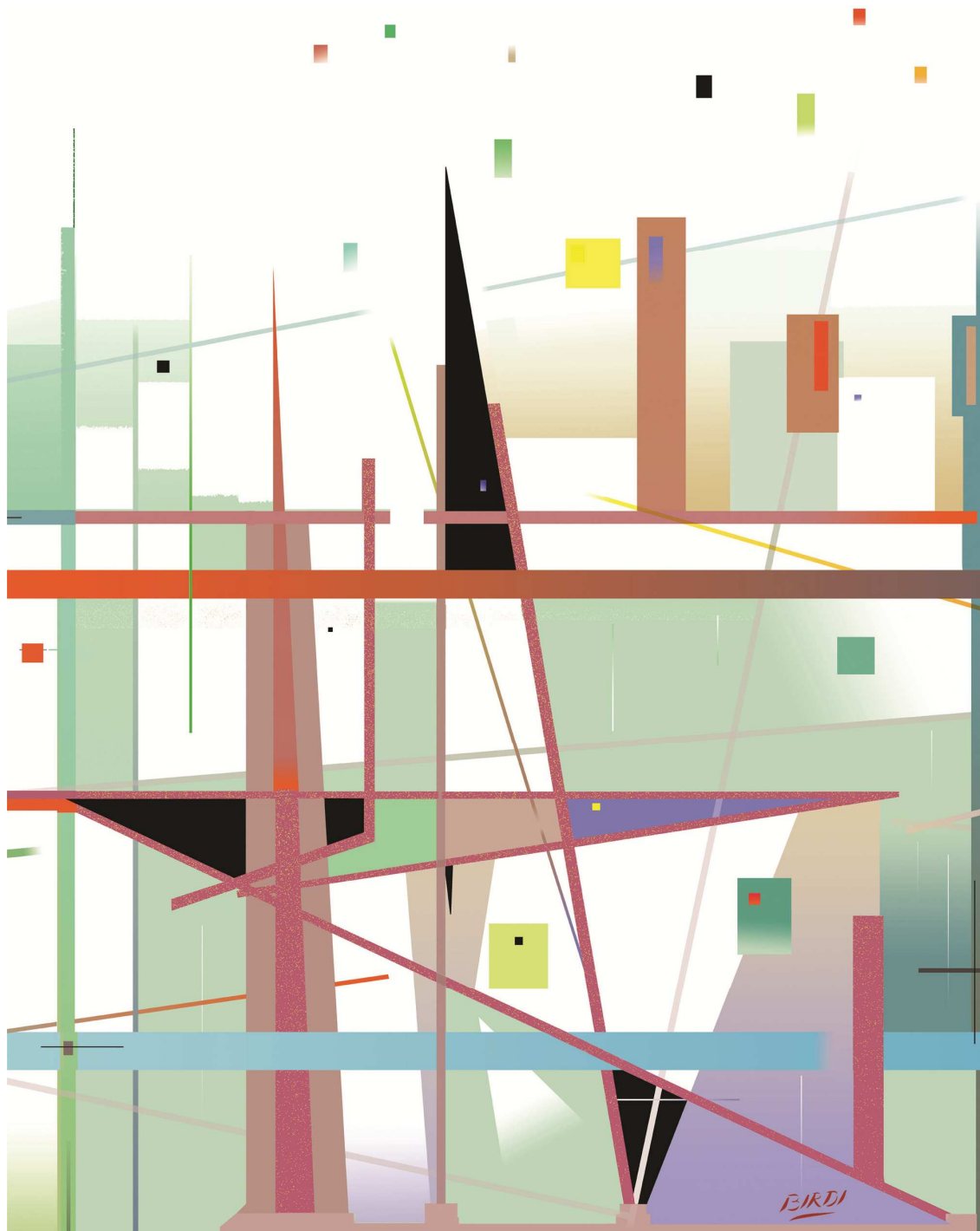


An Arts Strategy For the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme



Detail of Flight of the RAVEN BY Saranjit Birdi

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Introduction and Background

The aim of this strategy is to set into context what 'the Arts' means for the Borough and explore its relevance and role to our communities both in the present day and the future.

