

Annual Partnership Review Form

Year ended 31 March 2023

Partnership name:

Creative Darlington

Partnership function:

To develop and implement the goals of the Creative Darlington Vision and to ensure it is constantly refreshed

Objectives for the year

·Contribute to the Action Plan for Darlington Cultural Strategy in 2022/23.

·Contributing to the creative exploration of Darlington's railway heritage by commissioning or supporting the development of proposals.

·Further develop the theatre town momentum including strategic engagement with Darlington Hippodrome and Theatre Hullabaloo.

Supporting an accessible, distinctive and excellent cultural offer through a combination of events, festivals and programmes.

Seek additional funding for programmes which creatively explore local heritage.

Manage access to the Borough Art Collection and support the sharing of visual art activity in Darlington in 2022/23, support the development of appropriate exhibition proposals for Darlington Library post restoration (programme restart anticipated in September 2023).

Maintain positive working relationship with Darlington for Culture, other Darlington and Tees Valley enterprises, networks and organisations and the North East Cultural Partnership to lead, support or encourage the development of positive creative programmes in Darlington.

Performance against objectives

Contribute to the Action Plan for Darlington Cultural Strategy in 2022/23.

At the end of 2021/22 Creative Darlington had played a key role in developing Cultural Strategy 2022 – 2026 which had been endorsed by Darlington Borough

Council alongside an action plan for 2022/23 with the Strategy with Design and Print. In 2022/23 the strategy design was signed off and it was circulated to stakeholders, in hard copy and digitally. Creative Darlington and other Darlington Borough Council Services have utilised the strategy in advocacy and fundraising campaign and the final design has been shared with the Creative Darlington board, e.g. the strategy has accompanied a Project Funding application submitted to Darlington Borough Council to Arts Council England for a creative programme to celebrate the reopening of Darlington Library post restoration and promote improved facilities therein (funding decision August 2023).

Contributing to the creative exploration of Darlington's railway heritage by commissioning or supporting the development of proposals.

· Creative Darlington worked with Darlington Borough Council in museums services and authored and submitted a successful application considered by The Arts Fund's Commissions Programme panel in February 2023, which secured a grant offer of £38,000 to support the commission of rail themed public artwork by Andrew McKeown (who Darlington Borough Council had previously commissioned to design rail heritage themed pieces installed on Haughton Road Roundabout in 2021/22). Further develop the theatre town momentum including strategic engagement with Darlington Hippodrome and Theatre Hullabaloo · During 2022/23 Creative Darlington supported Theatre Hullabaloo in taking forward their work in and around Darlington borough, through budget support of £5,000. On 4 November 2022 Arts Council England announced Theatre Hullabaloo's place within their National Portfolio of organisations receiving government support through DCMS for the period 2023 – 26 with a significant increase in the annual budget allocation from the preceding National Portfolio period. The successful delivery of the Hullabaloo in the Park festival programme in 2021, to which Creative Darlington allocated budget support and the reach of the programme where also recognised in 2022/23 through a Tees Valley Combined Authority Festivals Programme award covering the 2023 – 26 period. . · Creative Darlington supported Christina Castling's 'Beyond Caring' proposal, as part of Darlington Hippodrome's A Place for Everyone commitment, to reach broader audiences. I was advised Christina has secured Arts Council England Project Funding support in December 2022 with our support. This is expected to support the development a new production in 2023/24 by Christina alongside partners including Gez Casey (Living Memory Theatre) who are experienced in creatively exploring the experience of older people and those with caring responsibilities, which will be shared in the borough. Supporting an accessible, distinctive and excellent cultural offer through a combination of events, festivals and programmes. · In 2022/23 Creative Darlington budget supported Tracks Darlington's delivery of the Last Train Home comedy and music festival involving The Forum Music Centre and other venues, which also secured Arts Council England Project funding support. · In 2022/23 Creative Darlington budget supported Darlington's Great Music Place programme within World Music Day, 21st June 2022. Darlington's programme included performances by primary schools in the Market Square, a free early evening concert at Darlington Hippodrome by ensemble groups (choirs, orchestra, bands) co-ordinated by Durham Music Service and a free later evening showcase at The Forum Music Centre celebrating the song-writing and music of young artists and bands. · In 2022/23 Creative Darlington budget supported a long established partnership programme involving Darlington Hippodrome, Durham Music Service and Orchestras Live enabling pupils to engage with professional musicians and to devise and celebrate their own work. In 2022/23 musicians from London Mozart Players worked with pupils from Corporation Road and Whinfield Primary Schools and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment performance at Darlington Hippodrome engaged pupils from a further Darlington school. · In 2022/23 Creative Darlington budget alongside Virtual School budget

