

# A CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR WEST CUMBRIA 2022-27

September 2022

**ctconsults.**

**The Intelligence Agency**

# Contents

FOREWORD	04
A. CONTEXT	08
B. INSIGHTS	12
C. A NEW MODEL FOR WEST CUMBRIA	20
D. INTERVENTIONS – STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	27
E. INTERVENTIONS – TOWARDS ACTION PLANNING	35

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"West Cumbria...  
is a strange place -  
a place that does not  
reveal itself so easily."

West Cumbria - On The Edge, John Scanlan  
(Research Fellow in Place Development & Promotion,  
University of Central Lancashire)

# FOREWORD

This is a strategy designed to fit West Cumbria.

A once powerful Celtic Kingdom and culturally and politically autonomous region, West Cumbria's relative remoteness has, despite invasion and migration, helped preserve a strong cultural identity – an ancient language still reflected in dialect and place names. Stretching in places into the Lake District National Park – the highest mountain, the deepest lake, it's best-known son's birthplace – its 'beyond the mountains' coastal aspect makes it distant and distinctive in equal measure, West Cumbria's natural assets have made it at least as industrial as it is rural – stone and minerals for quarrying; iron ore and coal fields for mining; water for cotton and paper mills; river estuaries to create maritime ports. This rich industrial heritage still resonates in its urban and industrial centres; ports with stunning Georgian town plans; tight-knit, physical working mining communities; engineering industries – places which are as bound together as they are resistant.

**“West Cumbria's natural assets have made it at least as industrial as it is rural...”**

Bar a few exceptions however, the old industries and employers have gone. Whilst the shift to nuclear and green tech is dynamically ongoing and future facing, the area faces economic decline and related social challenges. Young people are especially affected, storing up a demographic timebomb which everyone recognises and is concerned about.

Nor is tourism a major industry yet. Beyond key pockets and hotspots, West Cumbria's tourism is currently more on the outer edge, harder to reach. What exists is loaded with potential and a genuine wilder, grittier counterpoint to the over-crowded honeypot parts of the Lake District – but requires greater effort to reach, is currently spread too thinly to generate any critical mass, and remains too under-developed in terms of the wider offer and infrastructure at present to create mainstream visitor appeal.

**“Cumbria is 48% of the landmass of the North West, but only 7% of the population – is just one indicator of how difficult it is to sustain a typical cultural investment model...”**

And for cultural organisations, West Cumbria presents specific challenges. National cultural funding models and formulae, segmentation tools and KPIs disadvantage this region's cultural organisations from the off. Cumbria is 48% of the landmass of the North West, but only 7% of the population – is a vital indicator of how difficult it is to sustain a typical cultural investment model, and a scenario which isn't going to change until West Cumbria changes and becomes more populous, productive and prosperous.



**MUSIC - FROM COMMUNITIES TO FESTIVALS**

Music festivals – which are now often much more than music – are a staple of the cultural calendar in West Cumbria and have been so for many years. Newer events, such as Krankenhaus at Muncaster Castle (above) and EskFest add to the richness of the offer, and can connect in exciting ways into community and youth development services.

<https://www.krankenhausfestival.com>  
<https://www.eskfest.com>



The depth and breadth of these needs and opportunities means that any adequate cultural strategy response cannot adopt a short-term horizon; or be too narrowly focused on how to improve the cultural offer in the area, as important as those efforts remain.

Rather this Strategy is built on a powerful shared ambition for long-term generational change, and the central role that culture must play in the future success of West Cumbria. The Strategy recognises the value of investing in culture as a vital element of producing systemic transformation in key outcomes areas – such as mental health wellbeing and skills.

Put simply, this must be a ‘**socially engaged cultural strategy**’. This means not only a commitment to respond to the needs and aspirations of local communities, seeking at all times to enrich the opportunities available to them. But also, the imperative to focus directly on how to build and strengthen those communities and their sense of agency.

It will only be through new ways of funding, producing and valuing culture that culture in West Cumbria will level up. And this is where this strategy steps in and steps up - the time is right for a new model aimed at bringing community and culture closer together, where greater exposure to culture and creative thinking and practice will open up new ‘possibilities’, help tackle the impacts of social inequality and dial up confidence in West Cumbria.

A socially engaged strategy is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition, for future success. It must be combined with partnerships and collective leadership that works to ensure this cultural strategy becomes an embedded part of a long-term strategy for generational change in West Cumbria.

To those ends, this Cultural Strategy acts as a manifesto for partnership working which will together to deliver its **core ambitions**:

1. Support the growth of the cultural sector, market, infrastructure and talent base, with a long-term focus on delivering transformative change and impact.
2. Place culture at the core of social, education, health, environmental and economic goals in West Cumbria.
3. Ensure that the cultural needs of existing and new communities are met.
4. Ensure that building more resilient communities and a more resilient cultural sector become powerful mutually reinforcing goals.
5. Work with our cultural partners to ensure everybody in West Cumbria can actively develop and express their creativity.
6. Surface, support and strengthen the greatest possible diversity of voices.

Partnership working can and will extend beyond West Cumbria, and strategic alignment is a critical part of this.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ALIGNMENT

Cross-referencing the West Cumbria, Carlisle and County plans.

The Strategy also seeks to strategically connect not only with its Cumberland partners, but through the cultural strategic thinking expressed in Cumbria LEP's Creative and Cultural Strategy.

WEST CUMBRIA	CARLISLE ALIGNMENT	CUMBRIA ALIGNMENT
LGR TRANSITION - Strategy as a device for cross-departmental planning; establish a clear approval pathway into the new authority for strategy and investment decisions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leadership - recruit Executive body to drive implementation.</li> <li>2. Citywide alignment - liaison with, align with, inform city strategic planning.</li> <li>3. Engaging existing networks and cultural assets - map cultural sector.</li> <li>4. Engaging existing networks and cultural assets - engage with networks, e.g. CACN, Cumbria LEP Creative and Cultural Sector Panel.</li> <li>5. Cultural destination and place-making - embrace distinctiveness, as a destination for residents and visitors.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Integrate creativity &amp; culture into place-making / place-shaping agenda in towns &amp; villages.</li> <li>2. Ensure that there are sufficient locations for the sector to operate from and to deliver in.</li> <li>3. Promote Cumbria as a great place to start and grow creative industries.</li> </ol>
BUILD THE WEST CUMBRIA CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP - A devolved strategy with an extended partnership of stakeholders, organisations, agencies, programmes - from investment and funding partners through to active delivery.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engaging existing networks and cultural assets - engage with networks, e.g. CACN, Cumbria LEP Creative and Cultural Sector Panel.</li> <li>2. Community wellbeing - Cultural Partnership Panels - linking to major programming / events.</li> <li>3. Cultural destination and place-making - develop relationships with other sectors, e.g. visitor economy, night-time economy, community.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adopt CLEP definitions of 'Culture' and 'Creative Economy', national and pan-regional context, e.g. NP11, #66 Manifesto.</li> <li>2. Increase access to creative and cultural learning for all Cumbrians in all locations.</li> <li>3. Integrate creativity &amp; culture into place-making / place-shaping agenda in towns &amp; villages.</li> <li>4. Ensure that there are sufficient locations for the sector to operate from and to deliver in.</li> <li>5. Develop a specific support offer for the creative industries.</li> <li>6. Create effective networks to share best practice &amp; experience.</li> <li>7. Promote careers in the creative and cultural sector as part of the Our Future and Your Future campaigns.</li> </ol>

WEST CUMBRIA	CARLISLE ALIGNMENT	CUMBRIA ALIGNMENT
<p><b>SOCIAL IMPACT FUNDING &amp; CONTRACTING</b> - Strategy as opportunity to rethink organisational / project approach to funding for a more ambitious, place-based combined approach - increasing resources for cultural activity, but also increase local control into how funds are invested against agreed local plans.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investment - bring local and regional funders together to generate investment to deliver cultural vision.</li> <li>2. Investment - create opportunities for young people to attract support.</li> <li>3. Community wellbeing - work with NHS / healthcare, including developing social prescribing programmes.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that there are sufficient locations for the sector to operate from and to deliver in.</li> <li>2. Make effective use of Cumbria's exceptional landscape and environments in creative &amp; cultural life.</li> <li>3. Identify sources of finance to deliver the sector's ambitions.</li> </ol>
<p><b>DELIVERY RESOURCE</b> - Define and resource a delivery vehicle for the strategy which will activate the strategic vision on the ground across West Cumbria. To emphasise its role and purpose we are using a working title of the Cultural Catalyst Unit.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leadership - recruit Executive body to drive implementation.</li> <li>2. Citywide alignment - liaison with, align with, inform city strategic planning.</li> <li>3. Community wellbeing - Cultural Partnership Panels - linking to major programming / events.</li> <li>4. Cultural destination and place-making - develop digital connectivity (venues, organisations, networks and services).</li> <li>5. Children, Young People and Life-long Learning - establish LCEP to grow creative capacity.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the development of a STEAM curriculum.</li> <li>2. Increase access to creative and cultural learning for all Cumbrians in all locations.</li> <li>3. Enhance Cumbria's digital connectivity for effective Creative Industries.</li> <li>4. Develop a specific support offer for the creative industries.</li> <li>5. Create effective networks to share best practice and experience.</li> <li>6. Develop a Cumbria-wide annual calendar of events which promotes Cumbria's natural capital credentials.</li> </ol>
<p><b>MEASURING IMPACTS &amp; APPLIED LEARNING</b> - A shared impacts-based framework will deliver shared structure and coherence to ensure the longitudinal measurement of social impact and ROI, and supply iterative evaluation and learning.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community wellbeing - work with NHS / healthcare, notably social prescribing.</li> <li>2. Children, Young People and Life-long Learning - pilot programmes of activity.</li> <li>3. Cultural destination and place-making - develop digital connectivity (venues, organisations, networks and services).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enhance Cumbria's digital connectivity for effective Creative Industries.</li> <li>2. Identify sources of finance to deliver the sector's ambitions.</li> <li>3. Create effective networks to share best practice and experience.</li> </ol>



## A. CONTEXT





## A1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF

This is a time of great challenge and opportunity for the cultural sector – net diminishing core funding and the pandemic inhibiting workforce, programming and investment in particular. The cultural sector must collectively build its resilience to these pressures – early signs are that West Cumbria is ready to rise to the challenge.

All of West Cumbria's cultural partners recognise that culture is already a key driver in terms of the economy and place-shaping: improving health and wellbeing; skills development; community resilience; and shaping shared collective experience. Even before the planned Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the active synergies across the area were clear: geography, communities, heritage and ambitious strategic plans. LGR accelerates these collaborative conversations and brings with it the benefits of becoming Cumberland.

In response, the Strategy seeks to give voice to the aspirations and ambitions of West Cumbria's cultural diversity. The commissioning Councils have been very clear on the imperative to seize this window of opportunity, and to underline the importance placed on culture as part of the region's creative and social health and wellbeing.

## A1.2 WHY WE NEED A CULTURAL STRATEGY NOW

The Strategy's key commissioning goals are to protect and enhance access to and investment in cultural activity in order to:

- Improve the health and wellbeing of all communities in by promoting engagement in, attendance at and access to arts, culture and heritage activity.
- Support communities to rebuild and reshape from the impact of Covid through investment in the arts.
- Support the growth of the tourist, experience, creative and cultural economy.
- Enhance the appeal and reputation of West Cumbria great places to live, work, visit and create.

The Cultural Strategy is required to not only identify and showcase the positive impacts of arts, culture and heritage, but to support its growth and impacts across other existing Council strategies and programmes.

## A1.3 SCOPE

This Strategy seeks to develop an appropriate, sustainable approach to cultural provision over the next five years, that can maximise the benefit of cultural activity and investment for everyone in the region. So, it's not a narrow strategy for the development of cultural assets, but a broad-based strategy for individual and community benefit, setting a foundation for sustainable growth in the local economy in the context of tourism



### CRITICAL MASS: COASTAL HUBS

The principal towns offer the potential to work as cultural 'hubs'.

Each has a venue which can take the lead in building critical mass locally – but also to join the dots to share skills, connect programmes, bridge gaps and create cultural pathways across West Cumbria.

More joined up working will help avoid duplication and 'mirroring' – and inform the location of new infrastructure, initiatives and interventions.

and the cultural and creative industries. The lifespan of the strategy extends beyond progression through LGR transition and the establishment of the new authority.

Culture is a route to creativity – in education, partnership,

innovation, product and service development, entrepreneurship and investment. This strategy will set out how arts and culture, heritage and creativity will exert positive impacts across the key regenerative drivers and priorities of West Cumbria, as defined in the area's and region's major strategies and plans.

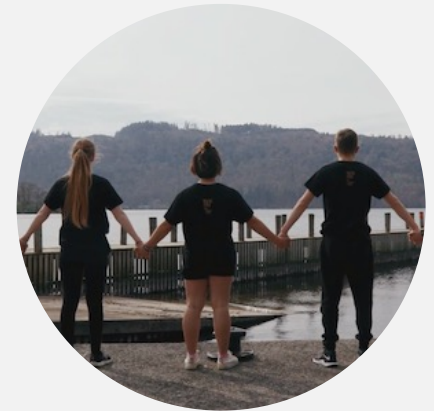
#### FORGE FESTIVAL BY THE KNOTTED PROJECT

The Forge Festival demonstrates strong practice with young Cumbrians, fusing mental health, co-creation, and with a focus on place and culture in particular. Forge Festival is The Knotted Project's first arts festival, created with and for young people across Cumbria, culminating in two young person-led arts festivals at Windermere Jetty Museum in May 2022 and 2023.

This two-year project is focuses on wellbeing and talent development, helping young people to 'emerge from the pandemic feeling creative, inspired and capable of shaping their futures'. The aim across the two-year project is to nurture and establish a strong cultural network of young creatives across Cumbria, preparing young people for future creative careers.

Year Two of the project commences in September 2022, introducing a 'ladder' system which enables young people to imagine their next steps, from schools, to Performance Companies, to Early Career Artists, to experienced Professionals.

*"We want young creatives to feel that this is a place they can stay, to be creative and build a successful future of their own. The festival events aim to raise the volume on young voices in our community provide a platform for them to engage with their community."*



#### FORGE FESTIVAL BY THE KNOTTED PROJECT

Funded by Arts Council England, and supported by Lakeland Arts, Carer Support South Lakes, Wave Forward, Institute for Social Futures, Great Place Lakes & Dales, Theatre by the Lake, The Brewery Arts Centre and Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery Trust.

<https://www.theknottedproject.co.uk/training-learning/forg-festival/>

## WE ARE HERE! CREATIVE PEOPLE & PLACES IN WEST CUMBRIA

Creative People and Places is about community leadership, building relationships and gathering views to be able to develop the right activities in the right place, and this will take place throughout the project, not just in the 1st year, but help to sustain the programme for years to come. The data gathered can be used in the wider cultural sector to develop the creative offer.

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria (ACT) co-led the successful Arts Council England bid alongside partners, securing £830k for delivery over 2022 – 2025. We Are Here! Is about place, it's about people and it's about the stories, from the past to the present and shaping the future. The full programme launched in autumn 2022.

Business plans and artistic engagement plans will be worked up annually based on the action research findings, keeping the project fresh and exciting, offering excellent artistic events and activities to encourage people's creative participation, enjoyment and ambition. The programme includes festivals and events, artist residencies, community led commissions and workshops and allow for development of creative spaces for communities to grow their ideas and enjoy a range of experiences for and with emerging creatives, from dancers, poets and potters to crafters, gamers, sculptors and designers

"This programme is all about participation and developing excellent activities for those who do not currently engage. We will work with arts delivery bodies, community groups, village halls and others to build and sustain creative, fun and inspiring activities that express the qualities of West Cumbria and people's life experiences and aspirations for the future."

Lorraine Smyth, CEO of ACT

We Are Here! has a clear manifesto. It will tackle participation inequalities and enable communities to take responsibility for paving their own creative pathways. The plans and programmes delivered as part of the project will help people realise the opportunities, grow participation and support communities to relish all that the arts offer, sharing homegrown to internationally recognised quality arts experiences, building on current successes and developing new grassroots activities. They will engage, inspire, support and celebrate creativity, enabling people to accomplish and achieve, and ultimately to develop and commission their own community cultural initiatives.



## WE ARE HERE!

We Are Here! is a programme already working on a West Cumbria basis, and as such will be a natural exemplar for the working practice that this Strategy champions:

- Cumberland Council
- Florence Arts Centre
- Prism Arts
- Rosehill Theatre
- Lakes College
- University of Central Lancashire—
- Nuclear Decommissioning Agency

(Sellafield Ltd.)



## B. INSIGHTS

Captain Boomer Collective, Eden Arts, Whitehaven Harbour.  
Image: Tom Kay Photographic