The Borough is a unique place with two principal towns as part of the North Staffordshire conurbation and a large rural area. These areas contain a rich heritage, history and cultural make-up, that means we are not starting with a blank sheet as art and culture already influence our 'sense of place'. The Arts also have a significant economic impact on the borough. For example, the New Vic Theatre generates £11.6m to the local economy and the Museum a further £1.6m. These buildings along with many others, such as Keele University, and more recently Newcastle-under-Lyme, College and Jubilee2, are all part of an existing infrastructure that contribute to the local distinctiveness of the area, enhance the architectural heritage of our historic towns and villages and have raised standards of design. The Arts has also helped shape our communities, particularly through work of BArts and Borderlines, and as a sector the Arts has been very effective in developing audiences locally.

An Arts and Culture Group was formed in 2012 as a consortium of local arts and cultural providers who have joined together to provide to promote the power of art in contributing to every facet of life in the Borough. The aims of the Culture and Arts Group are:

- For organisations with an interest in arts and culture to seek to maximise opportunities for partnership working in order to ensure that the community benefits to the fullest extent from these activities
- To ensure that arts and cultural activities support economic development, notably through the development of skills, employment generation and tourism opportunities
- To ensure that arts and cultural activities promote personal aspiration and achievement and support the social development and enrichment of communities
- To ensure that the benefits from the range of arts and cultural assets is maximised, particularly to ensure that all assets are utilised to the maximum degree possible
- To develop a comprehensive programme of arts and cultural events and to provide opportunities for commissioning new works, particularly from local artists
- To provide opportunities for local arts to show their work and to raise awareness in local communities of the talents of artists living and working in their locality
- To ensure that through outreach activity the benefits of arts and cultural programmes are spread across the widest possible geographical area

The primary responsibility for arts and cultural activity itself lies with the agencies that make up the Arts and Culture for the Borough. Their initial priorities are to help to regenerate the town centres and work with museum partners to commemorate the Centenary of the First World War.

It is this group that have driven the development of the strategy.

This strategy acknowledges the importance of partnership working, addressing itself to the agencies, voluntary and professional organisations within the area who will work in partnership to achieve agreed community outcomes. This commitment will grow support for culture and the arts and by building on existing strengths and developing them to meet community priorities, partner organisations will meet the following challenges:

- Increase participation in the arts
- Support the growth and spread of cultural and creative activity
- Strengthen leadership and resources dedicated to these tasks.
- Measure the improved effectiveness of the arts and culture in tackling community issues

National, regional and local policy context for culture and the arts

It is our intention to ensure that this strategy takes into account current key national, regional and local influences and our work links to these issues and priorities.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) provides funding for the arts in England, sets arts policy and supports arts based initiatives, often in partnership with other government departments.

DCMS funding is distributed through Arts Council England, the development agency for the arts in England.

The Arts Council Strategy mission is, 'To get great art to everyone by championing, developing and investing in artistic experiences that enrich people's lives'.

They have a number of goals, linked to funding, which are:

Goal 1: Talent and artistic excellence are thriving and celebrated

England is regarded as a pre-eminent centre for artistic excellence.

- developing arts opportunities for people and places with the least engagement
- strengthening the distribution of excellent art through touring and digital platforms
- encouraging funded organisations to be even more focused on attracting new audiences

Funding Source – Strategic Touring Fund

Goal 2: More people experience and are inspired by the arts

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

- using our investment to ensure excellent art happens
- establishing a coherent, nationwide approach to the development of artistic talent, particularly for emerging and mid-career artists
- supporting an artistically-led approach to diversity in the arts
- to showcase talent and build audiences for excellent art

Funding Source – Grants for the Arts

Goal 3: The arts are sustainable, resilient and innovative

Collaborative and networked, the arts are known for resilience, innovation and their contribution to the nation's reputation and prosperity.

- promoting greater collaboration between organisations to increase efficiency and innovation
- strengthening business models in the arts, helping arts organisations to diversify their income streams including private giving

Funding Source – Cultural Leadership Programme

Goal 4: The arts leadership and workforce are diverse and highly skilled

The diversity of the arts workforce reflects the diversity of society and artistic practice in England. Outstanding arts leaders play a wider role in their communities and nationally.