supported a pilot programme led by Blue Cabin CIC and supported by Youth Music (Lottery Funding) offering care experienced children and the adults in their lives access and opportunities to participate in a bespoke music programme. Seek additional funding for programmes which creatively explore local heritage · Creative Darlington allocated budget to Middlesbrough Arts Weekender to deliver three days of Pop-Up Print workshops and to Cabinet of Curiosities Studio to deliver two days

of Autumn Almanac papercraft drop-in activity at The Friends Meeting House, with these five days securing 300+ drop in participants in total. The Pop-Up Print sessions explored Darlington's associations with print as home of the Northern Echo and aspects of The Friends heritage, e.g. environmental concern. The Cabinet of Curiosities pilot sessions informed their successful Grow Your Own Creativity application which has secured Arts Council England Project Funding, and will support a programme running July 2023 to March 2024 involving Darlington Library, The Friends Community Hub and South Park, exploring. This programme will celebrate links between nature and creativity and explore areas, including the involvement of Darlington based company in designing and constructing glass houses of significant scale. · In 2022/23 Creative Darlington supported a successful application by curator Phil Gatenby which secured Arts Council England Project Funding to develop and share exhibitions exploring female activism, including the work of Elizabeth Pease and Josephine Butler. An exhibition at Josephine Butler College in Durham City opened in June 2023 and a further exhibition will be shared in Darlington Library's gallery in late 2023/24. Manage access to the Borough Art Collection and support the sharing of visual art activity in Darlington in 2022/23, support the development of appropriate exhibition proposals for Darlington Library post restoration (programme restart anticipated in September 2023) · With the restoration of Darlington Library underway in 2022/23 Creative Darlington budget supported the relocation of those works in Darlington Borough Art Collection previously held in safe and secure storage there to an alternative Darlington Borough Council location, where they are currently safely and securely stored. There has been limited digital access Darlington Borough Art Collection via the Art UK website previously (with only 251 images of works in oil paint or acrylics accessible). In 2022/23 to enable more extensive digital access to works in our public collection Creative Darlington budget covered photography services provided by Art UK (6 days of photography in December 2022) and now over 500 works in our collection including works in watercolour, drawings, prints, photographs, textile artworks and ceramics, can be accessed online at <https://batch.artuk.org/discover/artworks/search/collectionx:darlington-borough-art-collection-377/page/11> . These will remain accessible on the Art UK subject to a modest annual partnership fee. Creative Darlington also managed the loan of various works for exhibition elsewhere by other parties during 2022/23. · Creative Darlington supported Phil Gatenby's successful application in 2022/23 for Arts Council England Project Funding to support an exhibition focused on female campaigners and activists, including Elizabeth Pease. An exhibition, provisionally titled 'Place, People & Living Memory' will be held at Darlington Library from January – March 2024. Maintain positive working relationship with Darlington for Culture, other Darlington and Tees Valley enterprises, networks and organisations and the

North East Cultural Partnership to lead, support or encourage the development of positive creative programmes in Darlington · Creative Darlington continued to assess and make recommendations to Darlington for Culture's Small grants programme. 12 applications were assessed by Creative Darlington in 2022/23 with Darlington for Culture's Small Grants supporting a diverse range of activity including the Women-X film festival 2022 programme at Darlington Hippodrome and Open Clasp Theatre Company's performance of 'Lasagna' at The Forum Music Centre which generated funds to support the work of the Rape & Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre · (Darlington & Co Durham) CIO. · Darlington for Culture attended the Creative Darlington board meeting in 2022/23, and good links were maintained between both parties in 2022/23, e.g. the exhibition boards in The Friends Community Hub installed with Creative Darlington budget were used to support their first exhibition during Darlington Arts Festival in May 2023 curated by Darlington for Culture. · In 2022/23 Creative Darlington budget was committed to a number of Tees Valley wide initiatives involving Tees Valley

