

# A Strategy for Culture Cumbria

## 1. Introduction

Recent discussions with Cumbria Vision, CSP (Cumbria Strategic Partnership) and other partner organisations have brought into focus the need to develop a Strategy for Culture Cumbria which could be used as the basis for seeking acceptance of a common vision amongst all partners. Substantial work has been done on this in the last 12-18 months including Desire Lines, the refreshed Cultural Strategy for the County Council, and the Creative Cumbria research on the creative industries. The CSP is also developing a separate strategic statement which is currently subject to consultation. This detailed mapping and auditing means that we know where we are.

What is now needed is to bring these strands together into a single, shared vision, with agreed aims and objectives. We need a clear and ambitious view of where we want culture to be in Cumbria by 2020 and a clear, achievable plan for getting there rooted in the detailed work already completed. There is a need to focus on what will produce step changes in the performance and perception of the sector, what is achievable, and what will produce a multiplier effect in terms of drawing in resources. At the same time the strength provided by the natural diversity of the sector must not be lost.

The vision must recognise the social and environmental importance of culture and will include work with Cumbria Strategic Partnership, Cumbria County Council and other bodies to empower communities and improve quality of life.

The Vision for Culture in Cumbria outlined below is ambitious and demanding, but resources are limited. They need to be carefully focused to achieve maximum, lasting impact. The Strategy provides a mechanism and criteria for assessing and recommending resources to be focused on a few projects with the capacity and potential to change the reality and the perception of the cultural life of Cumbria.

## 2. Process

The document being presented today is an initial drawing together of the conclusions from Desire Lines, the County Cultural Strategy and the Creative Industries study. It is intended to stimulate general discussion of the principles involved and to establish a brief and a timetable for development and consultation. It is suggested that the process should be:

<b>26<sup>th</sup> Sept 2007</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion of the principles and processes involved</li><li>• Establish a task group to undertake development and consultation</li></ul>
<b>October – December 2007</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Task group to revise the document and to consult with stakeholders and partners</li><li>• Presentation of work in progress at AGM (28<sup>th</sup> November)</li><li>• Work with CSP to seek congruence with their statement on Culture</li></ul>
<b>January 2007</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Produce Beta version of Strategy for approval by Board of Culture Cumbria</li></ul>
<b>Easter 2008</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Target date for approval by Cumbria Vision, CSP, County Council, Culture Northwest etc</li></ul>

### 3. Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- Approve the principle of seeking to develop a unified view for the development of Culture in Cumbria including County Council, CSP, Cumbria Vision, West Lakes Renaissance and other partners.
- Approve the view that sufficient research and consultancy has already been carried out in the area and that what is now needed is a clear and ambitious view of where we want culture to be in Cumbria by 2020 and a clear, achievable plan for getting there
- Approve, in principle, the Vision for Culture in Cumbria, the Strategic Aims and Objectives subject to further consideration in the light of consultations
- Establish a small task group whose brief will be:
  1. To revise the initial draft in the light of comments received from the Board
  2. To consult with key partners on the revised draft
  3. To present an interim report to the AGM
  4. To consult with Stakeholders of Culture Cumbria
  5. To liase with the CSP on their emerging strategy
  6. Develop and simple deliverable action plan for Culture Cumbria including monitoring and evaluation mechanisms
  7. Produce a Beta version<sup>1</sup> of the strategy by the end of January 2008

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<sup>1</sup>**Beta version** is a description borrowed from the software world. It is the first version released outside the organization or community that develops the software, for the purpose of evaluation or real-world testing. Beta level software generally includes all features, but may also include known issues and bugs of a less serious variety.

## A Vision for Culture in Cumbria in 2020

By 2020 we want Cumbria to be:

- A landmark global cultural destination celebrating its identity, creativity, people and landscape
- A diverse, contemporary, catalyst for culture and creativity
- A vibrant, dynamic, magnet for young people and for creative businesses, enabling them to thrive and contribute to the economic success of the county
- A destination and location of preference for those seeking a high quality of life enriched by excellent cultural assets and opportunities

### Strategic Aims

To achieve this vision we must:

- Encourage a limited number of major **transformational projects** which will enable Cumbria to showcase its unique strengths and differences differentiating it from other cultural destinations/locations.
- Develop the **image and marketing** of Cumbria as a destination and location which exploits the our cultural wealth and opportunity
- Improve opportunities for **training and professional development** in the initiation, management and operation of cultural and creative industries and attractions
- Place economic and environmental **sustainability** at the heart of a transformed future for culture
- Ensure that **access and participation** in the cultural wealth of the sub region is available to all, particularly young people and students

## • **Strategic Objectives**

### • **Transformational Projects**

Culture Cumbria needs urgently to work with partners around the County to identify and then to prioritise a small number (3 or 4?) of major projects which provide the opportunity for transformational change to the opportunities and image of cultural activity in the County. The transformational potential of projects will be assessed against a set of criteria:

**Quality** – Will the ambitions and quality of the project provide national, regional or local significance?

**Distinctiveness** – Does the project compete directly with and stand out from other local, regional or national activities?

**Sustainability** – Does the project demonstrate the ability to thrive economically? Does it plan adequately for the impact of environmental pressures?

**Geography** – Is the project well located to provide opportunities for cluster development and distribution around the county ?

**Potential** – Is the project one that could excite, inspire and attract future generations ?

It is suggested that potential transformational projects be invited to submit proposals demonstrating how they would meet these criteria, for assessment and selection by their peers as represented by the Culture Cumbria Board. The views of the Board would then be available to potential funding bodies.

### • **Marketing**

The present proposals for the development of the marketing of cultural tourism is crucial but in addition we need

- to work with partners to influence how the image of Cumbria is conveyed through all promotional materials - seeking to move away from an image based solely on landscape and heritage to one which reflects the reality of contemporary cultural activity in the county
- improve access to the market provided by visitors for artists and craft people based in Cumbria
- develop mechanisms for linking artists and craftspeople to the visitor market

### • **Training and professional development**

We will work with the University of Cumbria and others to develop programmes for:

- Supported workshops
- Graduate retention
- Professional development
- Creative Industry management

### • **Sustainability**

A vision for 2020 must take into account the role of culture in addressing and planning for the impact of and opportunities provided by climate change, peak oil etc. This is a cross cutting aim and will be integrated into the assessment and development of transformational projects, image and marketing and training and professional development.

### • **Access and Participation**

We will work with partners such as the local authorities and voluntary sector to help them to deliver improved access to and participation in a wide range of cultural opportunities to enhance the quality of life for individuals and communities.