## B1.1 OVERVIEW

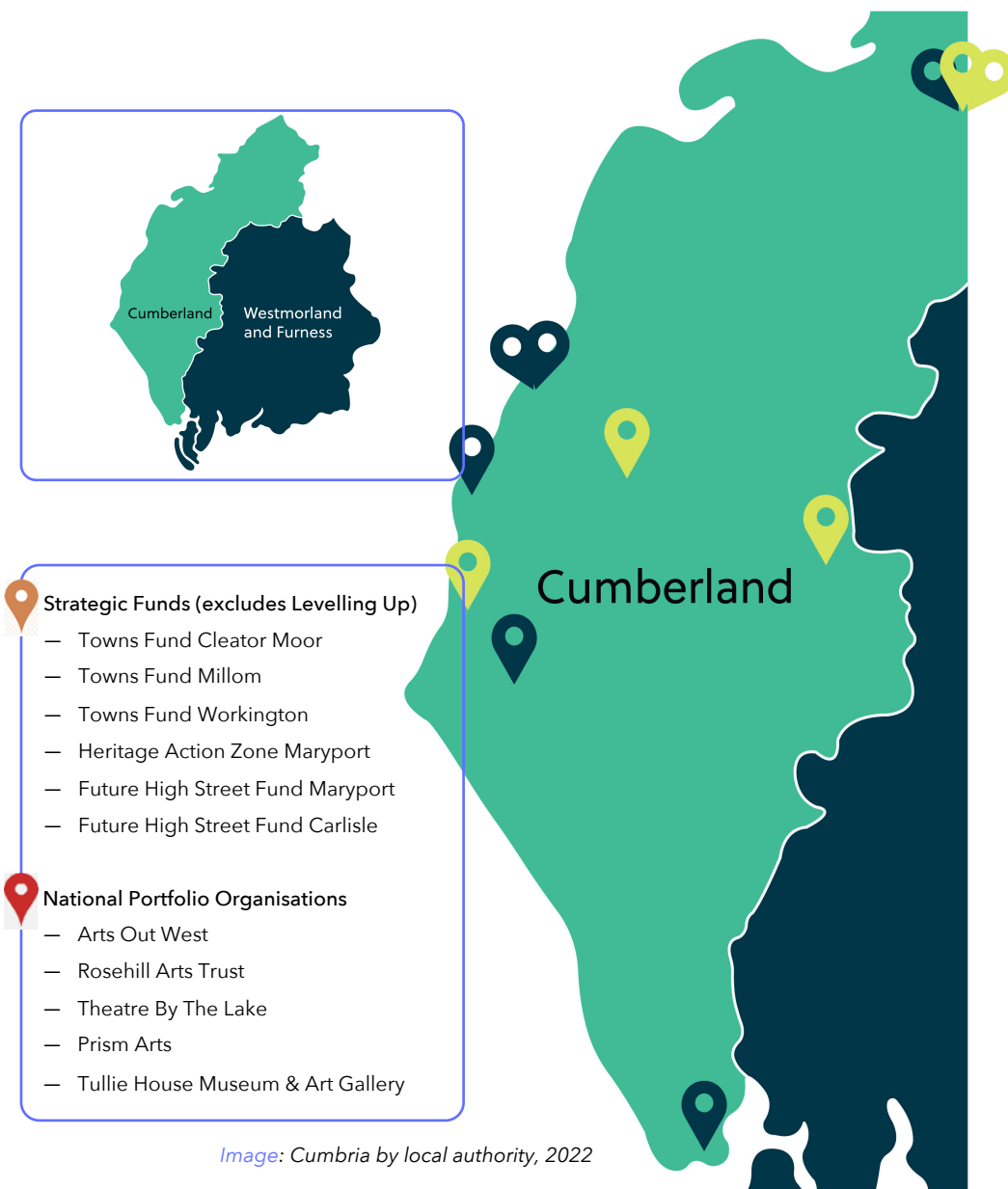
West Cumbria faces significant socio-economic challenges. These are not unique to West Cumbria, but there are ingrained patterns of social, economic and environmental behaviours and attitudes that any place-based strategy will need to respond to. In consultation the combination of these challenges has been described as ‘the perfect storm’.

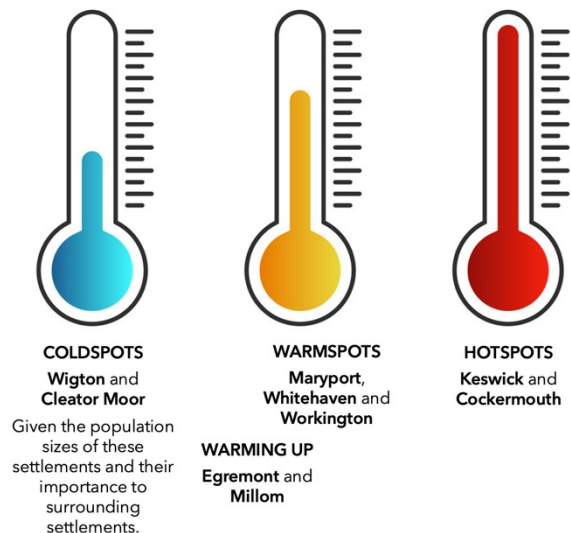
When assessed as a SWOT analysis, it helps to bring out the possibilities of place, culture, and assets in sharper relief. This section acts as a condensed summary of wide-ranging comments captured from cross-sector consultations. Some direct quotes are included. A full, detailed analysis is available as an Addendum.

## B2.1 GEOGRAPHY

There is an opportunity for community arts, co-creation, co-production, rural arts, and programming in unusual spaces. The area is vast and fragmented with the attendant access challenges. Recognition of West Cumbria as a place does not stop residents mainly seeing themselves as from their town (and distinct to their neighbours). Some residents may also feel stronger affinity to places adjacent to West Cumbria (e.g. Millom to Furness / Barrow to Morecambe Bay / Silloth to Carlisle and Solway Estuary).

The dynamic online map produced for this Strategy - that begins to integrate the wider Cumberland local government area - is available to continue to populate at: <https://bit.ly/3OMy3ZA>. This includes over 170 entries including key Strategic Funds, funded cultural organisations (National Portfolio), Theatres & Venues, Museums & Heritage, Festivals & Events, Participatory & Youth Arts, relevant Nature & Outdoor. Attractions, Miscellaneous Attractions & Infrastructure, and Public Art.





*Cultural 'heat mapping', 2022*

## B2.2 EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

Those who move back to the area for work often have higher priority motivations to return than career advancement – seeking a semi-retirement and/or better quality of life, wellbeing, with access to some truly great outdoors. Many of the strongest champions of culture in West Cumbria are not from West Cumbria, having relocated – it's a place that quickly inspires passion.

Schools are in competition with each other for the 'best' students. The east of West Cumbria attracts pupils away from the coast. Secondary & FE offers are focused on getting young people into

manual, engineering and manufacturing jobs, with creative courses in relative retreat. Anyone who wants to pursue other opportunities will leave. Whilst engineering is the focus, employers say they need and desire creativity in their workforce to stay at the leading edge, and the new Cumbria Arts Award, created by a local headteacher is a welcome extra-curricular addition.

In employment terms, Sellafield is very stabilising, but not always in a good way. High wages mask poverty in other areas, resulting in averaged-out ratings for strategic investment, and artificially inflates wages which other business cannot compete with. It creates a paternalism which reinforces expectations that things will be done for residents. Overall, there is a real issue with quality recruitment in all sectors – including for health, social care and teaching jobs.

Skills agencies work to build formal links between education and industry. New community developments such as the Bus Station and Whittles by default include for digital training and gaming facilities to encourage creative entrepreneurship. Community halls host 'clubs' such as film / photography. All can signpost the pathways for progression into the arts if they know them.

'Insular, isolated, territorial, parochial' – people can even see the next town as outsiders or 'economic migrants'. Young people who can leave, do leave the area and there are depopulation issues. There is an underdog mentality and sense of (post-industrial) trauma. Below average health and life expectancy shows big disparities between coastal communities and the LDNP.



### COMMUNITY CULTURE - THE SETTLEMENT AND THE GATHER

The existing and established network of 'cultural purpose' venues is being enhanced by new mixed-use facilities and community-led spaces. These are creating opportunities for more grassroots-up creativity – and new points of exchange with culturally motivated visitors (such as at The Gather with its positioning on the Coast-to-Coast route).

Newer projects such as Florence Mine are instinctively acting as both a community resource and also 'sector' support / development for West Cumbria.

*Consultations from across sectors and communities yielded informed and passionate viewpoints. Some made their points very strongly, but the sentiment behind them illustrate the themes that have emerged and informed the strategy.*



*Sample quotes from consultees  
(more detailed engagement is set up in supporting documents)*

## B2.3 ON WEST CUMBRIAN CULTURE & HERITAGE

There is a widespread recognition of the value of the cultural sector and an understanding of its importance, e.g. that a focus on culture also improves the visitor economy, health and wellbeing outcomes, or talent attraction – but much work to do in terms of building a sharper understanding of how to integrate and embed it across strategic place agendas.

Encouragingly, there is a strong desire to build momentum and capitalise on this moment and work to lever support and resources beyond the obvious sources. There is already artistic practice, dialogue and academic partnership around concepts of ‘place’ and culture. Many cultural professionals work across sectors (including nuclear) in West Cumbria and identified exciting opportunities for interdisciplinary approaches to project and programme development.

There are more new faces, connections, roles and resources in cultural venues, as well as ACE Priority Place status and Creative People and Places (CPP). The Cumbria Arts and Culture Network has, in a relatively short timeframe, brought people and organisations together digitally, and cut through the differences of scale and challenges of distance. Its role as a ‘convenor’ has been recognised by partners like Sellafield who want to work strategically with the sector, and alongside collaborative programmes like CPP.

There is much to build on here, but developing leadership, confidence and visibility takes time, commitment and skill. People and resources are spread thinly and focused locally – it is a big challenge for small organisations to take-on over such a large area. There are still gaps in depth and breadth of skills which joint working can’t always fill. It can be hard to recruit and commission locally – and there are still pockets of resistance to bringing in outsiders.

A lack of collaboration also exacerbates the lack of public visibility and sense of West Cumbria as a cultural place – although this is relatively easy to address through a networked approach to digital channel development and joined-up marketing, for which there is a growing appetite.