Combined Authority, including the Clore Tees Valley programme launched in spring 2023 at The Hullabaloo, which will support leadership development across the sub-region (Creative Darlington budget will support bursaries for individuals resident in Darlington borough only), and a proposal by TeesDANCE to provide development opportunities for those resident in Tees Valley interested in developing careers in dance (Creative Darlington budget will support this programme in 2023/24 and 2024/25 subject to Tees Dance securing Arts Council England Project Funding support) · Creative Darlington attended North East Cultural Partnership events in 2022/23 including their annual conference. A decision was agreed by the Tees Valley local authorities in 2022/23 who had hitherto each annually committed budget (£6,000 for 2022/23 from the Creative Darlington budget) to an annual subscription to the North East Cultural Partnership that they would no longer subscribe in 2023/24.

Budget administered

1) DBC funding - revenue and capital £122,842 (£121,317 to the Heritage & Culture Fund/Creative Darlington budget + £1,525 for Art Collection insurance)

DBC resources contributed

e.g. finance, employees, accommodation, other assets

Finance

1) DBC funding – revenue and capital £122,842

Staffing (FTE)

1) Creative Darlington Manager – 1.0

Accommodation

Not applicable

Other assets

None

Governance arrangements outstanding actions, if any, from partnership toolkit questionnaire

None

Issues of concern, if any e.g. Finance, staffing etc

The budget of £60,000 allocated by Darlington Partnership to support the Transition of Darlington's Arts offer in c 2011/12 has been allocated (supporting improvements to cultural assets including The Bridge Centre for Visual Arts and The Forum Music Centre etc). Since the inception of Creative Darlington, Darlington Borough Council's Heritage & Culture Fund programme budget has supported both Darlington Borough Council led programmes (e.g. the exhibition programme at Darlington Library) and externally led programmes, with this budget normally leveraging in significant additional funding from sources beyond Darlington Borough Council. Demand normally outstrips the available Creative Darlington programme budget and careful budget management is required. The Heritage & Culture Fund budget for programme in 2023/24 is fully committed and the majority of this programme budget in 2024/25 is also committed. Many of the commitments Darlington Borough Council makes to external parties to support work addressing priorities within Darlington Cultural Strategy 2022 – 2026 are conditional to their securing Lottery funding which is difficult to predict.

· Creative Darlington successfully appointed its new chair, Allison McKay from The Forum Music Centre in late 2022/23 however there was only one Creative Darlington board meeting held during this year in January 2023 in person at Darlington Hippodrome.

Action plan to address issues of concern (including responsible officer and timescales)

· Creative Darlington has played a role in the development of many creative assets, enterprises and to shape the vision within Darlington's current Cultural Strategy and this should help us in prioritising the commitments we make, while the high levels of demand on various funding programmes are beyond our remit we can take steps to advise where the finite Heritage & Culture Fund budget for 2023/24 and 2024/25 is focused to help manage demand.

· With the new chair appointed particularly significant demands including meeting the closing date for application to join Arts Council England's National Portfolio 2023 – 2026, and negotiation around funding agreements for those who applied successfully in 2022/23 now past, we are well placed to increase the regularity of board meetings in 2023/24. We have our first board meeting scheduled to take place at Darlington Hippodrome this year on 26th June 2023 and will call the next in September 2023.

Is the partnership to continue?

Yes

Objectives for next year

- Contribute to the Action Plan for Darlington Cultural Strategy in 2023/24.
- Contributing to the creative exploration of Darlington's railway heritage by commissioning or supporting the development of proposals.
- Further develop the theatre town momentum including strategic engagement with Darlington Hippodrome and Theatre Hullabaloo. · Supporting an accessible, distinctive and excellent cultural offer through a combination of events, festivals and programmes. · Seek additional funding for programmes which creatively explore and celebrate local heritage, particularly that of Darlington Library, which is expected to reopen post restoration in September 2023. · