

→ “Achieving a step change in the growth, impact and sustainability of our creative economy, to promote excellence and accessibility in our arts, culture and heritage offer.”

# A strategic framework for culture in Carlisle.





**2020's Covid-19 Crisis has simultaneously reinforced people's passion for arts and culture and devastated arts and cultural livelihoods because of lockdown's enforced closures and cancellations.**

**Both effects serve to emphasise a vital role for this cultural strategy and the urgency of supporting Carlisle's arts and cultural sector as a key contribution to our recovery from the crisis.**

**Darren Crossley,**  
Deputy Chief Executive,  
Carlisle City Council.

# Intro

## **Covid-19 and Carlisle Culture**

The consultation process that resulted in the production of this document concluded prior to the 2020 pandemic.

This is presented at a snapshot in time with the resultant outcomes and future developments needing to reflect the changes to the cultural and economic landscape in a post-Covid-19 environment.

**The development of the Strategic Framework for Culture in Carlisle was initiated in 2019 by a small steering group of Carlisle City Council, Prism Arts, Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery Trust and the University of Cumbria.**

Supported with funding from the Arts Council England, a series of themed consultation events took place with a wide range of stakeholders to identify how, through culture we could combine collectively to help drive and sustain the future growth of the city region.

This was followed up by a focussed 'play-back' event to disseminate initial thoughts and areas of priority and made a significant contribution to the document. The consultation was designed to not only engage existing cultural specialists, but to encourage a diverse range of voices representing diversity, business, education, health, individual and freelance artists and creative practitioners to contribute to shaping the future arts and cultural agenda.

Carlisle, like all other places across the UK, is operating within a competitive market, attempting to ensure ongoing economic prosperity alongside better outcomes for its residents. Culture reflects history, local life, creativity, economic vitality and ambitions for the future. Vibrant, layered and inclusive cultural opportunities connect people and places and create a unique distinctiveness that attracts people and stimulates happy and healthy communities.

The emergent Strategic Framework aims to give new life and vision to the city's rich culture and heritage and to determine how culture can play a leading role in the future growth of the city region. Partnership working will be fundamental to ensure that the offer continually evolves and grows to ensure the city remains an attractive place to live, study, work, invest and stay.



The Framework focuses on establishing Carlisle as a central hub for culture within the wider region, delivering cultural and creative opportunities for people living and working in and around the city whilst making the area a destination of choice for visitors by delivering on 4 areas of strategic focus.



## Area 1. Cultural leadership and enterprise.

# 1

Placing culture at the heart of Carlisle's ambitions for environmental sustainability, inclusive prosperity and good health for all, through:

- Renewed leadership promoting and securing investment in Carlisle's culture and creative sectors;
- Partnerships promoting the importance of creativity across Carlisle's economy, fostering greater appreciation of creative action and focusing on a higher value enterprise culture;
- Developing resilience and entrepreneurship skills.



## Area 3. Community wellbeing.

# 3

Embedding culture across health and wellbeing partnerships, bringing together sector specialists, communities, cultural and creative practitioners to drive change through empowerment and education. Developing a healthy city model that is meaningful and attractive to residents and visitors alike, through:

- Playing a full and active role in Carlisle's ongoing commitment as a World Health Organisation, Healthy City, using culture to improve the wider determinants of health, wellbeing and community cohesion;
- Developing Carlisle's capability to supporting individuals in taking greater control of their own health needs through adopting a holistic and inclusive approach to social prescribing;
- Raising awareness and celebrating the intrinsic and community value of cultural engagement and participation.



## Area 2. Cultural destination and place-making.

# 2

Attracting people to the city by celebrating and developing Carlisle's culture, communities, diversity and heritage, its treasures and assets, through:

- Embedding culture within regeneration and local planning to attract investment for city centre transformation and infrastructure development;
- Celebrating, protecting and enhancing the distinct characteristics and assets of our city, including local neighbourhoods, community heritage, and the city's unique position within the World Heritage Site of Hadrian's Wall;
- Enabling culture and heritage to be part of everybody's everyday experience and appreciation of Carlisle.



## Area 4. Children, young people and lifelong learning.

# 4

Creating a cultural ecosystem of learning and enterprise, where creativity helps the city, its residents and students to learn and prosper, through:

- Supporting culture, heritage and creative education through partnership working to provide opportunities for participation and engagement in culture for everyone, regardless of age or background;
- Enabling access to a wide range of creative and cultural training opportunities, from early-career skills development to apprenticeships and degrees that support leadership, cultural entrepreneurship and the creative economy.



