

TEES VALLEY CULTURAL STRATEGY

JULY 2003

The Need for Cultural Change

The objectives of the Tees Valley Cultural Strategy are to:

- lay the foundations for cultural change
- strengthen and extend the cultural assets of the sub-region
- promote economic renaissance.

The words 'culture' and 'cultural' have two senses. The general sense relates to our way of life and our patterns of thought, levels of confidence, quality of aspirations, beliefs about ourselves and others, pride in who we are, our willingness to strive for what we want and value what we have, and our preparedness to see things from different perspectives. The more restricted sense relates to the arts: music, theatre, dance, literature, architecture, sculpture, film, painting, sport. This sense relates not just to the people who engage in the arts as performers or spectators, it also links to the places where people play and perform, to the buildings which surround us. In the present era, these two senses of 'culture' and 'cultural' are drawing close together. One of the reasons for that is that culture and the arts foster experimentation and creativity, and the key to 21st Century survival for whole regions is that the general culture and way of life of an area have somehow to promote innovation and creativity. A region that fails to do this will stagnate.

The strategy is designed to underpin the economic renaissance of the Tees Valley, by laying the foundations for the cultural production of a creative economy. The strategy will help tackle issues of poor self-esteem, low aspirations, reluctance to engage in economic risk-taking, and inferior levels of social inventiveness as well as addressing the important issues of place marketing, image improvement, employment creation, social inclusion, and the enhancement of cultural facilities.

We have the instruments of cultural change at our disposal. They are

- Parenting
- Education
- Social networks
- Institutional and social leadership
- Physical infrastructure development

There are many reasons why it takes enormous energy and determination to move these levers of social change. The patterns of parenting within the Tees Valley are not so very different from elsewhere in the country, but levels of aspiration, achievement, motivation and self-esteem among our young people are not climbing as they can. We need the widest possible debate on how to repair this. When our nine year-olds can match and exceed the capabilities of their peers anywhere, how can we alter the factors that plummet their achievements just five years further on? We do not need to be given a lead from elsewhere,

we can work out the best relation between parenting and education for ourselves, and then plan to realise it.

It is a basic fact of social life that changing cultures takes a long time. It requires stamina from our civic leaders, and belief on the part of people in general. We therefore need markers along the way to the condition that we would like the Tees Valley to be in by 2020. Such markers help to sustain belief, and to fuel the drive towards economic regeneration and cultural confidence. The markers can be provided by the various projects which are suggested in this strategy. Their achievement can lead us to greater things. Bringing together and supporting what we already have in the visual and performing arts, for example, can secure the foundations for a new, world class performance venue. This is no more than we will deserve if we support what we have and enable it to thrive and prosper.

The transformation of the Tees Valley into a sub-regional culture which is communication-rich, outward-looking and aware of the path it is trying to follow is already underway. The two universities are working separately and together to innovate within and for the sub-region. A new Tees Valley Regeneration Company has been formed. The Tees Valley Partnership brings together a whole collection of people from positions of power right across the Tees Valley, and their very purpose for being around the same table is to help make the Tees Valley thrive. Our schools are now part of a cultural partnership which promises excitement and innovation from the early years right through to university. But this is no more – and some would say less – than is being done elsewhere. If we are to compete over the next century, rather than continue to decline, we must lay deep foundations in the very way that we think, feel and act. This is why parenting, education, social networks, leadership and infrastructure development are so important. They are the levers of change, and we must hang on them with all our might.

The society that was constructed along with the rise and establishment of heavy industry was characterised by paternalism, authoritarianism and a wage economy mentality. This cultural milieu does not lend itself to social inventiveness, adaptability and entrepreneurialism. The challenge for the future is to change the culture and to nurture the birth of a new innovative mind set for the Tees Valley, to build the individual and collective capacity within the Tees Valley which will allow the creation of a culture more appropriate for success in the 21st Century.



Steps Toward Enhanced Creativity in the Tees Valley

The programme of recommended investment and development projects proposed here can contribute to making the cultural changes which the economic development of the Tees Valley needs. They have been developed from work right across the sub-region, drawn together at first in the consultant's report from GHK-BOP (available online from the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit at www.teesvalley-jsu.gov.uk), but then extensively re-structured within the Cultural Strategy Working Group.

