



North Yorkshire Cultural Strategy

Final Version

21.10.24

Design note – front cover to have an 'issued date' so people know what version they are reading (due to the overall strategy being un-dated)

What is Culture?

Our communities, partners and sector told us that culture is:

Everything that makes life worth living

Creativity / creative expression

Ever-changing and dynamic

Our frame of reference

Our window on the world

Stories and expression

Community

Happiness

Sense of belonging

Accessible

For everyone

Transformational

Rest and respite

Growth, opportunity, work livelihood

Fun!

Dynamic, noisy and exciting!

We can experience culture through:

Music, dance, comedy, art, film, theatre, heritage, books, gardening, and many more things.

We often experience culture in our fantastic museums, galleries and art centres, but it also lives at festivals, agricultural shows, in community centres, in parks and open spaces, by the seaside, in our homes, and lots more places besides.

Our Vision

To create a distinctive region where accessible and inclusive culture and heritage is at the heart of improving people's lives.

Our Aims

We have global ambition, with a local focus.

- We will champion cultural entitlement, to ensure that everyone, irrespective of age, location or personal circumstance, should have the opportunity to create, participate, experience and be inspired by a wide range of creative and cultural activities and spaces.
- We will be ambitious, ensuring that creativity thrives in every part of our County and that North Yorkshire is recognised as a leader in rural culture and creative health.

The cultural sector has a strong history of collaboration. Innovation often comes from sharing ideas, working in partnership, and seeing benefit in working together rather than in competition. This strategy has been developed in consultation with cultural organisations, groups and individuals across North Yorkshire and in this spirit of cultural collaboration, is owned by us all.

Our strategy is deliberately un-dated. We will come together at an annual symposium to reflect on what has been achieved in the preceding year, and to decide together on changes and developments for the coming year. This will keep us focused and better able to be responsive to the needs of our communities and sector, to be more agile in response to opportunities, and flexible to changes in national context and priorities.

Why Culture is Important

Cultural organisations and the creative industries significantly contribute to our region's local economy, both directly through their business activities, and indirectly through wider impact on the domestic and visitor economy. The sector is growing at a rate over three times that of the national average, employing 1.8 million people across the UK, and contributing £125bn to our economy.

Just as importantly, creative and cultural engagement is essential for the health of individuals and has powerful potential in both preventative healthcare and treatment of health conditions.

Culture also cements the wellbeing of communities – providing joy, growth, inspiration and a sense of belonging. North Yorkshire benefits from a wide ranging and diverse cultural offer - from world class museums, cutting-edge exhibitions, and innovative theatre to interactive and entertaining festivals, events and opportunities to engage in everyday creativity from village to city.

Culture In North Yorkshire

Culture in North Yorkshire contributes to, and forms an integral part of delivery for a number of other strategic outcomes. The diagram below demonstrates the North Yorkshire Council strategies that work in symbiosis with the Cultural Strategy.