- building a network of arts leaders who value sharing their knowledge and skills, for the benefit of the arts and civil society
- creating equal opportunities to enter the arts workforce
- improving the delivery of arts opportunities for children and young people
- raising the standard of art being produced for, with and by children and young people

Goal 5: Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts

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

We will encourage the Bridge organisations in the area to work together and work across regional and area boundaries where the geography makes sense. We will continue to promote Artsmark and Arts Award.

Funding Source/Initiatives - Artsmark & Arts Award, Music hubs, National Music Plan

Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund can support arts projects when they increase access to, understanding of, or participation in heritage. Heritage Lottery West Midlands visited the Borough in the autumn and are to designate Newcastle (along with two other locations) as Priority Development Areas. As a result we will be allocated a member of HLF staff to work with us to help identify and develop bids which is intended to improve our success rate.

Staffordshire County Council Community Arts Fund

Staffordshire County Council's Community Arts Fund helps to support Staffordshire's communities in their access to a wide range of cultural activities and funds projects which help achieve the outcomes of the Council's Strategic Plan. There are two funding pots:

1. Community Arts Fund – for applications of up to £800 to run an arts activity or event which benefits the community, widens participation and promotes accessibility.
2. Community Arts Development Programme – for applications of up to £2500 to run an arts project which address social issues, develop new audiences, target marginalised groups and support community development.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Cultural Grants

The Borough Council's Cultural Grants panel has an annual budget of £14,500 and makes awards of up to £1,500. The fund is open to any arts or community group planning an arts project or event in Newcastle Borough or can demonstrate that at least 25% of participants / spectators are Newcastle Borough residents if taking place outside of Newcastle.

Existing artistic and cultural strengths

This section highlights some of the strengths and examples of the many notable achievements in culture and the arts in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Culture and Arts are defined, for this purpose as the following:

1. Performing arts, visual arts, craft, design and fashion
2. Media, film, television, digital media and language
3. Museums artefacts and archives
4. Libraries, literature, writing and publishing
5. The built heritage, architecture
6. Festivals and attractions
7. Creative business sector

Performing arts, visual arts, craft, design and fashion

B'Arts

B Arts develops creative programmes and projects that sustain, develop and enrich communities; while employing artists in work that is intelligent, thoughtful and contributes to a process of cultural democracy. They are based at the Barracks where they have workshop space and offices,

Creative Art North Staffs

CANS area a community arts company delivering a wide range of arts projects to young people and the wider public. They work with hard to reach communities and encourage the use of artistic activities to support community development and improve quality of life.

Letting in the Light

Letting in the Light are a not for profit, socially engaged arts group based in Newcastle-under-Lyme. They have engaged with a multitude of different communities in many different forms and has a particular interest in working with groups and communities that don't often have a voice. From creative consultation to hands on workshops, Letting in the Light specialises in creative thinking and are ambitious in their multimedia installations. They have vast experience of project development & management, community development, adult learning, creative consultation and working with communities at a grass-roots level, all of which strengthens our ability to work in the heart of communities

Newcastle College

Newcastle-under-Lyme College is a highly successful college in North Staffordshire, with pass rates and student success levels amongst the best in the country. The college provides a wide range of academic and vocational qualifications from entry to degree level, along with the support services to help students achieve their goals. With purpose-built facilities for art, design and creative industries the college is fully equipped to prepare the next generation of creatives.

New Vic Theatre

The New Vic is Staffordshire's award-winning theatre-in-the-round. With nine major productions a year, they present a varied and adventurous programme that includes contemporary drama, new commissions, acclaimed operas, innovative adaptations and accessible classics. Alongside this work the company has developed extensive and award-winning community involvement with an Education Department and ground-breaking New Vic Borderlines undertaking work of international significance.

The theatre also has a programme of art exhibitions.