At a community level, culture exists outside of the funded sector – at rugby clubs and crab fairs, acclaimed local dance schools, tribute acts and commercial entertainment. All are well supported, and people will travel to these as well as much longer distances to the more ‘valued’ cultural magnets of Newcastle and Manchester.

There is also a strong local scene for contemporary folk music and independent film. So, audiences are there – but arts audiences tend to be small, hyper-local and hyper-engaged – venues are playing to the converted, rather than growing audiences.



### PLACE-BASED PROGRAMMING

The strategy can’t overlook community-led programme such as agricultural shows and hyper-local festivals such as Egremont Crab Fair, or Whitehaven Live. Meeting communities in their own settings counts. Site specific initiatives such as The Whale in Whitehaven deliver accidental but quality interactions with arts and culture for audiences who don’t otherwise formally engage.

*DeepTime* may have ‘cultural tourism’ as its primary focus, but public art is well placed to build pride at a local level, and increase acceptance of cultural value within the community.



West Cumbria may not be a “collection of islands” in practice, but planning where to invest in culture, e.g. a new visual arts space, does present challenges across this unique geography. How can West Cumbria deliver quality cultural provision evenly and without duplication?

The *Iron Line* plan for Millom as well as *DeepTime* – open up the southern cultural tourism gateway to West Cumbria and have transformational potential. But support will be needed to help the local community (including artists) to respond together with appropriate vision to harness it as a driver for growth of the experience economy along the coast. Without support there will be a risk of losing the benefit to outsiders who spot the opportunities first.

This is an example of how West Cumbria’s culture and heritage can be a more powerful driver of tourism visits – including attracting Cumbrians to (re)discover parts of their own county. It will be important to align the cultural and creative economy with the visitor economy as the Cultural Strategy moves from transition to full implementation – informing investment, engagement, product development and marketing for residents and visitors alike. This will ensure that a pan-Cumberland strategy connects with the Cumbria LEP and Cumbria Tourism visions for the region.

### THE EXPANSIVE ROLES OF LOCAL VENUES

The existing local venues have potential to form a connected network, with strong differentiation: Beggars Theatre for example is not only a hub resource for Millom but brings strengths in comedy circuit programming that are hard to match regionally – next stop Edinburgh!

Rosehill Theatre is looking to strengthen its family-focussed programming and The Carnegie’s new business plan identifies music as its core specialism. Each has their own development programmes with young people, who will clearly benefit from a more networked, collective approach with other culturally engaged young West Cumbrians – opening up additional opportunities for enrichment, talent development and wellbeing.

Collaborative networks are needed to build resilience, encourage innovation and drive-up standards, but they need commitment and capacity.

Cumbria Arts & Culture Network has laid impressive foundations for bringing the sector together and building appetite for more exchange and partnership working on the ground.



### THE CRITICAL ROLES OF LOCAL VENUES

*Image: Rosehill Theatre, courtesy Tom Kay Photographic*

## B3.1 SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coast and landscape as well as the Lake District National Park (LDNP).</li> <li>2. Network of distinct towns &amp; villages -appetite for partnership working.</li> <li>3. Network of cultural venues / players in most places.</li> <li>4. Signature programmes. <sup>1</sup></li> <li>5. Strong partner base. <sup>2</sup></li> <li>6. Rich local heritage stories and events. <sup>3</sup></li> <li>7. Next-gen place-based producers. <sup>4</sup></li> <li>8. Depth and breadth of grassroots and community-led cultural activity.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. LDNP is a barrier in both directions.</li> <li>2. Cultural activity and LDNP inaccessible for many locals. <sup>5</sup></li> <li>3. Individual places can be territorial, tribal, parochial.</li> <li>4. Demographics don't support a traditional arts &amp; culture model. <sup>6</sup></li> <li>5. Cultural provision requires above average travel.</li> <li>6. Cultural production requires support from further afield. <sup>7</sup></li> <li>7. Lack of amplification channels / shared voices for culture.</li> <li>8. Lack of confidence in cultural provision. <sup>8</sup></li> </ol>

1. E.g. 'Pull' destination drivers - Deeptime, Iron Line.
2. Not just Sellafield, e.g. BEC - Bus station, Maryport regeneration; UCLan - academic posts, research fellows; Centre for Leadership Performance - young person career pathways.
3. E.g. Crab Fair, Egremont, <https://www.egremontcrabfair.com>
4. E.g. Krankenhaus, EskFest, Solfest.
5. Physical and perceptual / psychological obstacles to engagement. *"It doesn't matter if things are free, if you can't afford to get there."*
6. E.g. explicitly, traditional audience segmentation/evaluation models.
7. E.g. 'pool' of skilled freelancers / technicians; rehearsal spaces; affordable artists' accommodation; associated networks.
8. From audiences, and from cultural sector, which is focussed on survival and therefore risk-averse. This creates lowered expectations for culture.



### B3.1 SWOT ANALYSIS

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Funding alignment. <sup>1</sup></li> <li>2. Coast - beauty, biodiversity.</li> <li>3. Tapping into strong engineering sector.</li> <li>4. A distinct Cumbrian visitor economy offer.</li> <li>5. Digital engagement. <sup>2</sup></li> <li>6. Locations for film, image-making.</li> <li>7. Industrial heritage offer.</li> <li>8. West Cumbrian culture as social prescribing.</li> <li>9. Working with young people to shape cultural opportunities.</li> <li>10. The new Cumberland 'region', new brand.</li> <li>11. Engaging with R66 to inject culture &amp; creative practice into masterplans.</li> <li>12. Culture as a vessel for climate change activity on the Energy Coast.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Potential for resistance to change. <sup>3</sup></li> <li>2. Misinterpretation of nature and scale of shift to social-engaged Strategy.</li> <li>3. Cultural sector failure if no major shift.</li> <li>4. Local resistance to non-local practitioners.</li> <li>5. Lack of creative skills pipeline. <sup>4</sup></li> <li>6. Exodus of young people / talent; a super-ageing population.</li> </ol>

1. Perhaps one that is at least partly realised already, e.g. Town Fund, Heritage Action Zones, Coastal Communities Fund etc.
2. This would require a clear strategy to develop platforms, channels, content and distribution, visibility, shared practice.
3. From a cultural sector who have worked with one regional funding model for a long time.
4. The Education sectors' focus on STEM not STEAM means that creative skills are not developed in the region, so young people are not entering the creative industries (or bringing creative skills into the local STEM industries)

#### SENHOUSE ROMAN MUSEUM

A strong example of embracing a local, regional and national role. They have good national partnerships, offer Arts Award, and have the ambition and room to further develop their offer.





A woman with long, wavy hair transitioning from blue to purple, wearing bright blue-rimmed glasses and a blue and green scale-patterned top, is lying in a metal wheelbarrow. She has her mouth wide open in a shout or scream, with her hands raised behind her head. The wheelbarrow is decorated with green vines and red flowers. A sign with a mermaid logo and the word 'MERMAID' is visible in the wheelbarrow. To the right, a person in a dark jacket and blue shorts is partially visible, holding a yellow container. The scene is set on a paved surface with white and yellow lines.

## C. A NEW MODEL FOR WEST CUMBRIA

Image: The Mermaid, Fairly Famous Family



## C1 AN AMBITION FOR CULTURE

The scale of the challenges facing West Cumbria demands strong collaborative leadership; unified by common ambition; and animated by the need to build strong delivery partnerships capable of bringing sustained change to all of the region's citizens and communities. To those ends, local stakeholders are keen to grow the foundations of success - and are clear that a vital role of the Cultural Strategy is to help provide the opportunity to local cultural and civic leaders to effectively identify and serve the needs of West Cumbrians.

We detected an urgency amongst key stakeholders to explore and precisely define how cultural partners in West Cumbria can continue to respond directly and more effectively to a pressing range of needs and social issues (from mental health issues, economic inequality, to the existential threat of climate change).

The character of those embedded needs means that any adequate cultural strategy response to them cannot adopt a short-term horizon for impact; or be too narrowly focused on how to improve the cultural offer in the area, as important as those efforts remain.

Rather, enhancing the cultural capability and capacity of West Cumbria must be fuelled by placing front and centre the contribution that culture can make to improving the lives of the many West Cumbrian communities.