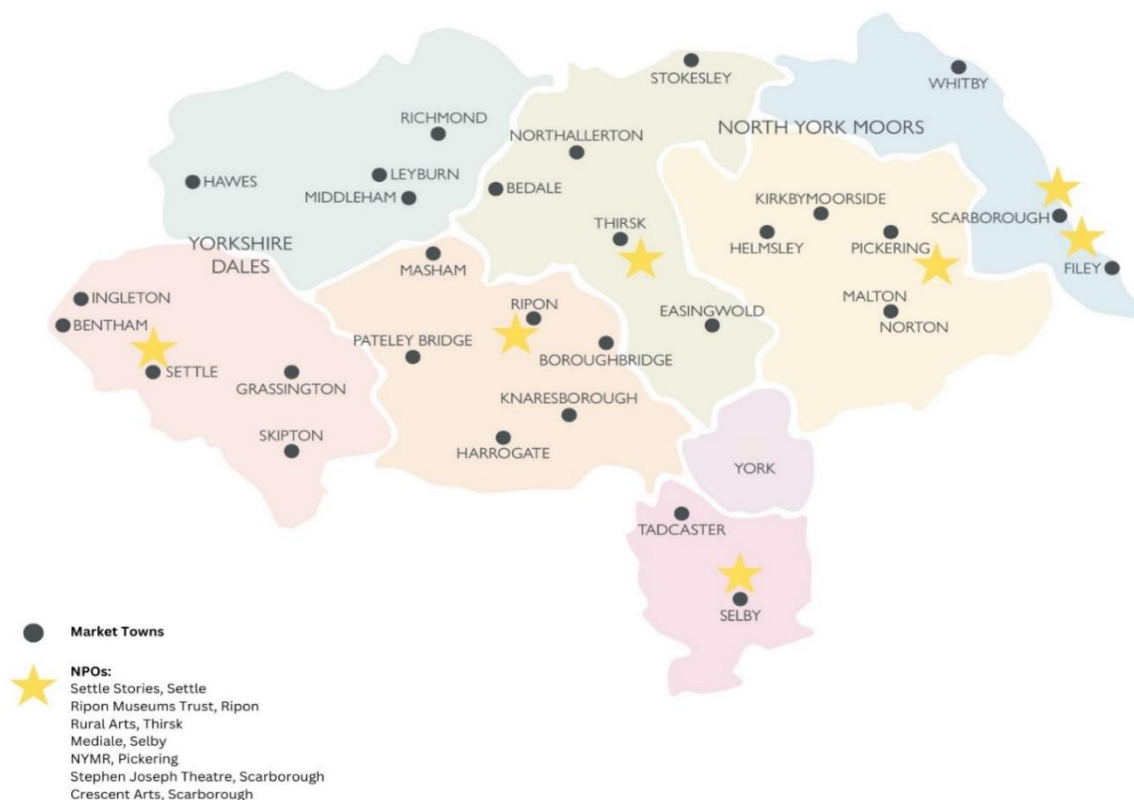
Diagram for illustrative purposes – to be designed.



This is indicative of how and where the cultural strategy will dovetail and work in cohesion with other key strategies, although is not an exhaustive list.

Map of North Yorkshire: Key Cultural Assets

Note – for illustrative purposes, full designed map of new constituency boundaries to be included



NPOs are Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations; arts, culture and heritage organisations that get regular funding from Arts Council England to deliver on nationally important cultural priorities.

National Portfolio Organisations are leaders in their areas, with a collective responsibility to protect and develop our national arts and cultural ecology and will have a key role in supporting delivery of this strategy.

Design note – also need to include key museums, galleries and arts centre locations – we won't be able to label all, but can ensure they're mapped and labelled on the digital version. This map will demonstrate the wealth of assets we have in the region.

Strategic Priorities

To use culture and creativity to create places where people want, and are able to live, work, visit, learn and engage.

Resulting in:

- Increase in accessible space
- Increase in creative & cultural participation
- Increase in participant diversity
- Positive feedback from participants
- Increase in skills, knowledge, experience, enjoyment, creativity, inspiration
- Culture is at the heart of place-shaping and regeneration of market towns and hinterlands across the region

Embedding culture into city, town and village developments is a shared priority of North Yorkshire and City of York.

We will ensure that culture, arts, heritage and creative health are integral to place-making and reflecting the relationship our people have with their places.

Together, and with national bodies, we will work to maximise the value, and ensure the sustainability, of heritage and cultural assets. We commit to increasing our focus on accessibility and inclusion, creating spaces in which everyone feels welcome and can experience culture, heritage and creativity without barriers.

Our work will contribute to Combined Authority Priorities for **Vibrant & Sustainable Places**.

To ensure that places, spaces and activities are inclusive and accessible.

Resulting in:

- Increase in accessible spaces in which to create and participate
- Increase in participation and co-creation
- Increase in participant diversity
- Positive feedback from participants
- Increase in skills, knowledge, experience, enjoyment, creativity, inspiration

To enable a thriving cultural workforce including employees, volunteers and freelancers, where grassroots creativity is nurtured and supported to grow.

Resulting in:

- Increase in workforce/volunteers/creative businesses & contributing to government plans to get 2 million more people into work
- Positive feedback from participants
- Increase in skills, knowledge, experience, enjoyment, creativity, inspiration

Creative and cultural education, skills and sector development is a shared priority of North Yorkshire and City of York.

We recognise and embrace the fact that the creative sector is one of the fastest growing economies in the UK, making significant contributions to employment opportunities, export of goods & services, and to tourism.

1 in 4 UK jobs are in the creative industries, employing 2.3 million in 2021 and contributing £124bn to the economy in 2022. Filled jobs growth rate from 2011 to 2021 in the creative industries was almost five times faster than the UK total overall – so we know how important it is to support sector development in North Yorkshire.

This starts with access to creative subjects in education, and access to creative and cultural opportunities outside of school for all young people - and continues with routes to employment, support for creative businesses to access training, business development and investment. We will work together across our local authority services, with our creative education networks FORGE & CREATE, within the Combined Authority, and with our sector partners to progress, attract and retain creative talent and a thriving workforce in North Yorkshire.

Our work will contribute to Combined Authority Priorities for **Boosting Business & A Thriving Workforce**.

To maximise the value and ensure sustainability of the region’s cultural assets and promote the cultural identity, wealth and distinctiveness of the region.

Resulting in:

- Increase in ‘value’ of cultural assets, by which we mean both non-financial indicators (places used for recreation, learning, engagement, and preservation of local identity), and financial (investment in, and maintenance of assets)
- Increased awareness of cultural offer amongst stakeholders

To ensure cultural engagement contributes to improved health and well being of communities

Resulting in:

- New or strengthened partnerships between cultural services & organisations, and health & social care services
- Increased social prescribing of cultural activity
- A bespoke approach to creative health that meets the needs of communities across North Yorkshire.

Transformation of the wellbeing and resilience of our residents and communities is a shared priority of North Yorkshire and City of York.

We will be revolutionary and ambitious in our approach, embracing Creative Health as a core component of both of our cultural strategies.

We will work in collaboration across local authority care teams, creative health organisations, and Integrated Care Systems to maximise the health, life opportunities and sense of belonging for everyone that calls North Yorkshire home.

Our work will contribute to Combined Authority Priorities for **Healthy & Thriving Communities**.

To ensure cultural activity positively contributes to the delivery of strategic priorities including economic, health and social well-being, skills and education, environment, public transport and quality of life.

Resulting in:

- North Yorkshire is recognised as a leader in rural cultural delivery
- Culture & creativity is visible and recognised as an essential component in delivery of economic growth, improvements in health & wellbeing, and progression of education outcomes
- Increase in provision that contributes to other strategic outcomes integral to the success of our region and happiness of our communities
- Increase in collaboration/partnership working
- Increased awareness of cultural offer amongst stakeholders

To identify, support and promote places, spaces, people and activities that can contribute to the vision.

Resulting in:

- Increase in funding accessed
- Increased external investment
- Positive media coverage
- Increased awareness of cultural offer amongst stakeholders

Creation of a Creative Hub

This has been identified as a key action which will support and enable the delivery of the Strategic Priorities identified above. North Yorkshire Council will facilitate the delivery of the Hub which will be a digital platform, supplemented by physical events, and will be the main access point for the North Yorkshire Cultural Consortium. It will provide:

A shared repository of resources:

- Information, advice and guidance
- Good practice, policies, standards and procedures
- Data collected through mapping, audits and surveys

Access to:

- Skills, knowledge and experience
- Facilitated partnerships and collaborations
- Training and mentoring

Support:

- To enable access to funding and resources
- Co-ordinated promotion and marketing
- Advocacy and representation

Measures of Success

- Increase in collaboration and partnership working
- Increase in funding accessed
- Data collection of – case studies, policies, practice
- Positive feedback from participants
- Positive feedback from sector
- Positive feedback from partners
- Increased awareness of cultural offer amongst stakeholders
- Evidence – both quantitative and qualitative against strategic and aligned priorities – case studies, academic research, evaluation, testimonies

Success will be achieved through the North Yorkshire Culture & Archives Service working in partnership with individuals and organisations. Delivery will include events, activities and networks on a regional and themed basis. A regional cultural symposium will be held annually to celebrate and share best practice and disseminate information from key strategic partners including funding bodies, as well as to agree the evolving priorities and direction of the cultural strategy.

Delivery of the Strategy

This strategy has been developed in consultation with cultural organisations, groups and individuals across North Yorkshire, in this spirit of cultural collaboration, and is owned by us all.

The partnerships developed across sector and the actions delivered by a wide range of organisations are key to the successful delivery of this strategy.

The creation of North Yorkshire Council and the implementation of a single Cultural Service for the County, gives us a great opportunity to build on our current offer, bring partners together, and provide a collaborative way forward to achieve our ambitions to be leaders in provision of excellent quality cultural opportunities in a rural county.

North Yorkshire Council will set out its actions toward the strategic outcomes on an annual basis. For 25/26 these actions are set out in Appendix One.

It is envisaged cultural sector organisations and individuals in the region will use the strategy alongside their organisational and development plans, to identify collaborations, apply for funding, direct their work, and deliver on the priorities set out here.

Case studies

Below are a range of case studies selected by the Cultural Strategy Steering Group to demonstrate best practice in cultural delivery across a variety of themes/artforms and geographical areas, a snapshot of what we currently have and are doing well in North Yorkshire, linked to the strategic priorities outlined above.

Imaginosity

Who?

Mill Hill School, Rural Arts, Wykeland, North Yorkshire Council

What?

Imaginosity develops children's creative thinking to support learning, wellbeing, confidence and resilience, and to connect to the wider community and future workplaces.

Pupils work in 8 mixed-age Imaginosity groups. Imaginosity sessions are run for one hour each week, and creative thinking is supported and encouraged. There is no hierarchy in the groups, and ideas from the younger pupils are just as valued as those from the older ones.

Where?

Northallerton

Impacts:

- Pupils have built confidence and abilities;
- The school's Ofsted rating has changed from Needs Improvement to Good;
- Attendance and attainment have significantly improved since Imaginosity began;
- A pupil has been identified as Gifted and Talented as a direct result of taking part in the project.

Aligned to strategic priorities:

- *To use culture and creativity to create places where people want, and are able to live, work, visit, learn and engage.*
- *To ensure cultural activity positively contributes to the delivery of strategic priorities including economic, health and social well-being, skills and education, environment, public transport and quality of life.*

Theatre Restoration & Development

Who?

Georgian Theatre Royal

What?

an ambitious capital works project funded by a generous £375,000 donation, that has provided more comfortable seating and improved views of the stage whilst maintaining the building's heritage and authenticity.

Where?

Richmond

Impacts:

- Theatre is able to thrive as a centre for artistic excellence;
- High quality shows are attracted to perform;
- Ability to deliver an award-winning Youth Theatre;
- Main project subsequently attracted additional donations and grants totalling £80,000, which enabled improvements to be made to the Theatre's heating and ventilation systems.

Aligned to strategic priorities:

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Run, Dance, Play

Who?

young people of different ages and abilities working with Drew and Hannah from York Dance Space and musician John Hughes, project facilitated by ARCADE.

What?

They worked together to create a piece involving the activities young people enjoyed, choreographed into an outdoor performance with movement, dance, singing, skateboarding, football and more.

Where?

The Barn, Tadcaster

Impacts:

Joe* is ten years old and took part in the project alongside his younger siblings. Joe has additional needs.

Joe's Mum said:

"Joe would have been very nervous if he had to do a school play or assembly. When I went down on Sunday night and saw the performance, it just blew my mind. I was in tears for most of it. At that moment, for those few days, Joe didn't have to worry about all the things he can't do. He just enjoyed himself. It was amazing. And I could just see how much it meant to him..."

...Joe took part with his brother and sister who don't have additional needs - but it didn't matter who did or who didn't. That is very important to me... I think that's what's missing - more stuff for everyone."

"For a child like Joe, to give him an opportunity to be at the same level as everybody else, that's so powerful, it really is. It's also an opportunity for all the children, the neurotypical children, for them to understand inclusion, and that everyone has a place."

Aligned to strategic priorities:

- To use culture and creativity to create places where people want, and are able to live, work, visit, learn and engage.
- To ensure that places, spaces and activities are inclusive and accessible.
- To ensure cultural engagement is embedded as a health behaviour in the region.

*Name has been changed to maintain confidentiality.

Out of the Box

Who?

Make More Arts, North Yorkshire Council, Museums & Galleries, and Ryedale Schools

What?

'Out of the Box Learning', is a new website sharing engaging content from over 20 museums, galleries and heritage sites across North Yorkshire. The site responds to calls from communities and schools with ever-tightening budgets struggling to access museum collections across the county.

Where?

Ryedale & digital/cross-region

Impacts:

- Increasing object-based engagement;
- Providing access to cultural capital and object-handling in the community;
- Over 100 objects representing histories, heritage, people and places across North Yorkshire – with more to add;
- Learning resources assist with oracy and spoken language development.

Aligned to strategic priorities:

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Young Curators

Who?

Year 12 students & The Mercer Gallery

What?

A fully funded work experience placement with the gallery team and a specialist curator or artist, provided through the Harrogate Decorative and Fine Art Group and The Art Society.

Students take on the role of consultants, devising strategies to engage young audiences. Outcomes have included the creation of a zine; short animations for our social media channels; interpretive captions for exhibits and pop-up exhibitions.

North Yorkshire Council's Resourcing Solutions team incorporate a careers session to the placement to convert learning into relevant data for CVs and job or university applications.

Where?

The Mercer Gallery, Harrogate

Impacts:

- Partnership with local and national arts charities has fostered opportunities for young people to prepare for future careers;
- 30 young people have gained hard-to access experience of gallery and museum work;
- Closer relationships between the gallery and local secondary schools and colleges;
- Collaboration, evaluation and feedback from target audience has shaped the gallery's future programming and planning.

Aligned to strategic priorities:

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Great Place Lakes and Dales

Who?

16-34 year olds, numerous arts/culture/heritage organisations, North Yorkshire Council

What?

an aspirational and ambitious partnership between Craven and South Lakeland Councils and Yorkshire Dales and Lake District National Parks, to use the arts, heritage, and culture to support and increase the number of 16-34 yr olds living and working in the area.

Programme initiatives have included a national Creative Connections conference; Hinterlands international rural film festival; Aerial arts festival; creative takeovers of unusual spaces for R&D; free creative careers residential for 18-25 yr olds; free workshops exploring how businesses, cultural organisations and young creatives can work better together; creative collectives; seed funding scheme; micro commissions; peer to peer networks; co-working space; RIBA competition; public art campaign; digital engagement platforms and networks development.

Where?

Craven

Impacts:

- Creation of opportunities for co-design and production;
- Creating the conditions for, and promoting creativity and the arts in rural communities;
- Development of new talent;
- Amplification of young voices;
- Legacy projects such as The Artery peer to peer programme supporting young performing arts students; Fresh Perspective young person's collective securing funding and commissions; and Watch This Space connecting artists with unusual spaces to programme cultural activity.

Aligned to strategic priorities:

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£1 Ticket Scheme

Who?

Young people from under-served communities, and Stephen Joseph Theatre

What?

A £1 theatre ticket scheme, designed to support people from underserved communities to be able to go and see shows. The theatre distributes 1,000 of these tickets each year, across all of its own productions and through a range of local partners, including Beyond Housing, Westway Open Arms, Carers Plus Yorkshire, Scarborough Survivors, Age UK and MIND Scarborough. In just the first year of the scheme, 880 of these tickets were taken up.

Where?

Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough

Impacts:

The initiative makes a huge difference to local people, with testimonials like the below commonplace.

“Many of the children in our community have never attended a theatre; seeing the reaction after the trip is heart-warming. The Eastfield area has been badly affected by the cost of living crisis and this scheme definitely raises the spirits and removes stress for the families who would not be able to afford full price tickets as well as enjoying such a wonderful experience”

“The positivity of being present with a live performance brings huge value to the individuals attending and by having the accessible performances it gives positive involvement for those who are being supported/cared-for to be included and not excluded which happens so much in their lives”

Aligned to strategic priorities:

- To ensure that places, spaces and activities are inclusive and accessible.
- To ensure cultural engagement is embedded as a health behaviour in the region.
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AMP Producers

Who?

Young people 11-25 years old, and AMP

What?

A youth-led short-course & workshop offer for young people to learn new skills, and a producer's work placement programme to design and produce a festival or event series.

Where?

Region-wide

Impacts:

F, 21 years, has ADHD, dyslexia and dyspraxia with caring responsibilities, and part of AMP's Plugged In Producers team.

They applied for a role, and became Press/Music Journalism coordinator. They grew in confidence over the programme and really enjoyed working with their industry mentor. This culminated in a creation of their own podcast series and making a pitch to newspaper.

"My biggest takeaway is that I should believe in myself more because sometimes I stop myself doing things in apprehension that I'm not going to be good enough or because of my learning difficulties that people will think I'm useless, but by doing this I know I can achieve good things."

"I plan to set up my own blog and podcast where I interview artists, write reviews of albums and live shows by artists in the Yorkshire area"

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Crime Writing Festival

Who?

Harrogate International Festivals with crime writers, fans of crime writing, and cultural visitors – local and beyond.

What?

Theakston Old Peculiar Crime Writing Festival, part of the Harrogate International Festivals portfolio of Festivals, this unique literature event celebrated it's 20th year in 2023.

Taking place over 4 days/3nights this internationally renowned celebration of crime fiction features special guests, panel discussion and welcomes audiences from around the world. Known as the 'AGM of crime fiction' this festival is recognised as one of the friendliest, with audiences and authors mingling across the site, currently the Old Swan Hotel, the home of the original Agatha Christie whodunnit!

Where?

Harrogate

Impacts:

- Significant economic impact into the Harrogate town centre;
- Continued delivery of a major literature festival for the UK founded and delivered in the north of England;
- Access for those with limited means to literature and festivals through bursaries, library networks and partnerships;
- 39% returning bookers & 40% new attendees;
- Literacy development work with schools and other networks through Kids, Spies & Private Eyes;
- Bus Libraries created on the 36 bus to create new readers and introduce people to the joy of reading;
- Online access through HIFPlayer with 7894 podcast plays across 9 countries;
- Longstanding title support sponsorship between arts and business within North Yorkshire.

Aligned to strategic priorities:

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We Are Here

Who?

Local community groups and art & performance studio idontloveyouanymore. Project facilitated by Mediale.

What?

Co-designed development of an exhibition of high-resolution animated environments based on imaginative versions of Selby Abbey's future.

Workshops took place over a month and participants explored the themes of the installation, recording their imagined futures for Selby and the Abbey via drawings, stories and models, which also included interactive gamic elements.

The final pieces interwove dreams and fantasy with possible and impossible futures for Selby and human life itself.

The exhibition launched the Now Then! Programme for Selby, Sherburn & Tadcaster.

Where?

Selby Abbey, Selby

Impacts:

- Creation of opportunities for co-design and production;
- Skills development;
- Increased sense of belonging;
- Setting the direction of Now Then! Part of Selby's creative change programme established in response to Selby's designation as an Arts Council Priority Place.

Aligned to strategic priorities:

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“The arts are **not the cherry on the cake** — they are the **cake**” **Melvin Bragg**

Culture and creativity enriches and provides fulfilment in people’s lives, contributes to good health and wellbeing, and is of benefit to our economy.

By investing our time and resources in Culture we’re investing in the future – providing a rounded and healthy life for our communities and giving them opportunities, supporting the growth of our creative industries, and attracting visitors to our region.

As well as the huge contribution culture makes to a range of outcomes that are important to us across health, economy, regeneration and education, to quote one of the consultation workshop participants, culture is also ‘everything that makes life worth living’ and it is clear through development of this strategy that access to culture is of paramount importance to us all.

Thanks to...

We would like to thank each and every organisation, group and individual that has participated in consultations for development of this strategy. Your energy, enthusiasm and clarity on what is important to our communities and cultural sector has been infectious and is core to this plan of action.

The North Yorkshire Council Culture & Archives Team were also supported by members of the North Yorkshire Cultural Consortium in the collation of consultation feedback and shaping of this strategy, so many thanks to our steering group:

Fiona Hunt, Freelance Writer
 Grace Knill, Pioneer Projects
 Heather Lane, The Museum of North Craven Life
 Helen Mahoney, Bloom Arts
 Ian Read, Rural Arts
 Jennifer Smith, Ryedale Folk Museum
 Julia Clark, Freelance Cultural/Heritage Fundraiser
 Karen Merrifield, Innovate Educate Ltd – The Artery
 Lisa Hart, Henshaw’s Art & Craft Centre
 Megan Evans, Deershed Festival
 Piers Edsall, Malton Sculpture Trail
 Rach Drew, ARCADE
 Sandra Wiggins, Harrogate Theatre
 Sarah McWatt, AMP
 Tom Higham, Mediale

If you would like to join the North Yorkshire Cultural Consortium network, please email culture@northyorks.gov.uk

Appendix one

North Yorkshire Council – Key actions to support Strategy delivery 2025/26

- To facilitate the delivery of the Cultural Hub.

To use culture and creativity to create places where people want, and are able to live, work, visit, learn and engage.

- Joint working across the Cultural, Economic Development, Regeneration and Planning Teams to identify opportunities for embedding culture & creativity, e.g. through local area/town planning, discharge of Section 106 commitments, and development/delivery of art in the public realm guidance, including environmental impacts & sustainability.

To ensure that places, spaces and activities are inclusive and accessible.

- Map creative and cultural organisations and activity across North Yorkshire, to identify ‘cold spots’ for intervention through partnerships with local cultural organisations.
- Facilitate access to best-practice, training, and ‘how to’ guides for organisations to develop their offer.

To enable a thriving cultural workforce including employees, volunteers and freelancers, where grassroots creativity is nurtured and supported to grow.

- Work with the Mayoral Combined Authority to secure funding and commission research into creative & cultural sector data specific to North Yorkshire.
- Develop a wide-ranging workforce development plan with the above, and with City of York Council, incorporating apprenticeships, internships, work experience and placements, to support the next generation of creative sector workers.

To maximise the value and ensure sustainability of the region’s cultural assets and promote the cultural identity, wealth and distinctiveness of the region.

- Support sector partners to attract funding and investment to develop cultural spaces.
- Seek funding to support care and development of NYC cultural assets, for benefit of communities and users.

To ensure cultural engagement contributes to improved health and well being of communities

- Work in partnership with sector specialists and with Public Health and Localities teams, to fund and develop a new way of working between culture and health, for the improved health of our region.

To ensure cultural activity positively contributes to the delivery of strategic priorities including economic, health and social well-being, skills and education, environment, public transport and quality of life.

- Map, in detail, where and how culture and creativity can contribute to wider outcomes across NYC strategic objectives, and identify/connect with key contacts to ensure a comprehensive and joined-up approach.
- Work with North Yorkshire and York's creative education groups FORGE and REACH

To identify, support and promote places, spaces, people and activities that can contribute to the vision.

- Commission Audience Agency research into North Yorkshire's cultural offer, and share data and audience segmentation information with sector partners.
- Undertake other baseline research to enable sector to measure impacts.
- Work with sector partners, and Tourism, on audience development plans for the region, and ensuring connections to Visit North Yorkshire.