Keele University

The University's mission is to be recognised as the UK's leading example of an open, integrated intellectual community. With a broad selection of full time and part time courses including humanities and music. They have an art gallery with a vibrant exhibition programme. It hosts an annual calendar of public events, ranging from lectures to live poetry readings, concerts and official ceremonies. The Keele Arts Panel has been set up to bring together people who have a particular interest in shaping the future arts programme. An Arts Officer has recently been appointed to develop a co-ordinated programme of events across disciplines, drawing and building upon the current arts offer. Arts and cultural activity is an integral part of what they offer as a University, providing events that enhance and enrich the student and staff experience and developing activities that appeal to and engage with the wider community.

Newcastle Borough Council Culture & Arts Service

Based at the Borough Museum on Brampton Park, in addition to offering development advice for young and emerging artists the service manages 3 temporary art exhibition spaces as well as a regular programme of arts and crafts events. This complements a retail offer that showcases the work of local and regional artists and designer makers in its handmade craft space at the museum and at The Perspective Gallery a unique temporary exhibition space housed on the first floor of Jubilee2 Health & Wellbeing Centre. It also administers the Cultural Grants Scheme which is able to support a wide range of cultural events and projects ran by community groups and organisations.

PicL

Partners in Creative Learning provide creative spaces for hire, arts training and development and research. PiCL's mission is to create more positive outcomes for children and young people in Stoke and Staffordshire, to enable them to find their strengths and fulfil their potential. It focuses on three main areas: project management, consultancy and advisory services research, professional development and training, fundraising and contract tendering.

Public Art

There are a number of excellent examples of public art within the Borough that reflects its vibrant history and culture. Most notably are the town', subway art projects. Six projects that brought artists and students together to design artworks to re-invigorate the subways have been completed to date with more planned in the future. A more recent example is 'Return of the Raven', a 50 x 4m digital collage work that adorns the glazing of Jubilee 2, designed by Saranjit Birdi.

Media, film, television, digital media and language

Vue Cinema

Vue Newcastle-under-Lyme is a state-of-the-art multiplex, located in the centre of the historic market town. This modern cinema has 8 screens and can seat up to 1,976 people. It shows main stream film releases and also screenings of plays, ballets and opera at London theatres. It also offers state of the art conference facilities.

Creative Production Companies

There are a wide range of film and broadcast production companies based in Newcastle including Inspired Film & Video, Junction15 Productions, McGovern Productions Eclipse Broadcast Ltd and Koko Digital

Museums, artefacts and archives

Museum & Art Gallery

Hidden in Brampton Park, less than half a mile from the town centre, the Museum and Art Gallery presents over 2000 years of Borough history and culture. Also housing a local history archive, this nationally Accredited museum takes care of unique archaeological, social history and fine art collections and makes them accessible to the public through displays, exhibitions, educational programmes and events and web based research facilities.

Apedale Heritage Centre

The volunteer run heritage centre tells the story of the heavy industries in the Apedale valley. It hosts a drift mine and a light railway which is operated by their colleagues from the Moseley Railway Trust.

Libraries, literature, writing and publishing

Libraries

Staffordshire County Council has 9 libraries in the borough. In addition to the regular book loan service these libraries have a regular programme of arts, music and craft events and exhibitions for use by local artists and arts groups.

Heritage (encompasses landscapes, historic places, sites and built environments, as well as bio-diversity, collections, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences).

Listed buildings, Monuments, Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas and other locally important buildings and structures

The Borough has a wealth of Listed Buildings of special architectural or historic interest, scheduled archaeological sites (Scheduled Ancient Monuments) and registered historic parks and gardens. These are of recognised national importance and are designated by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and English Heritage respectively.

Conservation areas are also designated by the local authority and therefore

enjoy additional planning protection and consideration. Newcastle has 20 Conservation Areas and much of the town centre is designated as such.

However there are a number of buildings and structures, which are not of national importance, and which lie outside of Conservation Areas. These also contribute to the rich cultural heritage of the Borough, and are included on the 'Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures', so that their significance to the Borough's heritage can be given proper consideration in planning matters.

Festivals and attractions

Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre Partnership

The Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre Partnership (NULTCP) is a new Community Interest Company whose aim is to offer a vibrant and thriving town centre to residents and visitors based on traditional market town values of quality and speciality, within an historic, beautiful, well maintained and safe environment. The partnership's board is made up of key stakeholders from the town, as well as strategic partners in the Borough and support from Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council. One of their aims is to develop and promote a year-round programme of professional and community-led events. Events such as the Lymelight Festival, Love Your Local Market and the Jazz and Blues Festival help to highlight local creative talent and create an atmosphere in which arts and culture can thrive.

Creative business sector

Newcastle town centre is home to a number of creative independents – the town boasts a fabric shop with its own sewing café, an art shop with facilities for regular classes plus workshop space, vintage clothes and crafts stores, one of which also run courses and a sheet music shop. Most of these are located in the northern end of town, home to many independents, in particular Bridge Street, which has the capacity to become an artisan quarter.

Pop-up Emporium, run by a local entrepreneur, has seen dozens of designer makers given the opportunity to sell their products in pop-up shops in a variety of locations round the town. Talented students from Newcastle-under-Lyme College have also used the pop-up shop concept to have a taste of running their own creative business.

The market, too, has been a focus for creative businesses with specialist markets run by Pop-up Emporium and a scheme to encourage craftspeople to consider market trading as a way of selling their products.

Both Staffordshire University and Keele University have focused on digital and creative studies to a high standard, from undergraduate degrees to PhDs. The result is an outstanding source of new local talent, and a dynamic attitude that's driven the creation of several graduate-run businesses in the area.

Building cultural and artistic capacity

Taking part in cultural activities can bring communities together and empower individuals to articulate their own aspirations and expectations. It is on this premise that this arts strategy identifies the need and demand for a programme of activity that also offers health benefits, community safety benefits, values diversity and tackles social exclusion. The case studies below document some outstanding achievements in these areas. Yet at the same time, much of our focus for capacity building is influenced by concerns and issues relating to town centre regeneration. We recognise the need to support economic regeneration but are keen also to capitalise on the wider benefits the arts can bring. This said we believe that to attract business and investment into our town centre we need to exploit its character and distinctiveness. High quality urban design and architecture are accepted as central to achieving sustainable development and a commitment to this will also support economic, environmental and social benefits. Architecture and design features, such as the predominantly Georgian architecture of Newcastle, are a reflection of our local history, the contextualising and understanding of which should inform our future plans and direction. Capitalising on and developing a strong local culture will help make Newcastle a distinctive place, contribute to its success and make it sustainable.

Newcastle has so far avoided much of the homogeneity of many town centres and continued to enjoy a good number of independent retailers and a strong evening economy. We have feature markets, an annual jazz and blues festival and do exceptionally well each year in Britain in Bloom (best small city category). Yet we are far from escaping the effects of the recession and like most towns there are empty shop units and growing concerns by businesses and landlords over the cost of parking and NNDR to the retail sector.

Part of the solution is clearly to do more – more farmers markets, more festivals, more pop up shops – but the wider benefits also need to be appreciated. We cannot just seek commercial benefits now that public money is in short supply. There has never been a better time for more collaborative work so that art and culture can continue to deliver improvements to people's quality of life in a variety of ways from improving physical and mental well-being to creating tighter knit sustainable communities and providing education. This approach can already be seen in the case studies highlighted below and the aspiration of the partner organisations involved in the production of this strategy.

Borderlines production of 'A Midsummer Nights Dream' 2012

This summer, we finally had the opportunity to perform in Brampton Park. The weather was good and the YPTC wanted to spend two days in Brampton to rehearse. It was a fantastic atmosphere people who were walking past would stop and watch the performance. We managed to get a younger audience and they even joined in the Indian dancing. This also allowed the Young Peoples to have an understanding of not needing a theatre space to put on a good performance. Furthermore the company performed in Koh-I-Noor restaurant which was a challenge for them because in Brampton Park they had a huge space but in Koh-I-Noor they had it was small. However at the end of the two

days they really enjoyed performing and interacting with the audience. The audience enjoyed watching the performance so much that they wanted to find out when and where the next play would be. In the past two years what we have discovered that this arts grant has allowed us to push and stretch the young people to perform in different theatrical styles. Majority of these young people come from very difficult and vulnerable backgrounds and this grant has them the opportunity to perform in a professional settings. This really boosted their confidence and one of the participants who performed in last year's summer project is now in full time employment. This project really celebrated the diversity in Newcastle under Lyme. The young people really had to embrace Indian music and dance to create the rich culture. Initially there were barriers but as the workshops development in scenes they we much more open and started to enjoy themselves. This kind of funding allows us to deliver projects which help young people to think positively therefore making positive contributions to the Newcastle-under-Lyme community.