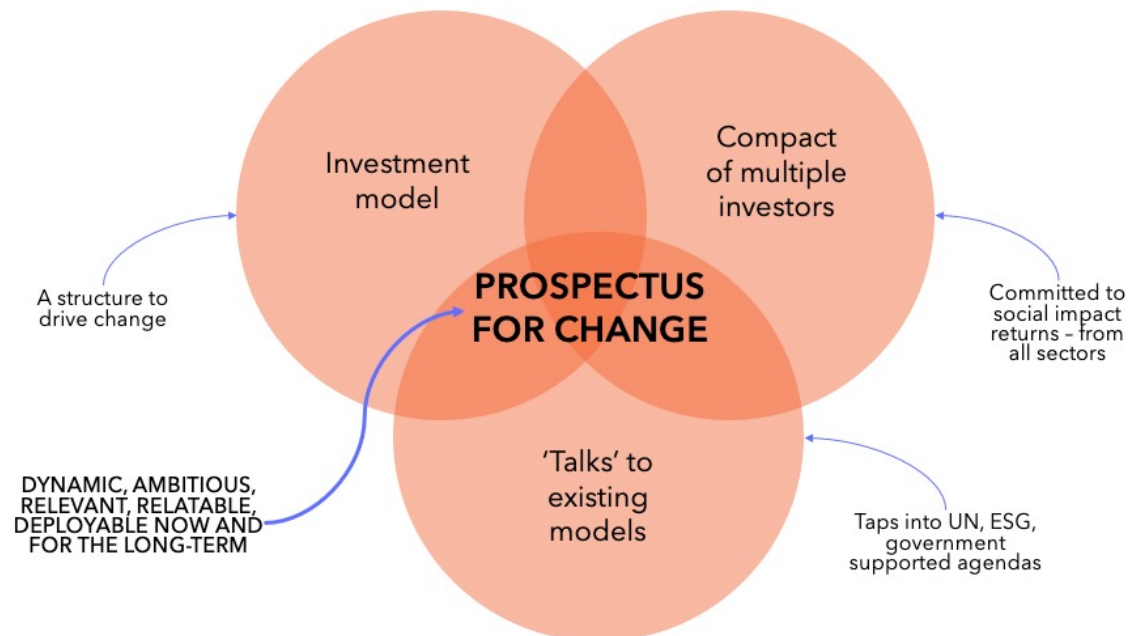
Put simply, this must be a:

**'socially engaged cultural strategy'.**

This means not only a commitment to respond to the needs and aspirations of local communities, seeking at all times to enrich the opportunities available to them. But also the imperative to focus directly on how to build and strengthen those communities and their sense of agency. To those ends the partners working together to deliver this Cultural Strategy support the following values, that will underpin collaborative leadership and delivery across West Cumbria.

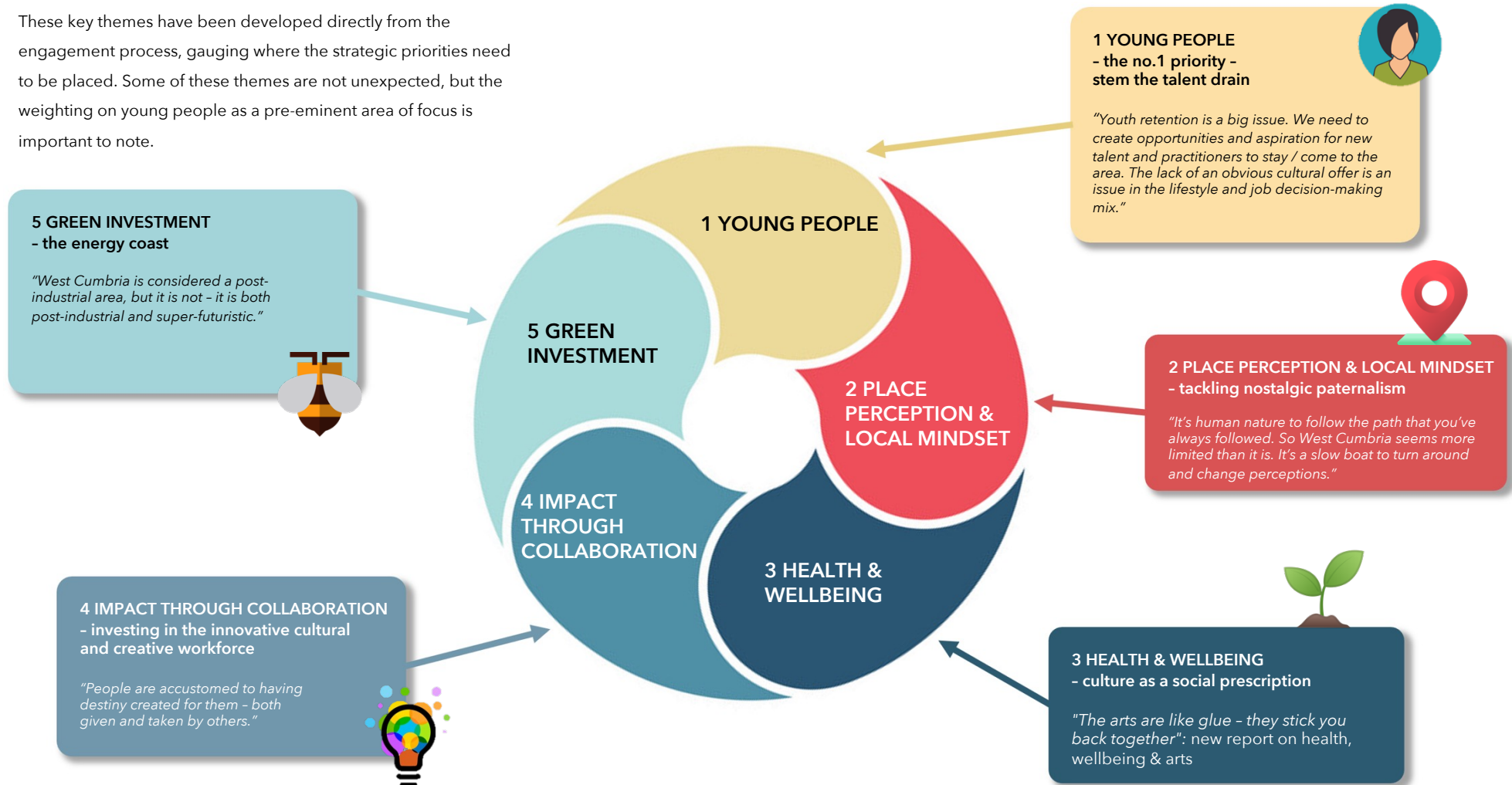
### PROSPECTUS FOR CHANGE

A culturally and socially-driven change model.



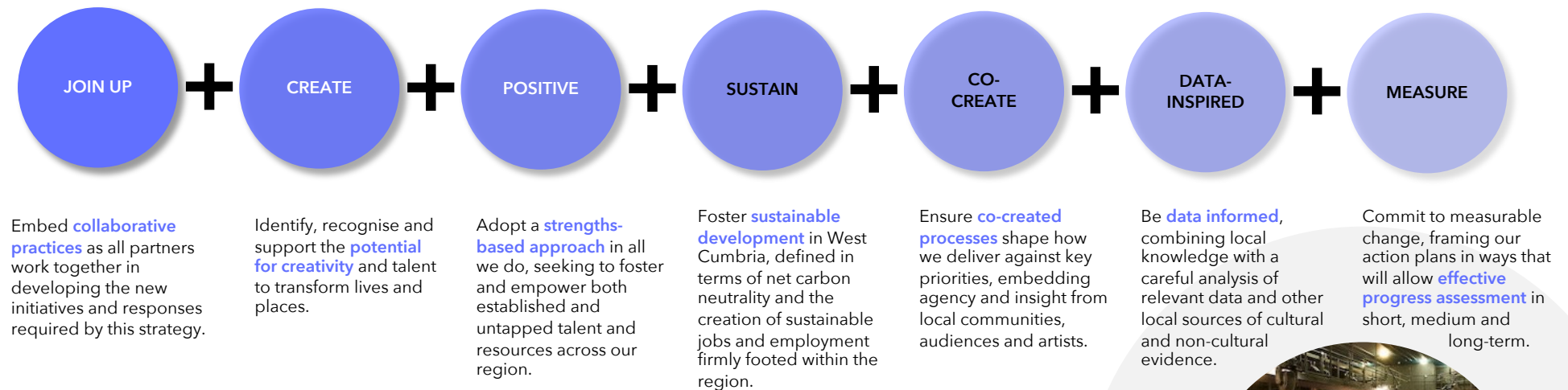
## C2 THEMES

These key themes have been developed directly from the engagement process, gauging where the strategic priorities need to be placed. Some of these themes are not unexpected, but the weighting on young people as a pre-eminent area of focus is important to note.



### C3 OUR SHARED PRINCIPLES

In taking forward the development and delivery of this Cultural Strategy, we commit to work together to:





## C4 OUR SHARED VALUES

We would hope that these values will resonate equally across the new Cumberland area as much as they have shone through in Strategy development in West Cumbria.

### 1. Enrich our communities

Seek to create new skills, experiences, memories, resources, and connections.

### 2. Build enduring relationships

Nurture relationships between cultural partners and local communities.

### 3. Recognise and value local expertise, knowledge, and creativity.

### 4. Amplify local pride

Honouring the knowledge and traditions of the people and places of West Cumbria.

### 5. Listen deeply

As we constantly enquire about what local people want and need, seeking to create an equality of influence and agency across West Cumbria.



*Image: Combined choirs from Cumbria performing St Matthew Passion at St John's Church, Workington*



## C5 AIMS: SHARED AMBITIONS FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL, GENERATIONAL CHANGE

Local stakeholders also emphasised that a socially engaged strategy is a necessary – but not a sufficient – condition for future success.

It must be combined with partnerships and collective leadership that works to ensure this cultural strategy is an embedded part of a long-term strategy for generational change in West Cumbria.