The titles of the nine projects are below, and their details follow:

- 1 Tees Valley Maritime
- 2 Profiling Tees Valley Festivals
- 3 Creative Industries Support Network
- 4 Excellence Through Sport
- 5 Better Buildings, Better Spaces
- 6 Visual Arts and Digital Arts Cluster Initiative
- 7 Community Networks
- 8 Performing Arts Cluster
- 9 Cultural Education Partnership

Project One : Tees Valley Maritime

Project Description

Building on the rich maritime heritage and traditions of the sub-region's coast, and on its diverse topography and ecology, the development of a maritime cluster of international importance in the Tees Valley. The basis of the cluster will be

- HMS Trincomalee
- National maritime attraction development for Hartlepool (eg National Maritime Museum of the North)
- Water transport initiatives for coastal access
- Hartlepool Marina

- International Nature reserve at Tees and North Tees marshes
- Lifeboat initiative at Redcar
- Hartlepool Maritime Festival
- South Gare interpretation centre

Importance

The rich maritime heritage and coastal environment of the Tees Valley represents a substantial opportunity for further tourism development and area enhancement. Co-ordinated marketing and promotion of existing attractions, together with the aggressive exploration of new possibilities, in particular the possibility of a national museum extension, will inject essential economic energy into the very centre point of the Tees Valley coastal arc.

The Vision

Linked and inter-branded centres of excellence throughout the coastal and estuarine areas of the Tees Valley. Greater access and improved interpretation of heritage and environment to increase significantly the perception and value of the Tees Valley coastal belt. Acquisition of another major maritime attraction will be a key lever.

Implementation

Long run project development for a new maritime attraction for Hartlepool, together with short run cluster development.

Costs

An initial cost of £50,000 was identified for cluster feasibility work, this has been partly implemented by the individual strategic studies currently underway which will lead to more specific proposals. Requirement now is for co-ordinated marketing and promotions funding, together with funding of dedicated project team for securing maritime attraction.

£50,000 pa Single programme, ONE, Local Authorities , partners.

Next Steps

- Draw together steering group of representatives of Maritime and Coastal environment attractions to inform and guide.
- Raise profile of the Maritime and coastal attractions by developing links with the Tourism Strategy

- Proceed to bid for and create maritime attraction development team.

Potential Project Partnership Leaders

Hartlepool Borough Council
Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
TVDC Tourism Partnership
Northumbria Tourist Board
NEMLAC

Project Two : Profiling Tees Valley Festivals

Project Description

To complement the existing events marketing activities by developing mechanisms for pooling resources, building profile, developing regional synergies and increasing the reach of the cultural/sporting offer to the domestic and overseas market.

Importance

- Will help create focal points and positive self image for the Tees Valley
- Will develop regional alliances and reciprocities with projects such as those under the umbrella of the Newcastle-Gateshead Initiative
- Will raise awareness - locally, regionally, nationally and internationally - of the wealth of the cultural events within the Tees Valley
- Will maximise advantages from the timing and cross-fertilisation of events
- Will attract new contributors to existing events and create possibilities for new ones.
- Will generate economic and employment benefits.

Vision

Building on what has already been achieved, to accomplish a step change in the profile and impact of Tees Valley festivals in order that they contribute to the widespread recognition of the renaissance of the Tees Valley..

Implementation

Single Pot Funding with monies from the Local Authorities and the private sector has been secured until March 2005. A Festival/Events Manager has been appointed to work with partners to develop the programme of events and implement the marketing plan

Costs

£70,000 per annum has been identified (part tbc) from partners for 2003/4 and 2004/5. Further monies will be sought to implement a comprehensive programme of activity.

Next Steps

- establish - in conjunction with the Creative Industries Support Network, the Excellence in Sport initiative, and the Performing Arts Cluster - an Events Forum to disseminate information, share resources, undertake research to improve planning and promotion of the events calendar
- create mechanisms and a revenue stream within the Forum for:
 - negotiating with event organisers towards coherent marketing of the major festivals with a view to increasing key outcomes.
 - identifying potential sponsorship opportunities from the business community
 - developing promotional individual, group and educational packages across the events spectrum
 - supporting event organisers in actively seeking to attract major new events to the Tees Valley
 - Co-ordinated press and PR support
 - Co-ordinated ticketing

Potential Project Partnership Leaders

TVDC with Steering Group comprising representatives from the 5 Local Authorities, Sport England, and other bodies as appropriate.

Project Three : Creative Industries Support Network

Project Description

The establishment of a Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) support network to improve the quantity and quality of business support available to the sector. The project will address failures in the current support system which prevent individuals and businesses from accessing appropriate support.