The Strategic Framework needs to serve many different groups and stakeholders, including local communities, visitors, artists, cultural producers and programmers, and entrepreneurs and investors.

The six month consultation process found widespread enthusiasm for partnership working.

The Strategic Framework has been developed to function alongside other plans and strategies, locally, regionally and nationally to maximise effectiveness. Including the Cumbria LEP Creative and Cultural Strategy and the ACE 10 Year Strategy 'Let's Create'.

As a result of the consultation and additional feedback the Steering Group have identified **10 priority areas** to kick-start delivery between 2020 and 2023 and beyond.

# Priorities

## Priorities 1-4. Making it happen:

# 1-4

### → Priority 1. Leadership.

To recruit members of a new Carlisle Culture Executive to lead implementation of the Strategic Framework, including setting up a cross-sector Cultural Forum for cultural leadership in Carlisle.

### → Priority 3. Investment.

To bring local and regional funders together to generate investment in order to deliver the cultural vision for the city. To create opportunities for young creatives to access investment and resources thereby retaining skills and talent.

### → Priority 2. Citywide Alignment.

To liaise with Carlisle City Council, businesses, health, transport and education providers to embed culture and creative place-making to inform strategic planning, economic and infrastructure development, heritage management, community cohesion, environmental sustainability, education and tourism development.

### → Priority 4. Engaging existing networks and cultural assets.

To work with local networks and cultural organisations, for example, the Cumbria Arts & Culture Network to map existing creative assets and resources to produce a local network of artists, creatives, cultural and heritage organisations who can work with teachers and learners in developing a creative place-based curriculum unique to the City region. Engage with the Cumbria LEP Creative and Cultural Sector Panel.



## Priorities 5–6. Cultural Destination and Place-making.



### → Priority 5.

To embrace Carlisle’s distinctiveness by creating a new cultural festival and events programme that puts Carlisle on the map as a destination of choice for residents and visitors.

### → Priority 6.

To align and develop our relationship with other sectors, such as tourism and the night-time economy, to ensure a well-informed collective approach to marketing Carlisle using digital connectivity across venues, organisations, voluntary and community networks and services.



## Priority 7–8. Community wellbeing.

### → Priority 7.

To invest in specific areas of need by forming new, task-focused Culture Partnership Panels (CPPs), where possible using existing networks such as community centres to collaborate across the district and to ensure that local cultural opportunities are diverse, reflective of and inclusive of people’s needs, and successfully connects large-scale events with ongoing local community activity, keeping culture current and dynamic. World Healthy City underpins these activities.

### → Priority 8.

To work with the NHS and other healthcare providers to strengthen and broaden the range of cultural opportunities available through social prescribing.

# 5-8

# Priority 9–10. Children, Young People and Life-long Learning.

# 9–10

## → Priority 9.

To work to establish a Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) as the incubator to grow the capacity for creativity in Carlisle with a pilot programme of activity that delivers a universal, inclusive approach to creative education.

## → Priority 10.

To work with Further and Higher Education institutions and networks, for example, Carlisle Young Ambassadors, to match cultural organisations with creative industry enterprises to prepare young people better for the changing world of work with opportunities for pursuing creative careers.





**The Carlisle Culture Steering Group embarked on developing this Framework as a collaborative and co-creative process that would start to coalesce city-wide cultural partnerships with a vested interest in the growth and prosperity of the Carlisle district.**

The completion of this Framework document, with endorsement from its stakeholders, concludes the development journey of the Carlisle Culture Steering Group.

Success will be measured through collaboration and commitment of the Carlisle community and realistic outputs within an agreed timescale and delivery plan.

Through the inclusive consultation process the project has achieved considerable interest and support towards the initial ambition:

‘to achieve a step change in the growth, impact and sustainability of our creative economy, to promote excellence and accessibility in our arts, culture and heritage offer’

Partnership working and communicating a collective ambition will actively promote the culture and creativity of Carlisle, and what it offers for all communities.

A strong cultural forum, that is inclusive, representative and achievement focussed will drive the framework through the next 3 years of development and beyond.



# Next steps



# Carlisle Culture.

A consortium working to harness the rich arts, heritage and culture of the city of Carlisle for our future sustainability and growth.

[carlisleculture.org.uk](http://carlisleculture.org.uk)

# Carlisle Culture.

Carlisle Culture Consortium members.



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