Partners expressed the desire to sign up to a powerful shared ambition for long-term generational change, with partners recognising the value of investing in culture as a vital element of producing systemic transformation in key outcomes areas – such as mental health wellbeing and skills.

*“Digital technology and creative talent have helped us all during the crisis whilst also providing a vision of what a successful and sustainable 21<sup>st</sup> century economy might look like.”*

**Creative Industries Federation ‘Creative Coalition –  
A Plan to Reimagine’ (2020)**



*Image courtesy: Solfest*

To these ends, the partners working together to deliver this

Cultural Strategy support its following **core ambitions**:

1. We will support the growth of the cultural sector, market, infrastructure and talent base, with a long-term focus on delivering transformative change and impact.
2. We will place culture at the core of social, education, health, environmental and economic goals in West Cumbria.
3. We will ensure that the cultural needs of existing and new communities are met.
4. We will ensure that building more resilient communities and a more resilient cultural sector become powerful mutually reinforcing goals.
5. We will work with our cultural partners to ensure everybody in West Cumbria can actively develop and express their creativity.
6. We will surface, support and strengthen the greatest possible diversity of voices.

*Image: Honister's world famous slate*



A group of four children and one adult are standing on a rocky shore next to a body of water. They are holding large, colorful, fish-shaped umbrellas. The umbrellas are made of a mesh material and have a fish-like shape with a circular eye. The colors are green, yellow, purple, orange, and blue. The children are smiling and looking at the camera. The adult is standing on the right, wearing a pink hat and a white shirt. The background shows a lake, trees, and mountains under a cloudy sky.

## D. INTERVENTIONS - STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Image courtesy: Theatre By The Lake



## D1.1 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

These recommendations and actions are about establishing the right conditions for success (partners, networks, funding, delivery vehicles, and responsive frameworks for setting and measuring return on investment etc.). They are not about prematurely prescribing the specifics for cultural activity programmes and investments, which require ongoing co-creation by key cultural partners.

	PRIORITY	OVERVIEW
1	LGR TRANSITION	Deploy this strategy as a device for cross-departmental planning (breaking any silos) in LGR preparation. It needs to establish a clear approval pathway into the new authority for strategy and investment decisions.
2	BUILD THE WEST CUMBRIA CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP	This is not a standalone local government strategy. To successfully deliver transformative change and impact this has to be devolved and extended partnership of stakeholders, organisations, agencies, programmes – from investment and funding partners through to active delivery.
3	SOCIAL IMPACT FUNDING & CONTRACTING	This strategy provides an opportunity to rethink the organisation by organisation / project by project approach to funding which hasn't served West Cumbria well in the past and develop a more ambitious, place-based combined approach which adopts a unified approach to the shared outcome priorities this strategy has helped clarify. The aim will be to increase resources for cultural activity, but also increase local control into how funds are invested against agreed local plans.
4	DELIVERY RESOURCE	There is a need to define and resource a delivery vehicle for the strategy which will activate the strategic vision on the ground across West Cumbria. To emphasise its role and purpose we are using a working title of the <b>Cultural Catalyst Unit</b> .
5	MEASURING IMPACTS & APPLIED LEARNING	A shared impacts-based framework will deliver shared structure and coherence to ensure the longitudinal measurement of social impact and ROI, and supply iterative evaluation and learning.



	Short-term deployability	Long-term systemic change
1. LGR TRANSITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Establish a joint <b>leadership group</b> to embed culture into LGR transition at key points in new Cumberland local authority service design and delivery process.</li> <li>ii. Communicate the cultural strategy vision internally to establish cross-team buy-in and appetite, and identify '<b>quick-wins</b>' and <b>demonstrators</b>.</li> <li>iii. Establish a mechanism / point of contact – <b>a key officer working group</b> – to provide the internal support and advice during LGR.</li> <li>iv. Involve <b>Carlisle Culture</b> as an important stakeholder and partner.</li> </ul>	<p>Focus on what will make the core ambitions and principles of the Strategy stick and become custom and practice beyond the stated ambitions of a leadership team when establishing the new authority. It's what happens after that really counts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Identify a '<b>culture champion</b>' from within the local authority leadership group (and also a councillor portfolio holder) with a brief to make the ongoing connections to ensure culture is embedded into services, projects and programmes.</li> <li>ii. Define an <b>internal process / model</b> to support and underpin an effective adoption of cross-team working. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify willing and ready partners;</li> <li>b. Clarify shared goals, expectations and mutual empathy (understanding of practices / processes / needs / challenges);</li> <li>c. Provide effective communication tools for exchange of information about activities and opportunities;</li> <li>d. Develop and deliver pathfinder projects with measured impacts for iterative learning and also for 'celebration' of impacts;</li> <li>e. Extend and roll out of pathfinder project(s);</li> <li>f. Service redesign to embed cultural practices and partnerships.</li> </ul> </li> <li>iii. Build ongoing mechanisms to <b>monitor and celebrate the collective impact</b> of the initiatives and activities and build appetite. E.g. monthly / quarterly / annual meetings / events to review progress and learnings; share good practice and celebrate impacts; supported by internal comms such as newsletters; and share external 'recognition' and perceived value.</li> </ul>

	Short-term deployability	Long-term systemic change
2. BUILD THE WEST CUMBRIA CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Complete the <b>stakeholder mapping</b> of existing and future partners. Note, this will need periodic review for relevance and diversity as the Strategy and new programmes take root.</li> <li>ii. Draw up a long-list and establish the <b>strategic oversight / leadership group</b> drafting a clear remit and set of responsibilities. Look to include partners who already have social value-led principles (e.g. Sellafield, Whitehaven Harbour Commissioners; BEC; Centre for Leadership Performance etc.). Typically, this will include – local and regional government; health; tourism; skills, education and young people; community; business; environment; community – as well as arts, culture and heritage bodies / representatives. Partners will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Advocate for and respond to the idea of a socially engaged cultural strategy;</li> <li>b. Contribute to its delivery through a combination of their external influence;</li> <li>c. Leverage resources and develop aligned funding priorities and bids;</li> <li>d. Bring their own organisation’s resources to the door as delivery partners.</li> </ul> </li> <li>iii. Research and recruit a <b>Cultural Commissioner for West Cumbria</b> – a passionate individual with the credibility, skills and networks to inspire support for a socially-engaged vision for culture in West Cumbria, across a broad partnership base.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>iv. Finalise and launch a <b>Cultural Manifesto</b> for a Socially Engaged Cultural Strategy for West Cumbria (with potentially new naming / branding) to a wider stakeholder and partner base.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Co-design all stages of this <b>with young people</b>, to ensure that their voices are heard with opportunities for involvement stamped across governance and delivery mechanisms.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>ii. From the stakeholder mapping identify (and establish) a series of <b>‘task-groups’ based around priorities and themes</b>, who will work to ensure that activities are identified, activated and delivered to progress (e.g. this could be a natural extension of some or all of the Carlisle Cultural Partnership panels, with reviewed remits).</li> <li>iii. Establish a clear <b>impacts-based framework</b>, which is flexible enough to allow for creative and targeted responses, but aligned to a set of shared principles and values (such as co-design and co-production, localism, green tech) that will drive collective behaviour and ensure greater combined impacts.</li> <li>iv. Maintain and extend the West Cumbria <b>cultural assets &amp; programmes map</b> as a resource to make opportunities visible and inform / develop more partnership working (e.g. activate the <i>CultureHosts</i> platform, or similar).<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>

	Short-term deployability	Long-term systemic change
<b>3. SOCIAL IMPACT FUNDING &amp; CONTRACTING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Bring together a portfolio of existing investments, plans and future aspirations as a joined-up Cultural Investment Prospectus for West Cumbria. This will create a stronger strategic proposition for a wide range of funders and investors who can fund individual projects within an overall strategic framework – and/or make untied contributions to support the overall vision. (e.g. key partners might be Sellafield, Arts Council England, Towns Deals etc.).</li> <li>ii. Accelerate discussions with Arts Council England regarding investment in R&amp;D / set up costs ahead of a more substantive phase 2 bid through priority grant applications.</li> <li>iii. Research and develop bids for revenue programmes such as Shared Prosperity Fund.</li> <li>iv. Bring forward projects that are fundable under existing schemes such as HAZ, Future High Streets and Towns Deal.</li> <li>v. Explore social inclusion and community engagement models (e.g. with University of Central Lancashire research fellows).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. R&amp;D into social impact investment to access ESG funds for cultural activity; but potentially to further establish a standalone Social Outcomes Fund for Culture in West Cumbria, for example , which will provide loans and investments for CICs, charities, 3rd sector and other social enterprises using culture as a means to deliver social impacts. <sup>4</sup></li> <li>ii. Ringfence / top-slice ‘West Cumbria’ partnership-working allocations into grant applications (e.g. in the way in which Manchester has done for its NPO and Culture Recovery Fund bids).</li> </ul>



	Short-term deployability	Long-term systemic change
4. DELIVERY RESOURCE	<p>Define the role and remit of the Cultural Catalyst Unit, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>Coordination</b> - West Cumbria-wide, collaborative, partnerships and networks.</li> <li>ii. <b>Brokerage</b> - connects people, organisations, communities.</li> <li>iii. <b>Support</b> - sector development (artists, venues, communities etc), guidance, advice.</li> <li>iv. <b>Commissioning</b> - leveraging resources for activities that link directly to strategic objectives.</li> </ul> <p>Define resources and skill sets needed by the Cultural Catalyst Unit, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>Capacity</b> - there needs to be capacity to work across a number of strategic partnerships and task groups such as Health &amp; Wellbeing, Education &amp; Skills, Programme &amp; Experience Development; Placemaking &amp; Regeneration.</li> <li>ii. <b>Capability (People)</b> - some capabilities will be required across all of the task groups such as digital; codesign for working young people, artists and communities; advocacy, marketing &amp; communications; evaluation.</li> <li>iii. <b>Capability (Systems)</b> - investment in B2B platforms, CRM and databases that will create a coherent body of knowledge and insight about the cultural sector performance across a number of KPIs, and support the delivery of initiatives and interventions.</li> </ul>	<p>Define workstreams. <sup>5</sup> These will emerge more clearly as the strategy develops but is likely to include the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>Sector Capacity</b> - bringing more cultural and creative capacity and confidence into West Cumbria through education, skills development, partnerships &amp; collaboration.</li> <li>ii. <b>Community Health and Wellbeing</b> - using culture and creativity to improve health outcomes for the community of West Cumbria, especially mental health.</li> <li>iii. <b>Creative Places</b> - growing cultural experience, enterprise and economy across West Cumbria, especially with younger people.</li> <li>iv. <b>Environment</b> - working in partnership with the West Cumbria green tech sector to adopt innovation-thinking practices - and identify sustainable, environmentally appropriate solutions for cultural delivery in West Cumbria.</li> </ul>

	Short-term deployability	Long-term systemic change
<b>5. MEASURING IMPACTS &amp; APPLIED LEARNING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Explore existing models for adaptation (e.g. Sunderland Culture, The National Centre for Cultural Value, Northumbria University building on the work for Northern Culture, ACE's <i>Impact &amp; Insight Toolkit</i> etc.).</li> <li>ii. Define a bespoke Social Impact Evaluation Framework that is robust, meaningful and realistic (taking existing data collection requirements, skills and capacity into account).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Establish benchmarks.</li> <li>ii. Set SMART targets.</li> <li>iii. Measure and monitor.</li> <li>iv. Insights-led reflection and applied learning.</li> </ul>

1. A useful reference is how this works in Greater Manchester for the Night Time Economy.
2. E.g. the West Cumbria Culture Commissioner could work alongside a cohort of Young Culture Champions from across the key towns and settlements in a programme of both mentoring and mutual exchange.
3. <https://www.culturehosts.co.uk>
4. <https://www.schroders.com/en/uk/private-investor/insights/economics/social-outcome-contracts-what-are-they-and-how-can-you-invest-in-them/>
5. Young people, digital, marketing communications and evaluation aren't envisaged as workstreams in their own right as they will feature across them all.

### THE IRON LINE

A sensitive and ambitious development of the beautiful coastal *Iron Line* at Millom as a recreational attraction that unites ecology, heritage and culture.

Image courtesy: Millom Town Deal Fund

<https://bit.ly/3pNux6j>



### D1.1.1 THE CULTURAL CATALYST UNIT

The Cultural Catalyst Unit (The Unit) is to enable and facilitate cultural partnerships, rather than deliver direct activity.

Its focus is on brokering impactful collaborative and cross-sector interventions that meet the aims of this strategy, driving and supporting activity where it is most needed and where it can make a measureable and visible difference to the wellbeing of West Cumbrian people and communities.

To do this it will need to marshal and engage a wide range of strategic partners, making the case for cultural investment with a broad range of sector partners, identifying opportunities for activity and leveraging influence and resources.

The core team will need to be skilled in a number of key areas such as co-design; advocacy, communications and joint marketing; digital transformation; and monitoring & evaluation.

To fulfil its role as an advocate and broker the Unit needs to have reliable, robust and accurate 'data' at its fingertips - which will be used to make the case for interventions, as well as evidence impacts.



*Where a dynamic Cultural Catalyst Unit could fit in leveraging resources, focusing efforts and supporting the sector across cultural planning, development and delivery.*

*Tsar = shorthand for a West Cumbria Culture Commissioner, as referenced throughout the Strategy.*



### CUMBRIA ARTS & CULTURE NETWORK

Established to help workers feel connected during the pandemic, Cumbria Arts & Culture Network has found a lasting role and is a positive voice of the sector. It works because there is a trusted and neutral 'resource', providing clear communication and curated, engaging and relevant content / services. Its online presence is democratic - no single institution controls content by virtue of having a large 'hosting' space. A well-curated, relevant agenda propels the discussion forward.

CACN has managed admirably to avoid becoming a space for negativity and insularity. This is helping partners and funders see its value in driving alignment and CACN is now extending its reach into collaborative project delivery.



## E. INTERVENTIONS - TOWARDS ACTION PLANNING



Image: Bowness-on-Solway, courtesy Cumbria Tourism



## D1.2.1 OVERVIEW

How can this Strategy gain traction? What does implementation look like, not least as LGR will influence how this is approached?

This final section seeks to set out some of the thinking of the Strategy into a more action planning-based context. In other words, how it can work.

The following two pages (D1.2.2) illustrate how the strategic priorities could be applied into two key areas: digital, and (the theme of) young people. A mix of short and longer-term outputs are set out to illustrate what this could look like, starting through LGR transition and embedding post-LGR. The points noted in the tables denote areas of focus, and would have specific actions with assigned roles, resources, more detailed timeframes, and practical measures of success. This is the task of the newly formed Cultural Partnership.

However, the successful delivery of the Cultural Strategy cannot be left to the Cultural Partnership. This model is designed to draw on the full resource and networks of the cultural sector and its partners. There are underlying and long-term – even generational – changes that need to be made, and a partnership-driven approach to these ‘workstreams’ provides the best opportunity to make that step-change.

Section D2.1 introduces a series of workstreams that are necessarily integrated within and/or aligned alongside wider agendas for West Cumbria. These include:

1. *Sector capacity building* – building the skills and talent base within West Cumbria;
2. *Community health & wellbeing* – building stronger health outcomes;
3. *Creative places and cultural destinations* – building the cultural experience, enterprise and economy with local communities, especially young people.
4. *Environment* – building in strategic climate responses through cultural activity, not as a bolt-on or option.

As such, every workstream not just benefits from, but requires, a cross-sector mix of partners based on shared, long-term goals. Some potential work activities are suggested to illustrate where this partnership model could go, but again this is for the forward agenda of the new Cultural Partnership.



### ARTS OUT WEST

Recognition of the rural cultural landscape and its communities is eloquently responded to through a programme of 60 performances per year across West Cumbria by [Arts Out West](https://kirkgateartsandheritage.org.uk/arts-out-west/), the rural touring arm of Kirkgate Arts & Heritage. Partnership is key, firstly with Penrith-based [Highlights Rural Touring Scheme](#), but also with villages, libraries, cultural partners and local authorities.

*Image courtesy:* Arts Out West  
<https://kirkgateartsandheritage.org.uk/arts-out-west/>

## D1.2.2 APPLIED TO DIGITAL

**Example:** a digital strategy strand to develop the necessary shared infrastructure, platforms and skills development programmes to ensure a digitally mature, skilled and joined up partnership network (further detail is in the supporting Addendum).

	Short-term deployability	Long-term systemic change
<b>Digital development within the cultural and creative sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. A digitally mature, skilled and joined up partnership network.</li> <li>ii. Attraction of new creative enterprise clusters.</li> <li>iii. Shared information and content platforms (e.g. Culture Hosts or similar) raising visibility and reach by supporting multi-channel, highly effective targeted marketing such as young people (e.g. via Hollr), cultural tourists (e.g. via Visit Cumbria) or social prescription workers and volunteers (e.g. via elemental).</li> <li>iv. Local, national and international content distribution and conversion to sales through streaming / e-commerce / bookability.</li> <li>v. Engagement of harder to reach communities through digital storytelling and archive projects.</li> <li>vi. Piloting 'smart city' working in Whitehaven.</li> <li>vii. Artist residencies with the West Cumbria green tech industry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Activate the workstreams (see D2.1).</li> <li>ii. Monitor, analyse, review, repeat (see next priority).</li> </ul>

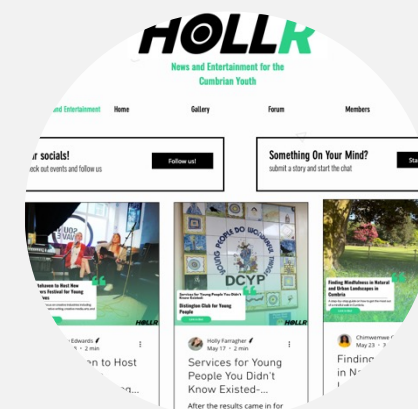


Image: <https://www.hollr.site>



### D1.2.3 APPLIED TO YOUNG PEOPLE

**Example:** Taking a theme as a starting point – such as **young people** – we can see how recommendations can flow from this strategy's focus and proposed model.

	Short-term deployability	Long-term systemic change
Creating opportunities for young people to experience, participate, create and develop cultural activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Regionally-based and engaged HEI.</li> <li>ii. Develop project-based opportunities.</li> <li>iii. Temporary campuses / programmes across West Cumbria locations.</li> <li>iv. Community-based with genuine co-production approach.</li> <li>v. Skilled partners.</li> <li>vi. Bursaries and incentives.</li> <li>vii. Connect to career progression, partners and funders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. HEI partner – place-based, socially engaged cultural practice faculty – MA, PhD, CPD development.</li> <li>ii. Priority places for West Cumbrians.</li> <li>iii. Dispersed delivery models: learning campuses / residences.</li> <li>iv. Working with local artists / companies.</li> <li>v. Develop new cultural product.</li> <li>vi. Organically change places.</li> </ul>



*Image: Fun Day, Rosehill Theatre, courtesy Tom Kay Photographic*

## D2.1 WORKSTREAM OPTIONS & PROGRAMMES

The following are examples of the kinds of partnership programmes and initiatives that might be developed as part of a socially-engaged cultural strategy.

### 1. SECTOR CAPACITY BUILDING



The primary aim is to develop existing and attract more **workforce talent**, especially young, early-career people, actively **choosing to work in the creative and cultural industries** in West Cumbria in order to progress their **creative and cultural ambitions**, rather than as a lifestyle choice such as semi-retirement. And to be able to sustain viable, valued careers in West Cumbria.

### 2. COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLBEING



The overriding aim is to use culture and creativity to **improve health outcomes for the community** of West Cumbria, especially mental health.

### 3. CREATIVE PLACES & CULTURAL DESTINATIONS



The primary aim is to **grow and develop the experience economy** across West Cumbria, especially with local residents – and most especially younger residents. Develop cultural / creative experiences and enterprises that will support the growth of an authentic tourism infrastructure and a visitor economy where the benefits will be felt locally.


### 4. ENVIRONMENT




Primary aim to identify sustainable, environmentally appropriate solutions for cultural delivery in West Cumbria – and to **see the natural environment as an opportunity** for a meaningful dialogue around the enjoyment and protection of the environment, and nature's reliance on human behaviour and **innovation-thinking in dealing with the climate emergency**.

1. SECTOR CAPACITY BUILDING	
Key Partners	<p><b>Education</b> – primary, secondary and tertiary; LCEP, Frame, Curious Minds, Cumbria Arts Awards.</p> <p><b>Training, skills &amp; business support</b> providers including Centre for Leadership Performance; specialist support such as Google Garage / Arts Council England tech champions, LEP business advisers.</p> <p>Enterprise <b>investment and incentive programmes</b> such as Sellafield SiX.</p> <p>Infrastructure providers such as access to networks such as CACN; transport providers.</p> 
Identified Needs	<p><b>Digital skills.</b></p> <p><b>Technicians</b> to support productions and festivals.</p> <p>Rehearsal and workshop / maker <b>spaces.</b></p> <p><b>Accommodation</b> and housing.</p> <p>Collaboration <b>networks.</b></p>
5-10 Year Vision	West Cumbria is to be <b>celebrated as an exemplar case study</b> – with a number of large dots on the map denoting UK clusters of rural creative businesses.
Potential Programmes & Activities	<p><b>Training schemes:</b> Digital transformation; event / project management; grant-making and investment propositions; enterprise &amp; scale-up; innovation-thinking; co-design.</p> <p><b>Access to work &amp; creative education schemes:</b> Apprenticeships and placements programme / Careers advice programmes / STEM to STEAM / FE and HE colleges to offer elective and combined courses e.g. engineering with photography / drama with innovation.</p> <p><b>Talent attraction schemes:</b> Place-based / social impact based undergraduate courses / MA programmes delivered by Universities in situ in the community; artist residencies and commissions;</p> <p><b>Talent retention schemes:</b> Establishing hyper-local artist colonies and creative business clusters (e.g. Krowji in Redruth, <a href="http://www.krowji.org.uk">www.krowji.org.uk</a>).</p> <p><b>Infrastructure:</b> Investment in digital capacity, feasibility studies and investment into gaps in provision and progression (e.g. gallery space, affordable workspaces and artists' studios).</p>



2. COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLBEING	
Key Partners	<p>Cumbria NHS.</p> <p>Adult Social Care Teams.</p> <p>Children's Services.</p> <p>Cumbria Youth Alliance.</p> <p>Barnardo's Cumbria LINK programme.</p> 
Identified Needs	Impacts of <b>isolation and poverty</b> – loneliness, alcohol & drugs abuse, suicide, obesity.
5-10 Year Vision	<p>Formally recognised as National Centre for Creative Health <b>centre of excellence</b> and celebrated case study.</p> <p>Percentage increase in happiness indices, and life-expectancy and wellbeing outcomes.</p>
Potential Programmes & Activities	<p><b>Cultural R&amp;R programmes</b> aimed at health workers to build understanding and champions;</p> <p>Embedding cultural options with <b>social prescribing</b> Link Workers;</p> <p>Place-based / social impact based cultural and creative <b>courses / programmes with universities</b> delivered in situ and sustained over time, with communities;</p> <p><b>Artist Residencies</b> in schools, care homes and workplaces;</p> <p>Practical '<b>creative</b>' <b>programmes and residencies</b> with Men's Sheds, Clubs, and Sports Associations (e.g. Whitworth Art Gallery's Handbook for Engagement with Older Men, <a href="https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=24251">https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=24251</a>);</p> <p>Expanded roles for <b>libraries</b> and leisure centres;</p> <p>Regional expansion of '<b>by and for</b>' <b>young people's programmes</b> such as Soundwave and Holrr.</p>

3. CREATIVE PLACES & CULTURAL DESTINATIONS	
Key Partners	<p>Cumbria Tourism.</p> <p>Town Councils.</p> <p>Regeneration agencies and developers.</p> <p>BIDs and Chambers of Commerce, and Private sector partners.</p> <p>Sports and community organisations.</p> 
Identified Needs	<p>Increased access to and visibility of culture and creativity in the heart of the community.</p> <p>Reactivation of High Streets as engaging social spaces through events and activities.</p> <p>Development of cultural tourism experiences and visitor infrastructure.</p>
5-10 Year Vision	<p>Measurable shift in internal / local perceptions of West Cumbria as dynamic and enterprising creative place with a recognisable contemporary culture and 'voice' which builds on its heritage narrative but isn't held back by it.</p> <p>Measurable growth in cultural tourism and experience economy.</p> <p>Measurable growth in use of West Cumbria as a film / shoot location.</p>
Potential Programmes & Activities	<p>Optimise Iron Line and Connecting Cumbria's Hidden Coast for coastal <b>cultural tourism enterprise</b> programme.</p> <p>Whitehaven as '<b>smart-city</b>' <b>pathfinder</b> using cultural engagement as a 'key use' case.</p> <p>Develop '<b>bookable experiences</b>' and itineraries – and build destination offer and infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Festival development strategy.</b></p> <p>Build <b>national partnerships</b> and tours.</p> <p>High Street creative presence and taster activities (such as Halton's <i>Mako Create</i>).</p> <p>Venue and Producer networks to coordinate programme / outreach / engagement.</p> <p>Stronger partnerships between subsidised and private sector cultural providers.</p> <p>Identification of informal venues and spaces.</p> <p>Joined up, multi-channel <b>digital marketing strategy.</b></p> <p><b>Film and Location Bureau.</b></p>

4. ENVIRONMENT	
Key Partners	<p>West Cumbria Energy Coast businesses and green tech sector.</p> <p>UNESCO.</p> <p>Lake District National Park.</p> <p>National Trust.</p> <p>Forestry England.</p> <p>Environment Agency.</p> <p>Sustrans.</p> <p>Transport providers.</p> <p>Landowners.</p> <p>Julie's Bicycle.</p> 
Identified Needs	To improve how the cultural sector delivers positive environmental outcomes and impacts of the cultural sector through – building materials and systems; local supply chains; production reuse and recycling; festival operations; transportation to and between places and events; to bring creative thinking into tech-based businesses; to raise public awareness of climate change issues and encourage a change in individual and community behaviour.
5-10 Year Vision	To be carbon neutral with a clear plan to be Near Net Zero. Target dates for borough and the region (Cumbria Action for Sustainability) range from 2030-2043, all of which are ambitious.
Potential Programmes & Activities	<p>Working in partnership with the West Cumbrian green tech sector to create a sector-exchange / innovation programme involving workplace residences and buddy-schemes, with a view to create practical recommendations, guidelines and targets as to how the cultural sector can become a) carbon neutral and b) net zero within a given timescale.</p> <p>Programme site-specific, accessible work that directly engages local people in an active dialogue, as participants as well as audience - and which shares images and key messages for West Cumbria around the world (2022 examples: Whale – Captain Boomer Collective, Eden Arts in Whitehaven; Unboxed Festival – nationally).</p>



**ctconsults.**

**The Intelligence Agency**

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