Importance

Research has highlighted a range of business support needs in the sector, not being currently met, including: Skills, Marketing, Finance, Facilities, Networking, Information and Mentoring. There is a language and culture gap between the CCI sector and mainstream business support, and this is experienced on both sides. However, current levels of cultural enterprise promise real rewards from improved access to support. While fragmented and scattered, present activity does relate to important hubs: music, performing arts, digital media, design. Increased support can improve the success rates of new and existing activities, and will help to provide the focus and attention that will increase the birth rate of new enterprises.

The Vision

To establish and maintain effective links including:

- Regional - ONE, Northern Cultural Skills Partnership, Arts Council England (NE), Culture North East, Capital of Culture initiatives, regional Business Link.
- Sub-Regional - Enterprise Strategy (Business Link's role as broker & coordinator of business support), plus focus on key areas: Graduate enterprise, Social enterprise, BME businesses, Connexions, Young people, Colleges and Universities, performing arts cluster, and exhibition spaces

To develop & deliver services, through a series of three linked 'hubs':

- Educational
- Professional
- Community-based

To establish a system of co-ordination and leadership, provided by a Steering Group consisting of successful practitioners and cultural entrepreneurs who represent the interests and viewpoints of both the demand and supply sides the target markets.

Implementation

The proposal within the strategy would see this project to be based in Business Link Tees Valley and linked to key educational, community and professional 'hubs' across the sub-region.

Costs

Estimated at £135K in year one, with a further £150K in each of years two and three. Potential funding sources include One North East, Business Link, Local Authorities, Higher Education, Learning & Skills Council, Europe

Next Steps

Draw together 'steering group' of representatives of Tees Valley Creative Industries to inform and guide the network.

Potential Project Partnership Leaders

Business Link Tees Valley (new sectoral specialists may be needed)
Tees Valley Creative Industry Group
Northern Cultural Skills Partnership
The University of Teesside

Project Four: Excellence through Sport

Project Description

Aimed at a development of the excellence that already exists in the Tees Valley in relation to particular sporting disciplines (ie outdoor water sports, table tennis, ice sports, golf, tennis, countryside, motor sport and martial arts) together with a development of the expertise in sports science that exists in the two universities.

Importance

Sport is a key component of regeneration, health improvement and educational attainment. The area already has facilities or activities in place that are of regional, national and international significance. However, these currently tend to operate in isolation within the sub region and the potential to develop greater synergy, significance and profile is being lost. Individually and collectively they can also help to deliver part of the tourism agenda: residential sports and training facilities, creation of sporting summer schools, extreme sports, events and schools

Vision

- Greater recognition and profile inside and outside the region for minority sports which are currently growing in popularity and impact, increased participation within the sub region and acting as an attraction to a wider visitor market
- Facilities uprated.

- Participation rates increased
- Capitalising on sporting excellence as a driver for regeneration
- Enhancing the perception of the sub region
- Achieve definition of the routes to participation through research and engagement in the national scene.
- Creation of a Tees Valley Sports Institute (building on the Durham University community model : cf. swimming) and on the Teesside Sport model with national status

Implementation

- Core funding for key sports based on a needs and gap analysis
- Expanding the role of Teesside Sport
- Joint bids to funders to enhance the role of the Universities
- Partnering with Sport England, Education (all sections) Health and Middlesbrough and Darlington Football Clubs to create an Excellence in Sport Tees Development Corridor Group.

Costs

- £100,000 per year for two years to develop the project
- Thereafter revenue and capital matching funding assessed at £250,000 per year, for five years in the first instance.

Next Steps

- Establish lead group
- Raise profile of the sports through marketing and events (link to tourism)
- Carry out a sport and facilities audit
- Identify gaps in provision and facility needs
- Expand the role of Teesside Sport to incorporate both universities to lead the proposed management group

Potential Project Partnership Leaders

Tees Valley Chief Leisure Officers Group
Sport England

Project Five : Better Buildings, Better Spaces

Project Description

This project will establish a new design agenda for the buildings and public spaces of the Tees Valley, changing the image of the conurbation, breaking the circle of poor design – low land values – poor design. It will also use good urban design and layout to contribute to the development of more vibrant communities.

Importance

The Tees Valley has few buildings or spaces of significance. Uninspiring buildings contribute to the negative image of the area, it doesn't look like a vibrant cityscape. With very few exceptions, the buildings and spaces support the sense that we have little to be proud of and perhaps little to look forward to.

The Vision

Concentrating on key spaces, using buildings, engineering structures like bridges, and public art, we can set a new tone, creating icons for the new, confident Tees Valley. We can increase land values and inward investment and revitalise the urban core of the area.