B Arts and Chesterton Vision

For twelve months from February 2012 B Arts were in residency in the new youth centre for Chesterton in Staffordshire, Chesterton Vision. The youth service wanted to engage the young people by using creativity in four key areas affecting young people's safety and wellbeing. B arts suggested doing this through 4 artist residencies, each using a different art form to explore one of the topics identified by the youth service.

The projects across the year were; creating a series of short animated films on alcohol abuse (artists Matt Ollerhead and Steve Cooling); composing a digital soundtrack about careers and jobs (Steve Edwards and Steve Cooling); devising a performance piece about sexual health (Susan Clarke and Steve Cooling); and designing an art installation raising the issues of domestic abuse (Hilary Hughes and Steve Cooling).

All the projects were hands on for the participants, the youth members learning new skills and exploring new techniques, making decisions and using the arts to explore issues that are relevant to their lives.

On the 9 March 2013 the new building was officially opened with due speeches, ceremony and plaques. The building is a MyPlace project and is a resource for all the community in Chesterton. B Arts and the young people involved showcased work created in the year-long residency of four arts projects funded by Staffordshire County Council.

Maer, Chorlton and Blackbrook Social History Project

Maer and Chorlton have a rich historical heritage with links to Charles Darwin, the Davenport family and the Harrison Shipping Line. Both villages have ancient churches. The group, a subcommittee of Maer Village Hall following a feature in the Yesterdays supplement of the Sentinel which triggered a barrage of excited telephone calls from people with local memoires, decided to act. They wanted to spread the knowledge about their heritage, to appreciate their older residents

and learn what they experienced. Changing the perception of newcomers to the villages was also a motivation.

The residents honed their skills, including interviewing, typing articles, collecting memorabilia and researching in record offices and libraries. Participation was encouraged in the villages.

All the work was voluntary and funding was secured from a variety of sources including the HLF, Newcastle Borough council's Cultural grants, and the local parish councils. 'The Life and Times of the Villages: Maer, Blackbrook and Chorlton was published in 2012 and has sold out.

Local Festivals May Music Festival

Community Education Programme – Letting in the Light

'Animate!' facilitated by Anne Kinnaird (visual/digital artist) in collaboration with Ben McManus (sound/digital artist) was staged at the PICL venue in Newcastle. The participants explored a range of digital and related hands on activities e.g. story boarding, photography, light painting, model making, sound recording, music production, image manipulation, as well as more recognised animation and editing techniques, such as time lapse, stop motion and so on. The participants had access to a range of state of the art equipment and software to create exciting visuals, soundscapes and animated scenes.

As each child/young person had very diverse needs we tailored their involvement to suit their interests, abilities and needs. Each child/young person or small group created at least one animation and in each session we had a range of activities available. The activities ranged from creating plasticene figures and animating them against appropriate imagery downloaded from the internet, recording the sound effects and editing the final animation with sound and credits in iMovie to physically animating bodies.

The result of this project is a series of short animations that were shown at the end of the last session on a big screen where everyone received a trophy and certificate for their achievements. Each child/young person also received a DVD with their work on it and a CD of any other imagery or photos they created. All of the children/young people and their families have given consent to have their films uploaded to youtube for their friends, wider families and schools to watch.

Partner Organisations 3-5 year aspirations

Newcastle Borough Council

The priorities for the area are being taken forward in three principal strategies for economic development, safer and stronger communities and health and wellbeing. Culture and Arts development has an intrinsic role in all three strategies as arts and cultural activities supports economic development, improves the health and wellbeing of all participants and helps to create community cohesion.

Therefore the Council's specific involvement in **Culture & Arts** is to:-

- To provide the opportunity for everyone to enjoy the Borough's material culture and the arts, to explore their history and culture and to use them along with our knowledge as an inspirational resource for learning and creativity.
- Ensuring that the performance of the service continually improves within existing and future budgetary controls. This will mean looking at the best use of resources in terms of management, staffing and services.
- Creating a more self sustaining service by identifying new income streams.
- Advocating the importance and value that the arts and cultural activities can have in delivering on the objectives set by the performance framework. Developing partnership arrangements with other Councils and the Third Sector will be a priority.

