and Innovation Hub and FabLab at the University of Sunderland will be a major catalyst for students, recent graduates and new creative businesses who will benefit from lab space, room to trial and develop new ideas, access to world-leading academic expertise, support and a network of other professionals.

NGCA/University of Sunderland new graduate mentoring -

NGCA will mentor groups of final year students from the University of Sunderland using a vacant space in the centre, with the support of the BID, to help them to transition into their first year of practice; establishing a working studio space, programming and promoting a public-facing offer.

Sunderland Artists Resident in the Workplace -

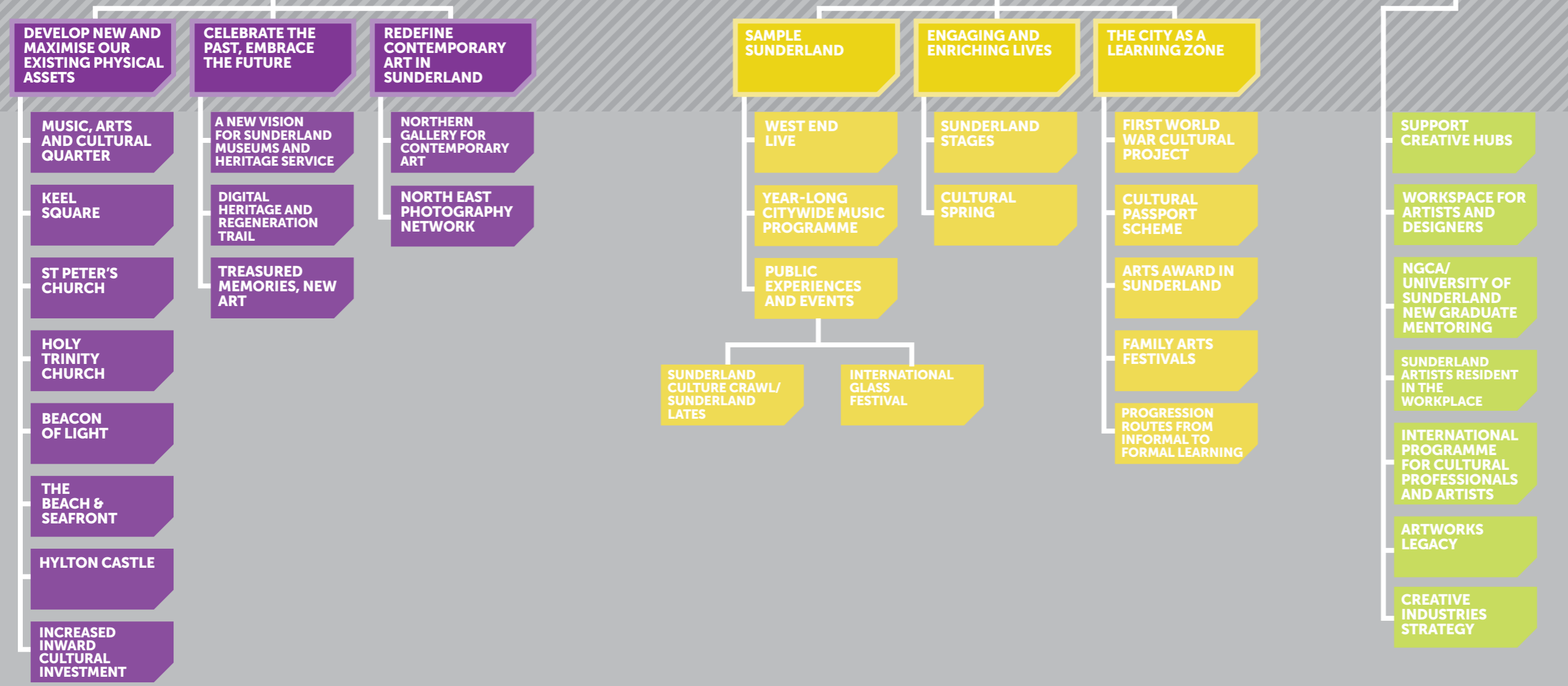
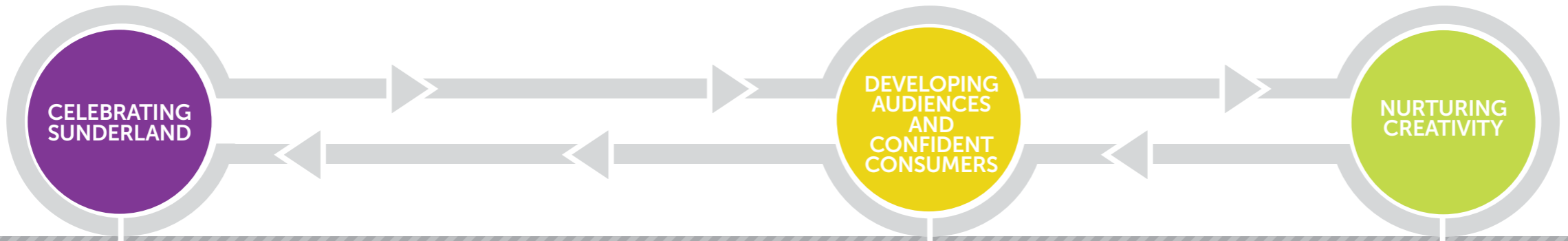
we will secure 10-15 artists residencies in a variety of Sunderland

workplaces to help facilitate closer working relationships between the business and creative community, convey to a young audience what it is like to work in that industry and for that company, share skills, explore new ways of working and ultimately embed the value of culture to Sunderland's business sector. This will utilise ANEC's North East Culture Partnership programme to connect "100 Artists in 100 Businesses".

International Exchange Programme for Cultural Professionals and Artists -

we will work with key partners across Europe and the world to connect artists and cultural professionals; sharing best practice, insights and encouraging innovation.

ArtWorks Legacy – sustaining the legacy of this major project to explore models of learning for artists engaged in participatory practice.



CREATIVE PROJECTS IN SUNDERLAND



Sunderland
Cultural
Partnership

Sunderland
City Council



University of
Sunderland



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