Implementation

A Tees Valley Task Group will be established, involving land and property developers, architects, planners, and organisations such as CABE, Northern Architecture, RSA, RTPI, RIBA, RSA and the Tees Valley Urban Regeneration Company. The Group will champion a high standard of design, initiating a debate about architecture and the built environment, and influence planning guidance, land use decisions and private sector development schemes. The Task Group will use a variety of tools, including publications, workshops, training courses, advocacy, the media, and international competitions. It will use public displays and interpretation of models to introduce people to more radical designs.

Costs

The advocacy work, with costs for exhibitions, publications, competition fees etc could be between £50,000 and £100,000 per annum. However, all costs are proportional to the number and scale of developments which occur. Signature buildings or major pieces of public art to set the tone and lead by example, would obviously require seven figure investments.

Next Steps

Establish core of the Task Group, under the auspice of the TVP, and seek a part time secondment or contract consultant to coordinate and develop the initiative.

Potential Project Partnership Leaders

Tees Valley Regeneration Company
Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
NE Civic Trust
Local Authority Planning Authorities

Project Six: Visual Arts and Digital Arts Cluster Initiative

Project Description

To develop activity in visual and digital arts. In the visual arts, to enable this through the creation of a major venue for the presentation of fine and applied arts; and in parallel to source public art commissions and secure general consciousness of them.. In the digital arts, to increase creative production through the support and extension of dedicated further and higher education, through an increase in related applied technological research, and through the facilitation of consequent business start-ups. In both, to establish links between the visual and the digital by connecting the Digital City initiative of the University of Teesside with the Middlesbrough Council project for its Cultural Quarter, and through other relevant initiatives across the Tees Valley

Importance

A cluster initiative will establish a critical mass of achievements and developments that will:

- a) support the growth of a creative industries cluster benefiting local artists and engendering the establishment of a visual arts community
- b) galvanise the sub-region as a key location for nationally and internationally renowned exhibitions and residencies of significance
- c) create the climate for the development of a support model that draws together training, subsidy, platforms and showcases, and market-place development

The Vision

The project will establish the Tees Valley as a global centre of excellence in visual and digital arts via new technology, creativity and expertise and will develop audiences and markets in the region, while strengthening links nationally and globally. The project will use virtual and real space to provide a showcase which will promote our unique and developing expertise

Implementation

To raise the profile of the creative industries, developing local and national markets and thereby generating sustainable jobs, and working innovatively across the spectrum of digital arts, this project will

- Appoint a project manager
- Form a Digital and Visual Arts Agency
- Lobby, support and bid for the development of new cultural spaces: Middlesbrough Art Gallery, University of Teesside Digital City, Arts Quarter in Middlesbrough, including Cleveland College of Art and Design
- Plan a programme of development for new creative spaces, both real and virtual to promote exchange of ideas, research, technological development and creative production.
- Provide support and resource for the development and relocation of creative industries businesses
- Work with artists to develop new use of existing technology,
- Develop research into business use
- Link digital activity to the development of education and progression pathways
- Develop promotional opportunities via activities which will showcase existing and developing digital activity

Costs

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Next Steps

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Potential Project Partnership Leaders

Project Seven: Community Networks

Project description

A four-pronged programme to increase and extend general social communication within the Tees Valley.

- A 'state of the art' Tees Valley-wide media initiative to enable greater and better communication across the region.
- A "5% for Tees Valley" leadership campaign calling on decision-makers at every level to devote time to think how their decisions might best be made and presented to enhance the Tees Valley in whatever ways might be possible.
- Billboard campaign to advertise the projects, the TV Cultural Strategy, and the Tees Valley Vision (at all stages linking to the world outside the Tees Valley).
- A range of funded low-bureaucracy network support agencies.

Importance

If the Tees Valley does not undergo an upsurge in creativity, it will continue to decline. Increasing the density of social interaction within the Tees Valley – the amount of its communications, both internal and external – is necessary for there to be any chance of relative social and economic advancement at a sub-regional level.

The Vision

Economic and social regeneration within the Tees Valley will depend on widespread willingness to seize opportunities and follow them through. Extensive social networks, new people engaged in existing networks, and new networks created, will result in a greater number of opportunities and wider sources of support and encouragement. This will work as follows:

- Extended communication allowing recognition of common interests.
- Emerging leadership and creativity from unexpected quarters.
- New project development and hunger for innovation

- Unwillingness for things to remain the same
- New connections between existing networks
- Increased energy within the Tees Valley.

Implementation

A Tees Valley Partnership Group with the specific remit to enhance in whatever ways possible the levels of interaction across the Tees Valley and across its boundaries, with an understanding of the structural importance of this, should be formed. A billboard campaign will keep the largest possible numbers of people in the Tees Valley aware of what is happening and what changes are taking place.

Costs

Billboard, media, and network support agency development .

Potential Project Partnership Leaders

Tees Valley Partnership, Community Foundation.

Project Eight: Performing Arts Cluster

Project Description

The development of a performing arts network across the sub-region to bring together venues, companies, projects, artists, businesses and local authorities.

Importance

The cluster is crucial if we are to:

- Maximise the impact of performing arts across the sub-region
- Identify priority areas for support and development
- Develop opportunities for venues, programming and events
- Operate strategically in the growth of new initiatives/ small businesses
- Grow, attract and retain performing arts businesses by addressing issues relating to: training; subsidy; promotion; market development

A well-supported Performing Arts Cluster will - as consultation has made clear:

- Enhance co-ordination
- Increase the (too often sub-optimal) impact of well-received events
- Help repair the leakage of artists/ companies from the sub-region
- Improve the connection to the region's other population centres, and to institutions such as Sage, Gateshead.
- Extend niche development
- Grow the sector toward 'critical mass'.
- Enable the maintenance and development of current venues and facilities
- Build towards major new developments.

The Vision

To achieve an internal and external understanding that the Tees Valley is an area of significant opportunity and accomplishment in the performing arts.

Implementation

A fast research project to establish best practice in cluster development, with a view to establishing a slim practitioner-led communications and co-ordination unit operating within the Creative Industries Support Network.

Potential Project Partnership Leaders

Stockton Borough Council
Middlesbrough Borough Council
Darlington Borough Council

Project Nine : Cultural Education Partnership

Project Description

The Cultural Education Partnership is designed to bring together key players in education across the Tees Valley, but also to engage parents, guardians and peer groups at the informal network level. The partnership would create a structure able to deliver effective medium to long term cultural education programmes building on existing programmes such as Creative Partnerships, Sports Action Zones & Education Action Zones. The structure should embed culture at the core of existing as well as new programmes. The partnership would be a strategic umbrella organisation acting as a conduit for information into and out of the sub region. Their remit would be to:

- Ensure that culture is a key element of any education initiative.
- Maximise the cultural impact of education initiatives.
- Identify priority areas (both geographic and cultural) for development.
- Exploit to the fullest the potential of new and existing initiatives and resources.
- Operate strategically at the highest operational & policy making level to influence the decision makers.
- Facilitate an active dialogue between educationalists & the cultural sector operating in the region on all levels.

Importance

Despite the sub region benefiting from a plethora of high quality potential cultural educational programmes, cultural education still only touches a minority of community groups and schools. The impact of initiatives is limited and patchy due to the lack of synergy, duplication of effort and a number of competing rather than co-operating structures. Sharing of best practice and strategic 'joined up' planning would be key to delivering an effective cultural education partnership. This strategic overview can only be obtained within a Tees valley wide partnership. The existence of an effective partnership would also encourage new initiatives and new funding.

Vision

Tees Valley will create an effective strategic body with the remit to deliver the project. The Partnership will raise the profile of cultural education in the sub region and begin to impact on the image of Tees Valley region wide but will also be one of the key players in developing regional and national policy.

Implementation

There are several potential models for an effective partnership. Whichever method is selected would need to be endorsed by the Tees Valley Cultural and Educational Sectors

1. A new autonomous umbrella organisation
2. A new working group made up of representatives of existing organisations such as Local Arts Teams and Education Departments.
3. An existing organisation/agency commissioned to take on the role.
4. An existing organisation/agency develops a new wing to take on the role.

The Working Group that developed this cultural strategy for the Tees Valley consisted of representatives from the five local authorities, two universities, and key arts organisations – all supplemented by the work of two consulting firms working in alliance. This work on the various projects emerges from the desire across that group to build on strengths, remedy weaknesses, and engage significant numbers of people from across the Tees Valley in the process of determined cultural change. There were significant issues of balance: between consolidation and innovation, between the creation of the stamina necessary for long term planning and the need to do something now, and between culture as a way of life and culture as the province of the arts. These oppositions returned in various forms again and again in Working Group meetings, in Consultant briefing sessions, and throughout the group and individual discussions with more than 150 representatives of the cultural sector from across the Tees Valley. At this point in the process, however, there is no dissent from the view that enhanced communication and sustained determination are among the most important elements in the Tees Valley Cultural Strategy, as it strains to increase the self-belief and creativity of the entire area..