B'Arts

- Continue to make progress on our three key programme strands – work with older people, community baking and large outdoor arts projects
- Establish a temporary cultural space within the town centre and co-ordinate a year's worth of programme from the professional, voluntary and amateur arts sectors

- Continue to strengthen the company organisationally, financially and artistically

New Vic Theatre

- Take ideas from the theatrical cutting edge and make them accessible to an audience eager for new adventure.
- Exploit the intimacy of our in-the-round auditorium.
- Capitalise on the unique voice and skills of our Artistic Director, Theresa Heskins,
- Ensure a diverse offer to as wide an audience as possible, including season programming exploiting the subscription model.
- Grow the audience of young people in the 16-25 age range with a dedicated audience development scheme and relevant programming.
- Present a strand of programming aimed at the C2DE socio-economic groups.
- Allocate resources to enhance the scale and artistic concept of at least one production each year.
- Maintain a dedicated team of in-house creative, craft and production staff
- Keep larger casts on stage through inventive programming
- Continue to invest a significant proportion of our resources into maintaining the quality and distinctiveness of our Christmas productions.
- Prioritise the ethos of the ensemble; of actors and audience inhabiting a shared space,
- Invest in the kind of artist development that's seen emerging theatre makers find a supportive home and interested audience at the New Vic.
- We'll continue to invest in our Borderlines department, which will work in partnership to reduce criminal and anti-social behaviour and enhance neighbourhood relationships.
- We'll continue to invest in our Education programme, with a programme of lifelong learning aimed at developing aspiration and achievement.
- We'll continue to raise our national profile.
- We will continue our work to support the Borough's priorities and the ambition to make the borough prosperous, clean, healthy and safe.

Keele University

- Development of the Keele Arts Vision
- Development of a diverse and coordinated programme of arts activity
- A strong focus on engagement and participation both through the provision of events that enhance and enrich the student and staff experience, developing activities that appeal to and engage with the Keele community and local area and profiling our offer to wider regional and national stakeholders
- Developing clear marketing and communications
- Exploring fundraising, sponsorship and grant opportunities
- Developing key partnerships and exploring prospects for collaboration

Newcastle College

- The College's arts and culture priorities for the next 3 to 5 years mostly revolve around our new performing arts centre to be built on the old fire

station site and due to open in September 2014. We are hoping that the venue will not only provide accommodation for our growing performing arts offer, but will also act as a public performance space. Current plans are still sketchy, but should include both dance and theatre studio and performance spaces with a 200 seat capacity.

- We will continue to grow our music offer and looking to offer more performance opportunities linked to this.
- We will be expanding our fashion offer from September 2013.
- We are hoping to set up an in-house drama group and dance group from September 2013.

Civic Society

- To stimulate public interest and care for the beauty, history and character of the area of the town and its surroundings.
- To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic interest.
- To pursue these ends by means of meetings, exhibitions, lectures, and promotion of schemes of a charitable nature.
- To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Encouraging the growth of the cultural and creative enterprise sector

Newcastle-under-Lyme is associated with a small number of national brands: The Potteries; the New Vic; and Keele Medical School. However it is also associated with failing industry: Coal mining; heavy industry; and engineering, which have resulted in a move to the service sector (logistics) and a loss of the dexterous skills with which people previously earned their living.

The cultural industries have begun to respond to this situation locally particularly through the provision of exhibition space. Recent times have seen the opening of the Perspectives Gallery at the Jubilee2 Health and Wellbeing Centre, the use of vacant shops in the town centre and additional gallery space created at the New Vic, the Barracks, and Museum.

Educational facilities have also improved greatly with the provision of Newcastle-under-Lyme College, but the schools in the Borough have not yet benefited from any of the national schools building programmes. Art and design is to continue as part of the national curriculum and will therefore remain a popular choice within our schools.

The retail environment has remained distinctive in nature maintaining a number of independent retailers, the town centre streets are pedestrianised and of a good width due to our history as a successful market town. Indeed, Newcastle still supports a daily market. Relocation of a major supermarket to the other side of the ring road has left a major town centre regeneration opportunity and it is still anticipated that this will be retail led, if the right anchor tenant can be found, but until then at least attracting people into the town centre will require a variety of means and in particular a more flexible use of shop space, some of which can be shared or occupied by arts and cultural groups and agencies

Case Study Shops for Art

Action

Shared priorities

- Audience development/increased participation
- Town Centre regeneration
- Exploring Venues
- Contributing to a vibrant arts community

Action

Themed Activity Planning 2014 -2018

[First World War – 100th anniversary](#)

[Town Centre regeneration](#)

[Guildhall 300th anniversary](#)

[Philip Astley – 200th anniversary of his death](#)

Strengthening Leadership

Newcastle has a good cultural offer, and leadership for the arts and cultural communities comes from the organisations involved in developing this strategy.

Both local authorities recognise the value of the arts and have gone some way in integrating them into policies and strategies. Coordination is effective with a number of county groups and locally the production of 'Creative Catch-up' e-news letter along with the marketing activity of individual venues or events means that communication is beneficial. Strong partnership working takes place at a local level to demonstrate the value of culture and arts to cross cutting issues and at a regional and national level with cultural bodies.

Action

Build on existing coordination, communication and partnership activities.

Putting policies and mechanisms in place

Summary of actions from earlier sections

REGENERATION

- That culture, arts and heritage in all its varied interpretations including our historic buildings, monuments, archaeology, rural and build environments are central in development of both the public realm and in the redevelopment of Newcastle town centre.
- Create new ways to access the historic environment, and maintain accessible archives.

PARTNERSHIP

- Some strong and productive partnership working is already in place and potentially provides a strong foundation for establishing Newcastle as a cultural town and area of historical interest.
- Newcastle has a number of groups and societies who actively promote and support heritage and history. They provide many opportunities for local people and include for example the Civic Society, Friends of the Museum and local history society.

To develop

- Engage key partners to deliver specific agendas and shared outcomes and to lever external income through joint funding opportunities.
- Enable partnership approaches to audience development, access, funding and sponsorship
- Investigate the possibility of a historic festival for the town possibly based on the Circus
- Work together to attract national and international exhibitions
- Re-develop the Town Centre Library and Borough Museum with strong branding

ACCESS

- Alternatives should be available to those who do not or cannot visit venues, including the access provided through emerging technologies; including a virtual heritage experience online, a virtual museum and art gallery.
- Maximise access and participation in culture and art
- Develop the online offer and web pages, to include a 'Virtual-online Museum' and links to other Heritage venues and use of technology to maximise engagement in and access to art, culture, heritage and history.
- Ensure venues are easy to locate by improving signage and orientation.
- Increase volunteering opportunities
- Develop trails and storyboards around the town

LEADERSHIP

Ensure that culture and arts organisations and services:

- Have quality leadership and management in place to set the strategic direction for the culture and arts sector.
- employ and retain quality skilled and creative staff
- Are skilled in attracting outside investment, sponsorship and funding.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Support workforce development of both traditional and transferable business skills in order to develop the sector.
- Raise the quality of service provision through quality assurance frameworks and use of benchmarking.
- Maximise opportunities for attracting investment, funding and sponsorship, both within individual services and across services.
- Ensure excellence through making staff training and development a priority.
- Support workforce development of both traditional and transferable business skills in order to develop the sector.
- Improve the use of data and statistics to evidence delivery against key agendas and priorities

OUTCOME

- A joined up, recognised and quality visitor offer across Newcastle. Marketed to target groups with tailored packages and offers.

Priorities	Outcome	Project/Initiative	Milestones/Actions	Completion date	Lead organisation/officer
To develop audiences/ increased participation		WWI Astley Guildhall		2019	
To contribute to town centre regeneration	A more vibrant town centre which attracts visitors				
To investigate new venues/spaces for the arts		Shops for art Shop front exhibitions Creative industries			
To create a vibrant, cohesive arts community	Greater cooperation between partners including joint funding bids/marketing/planning				
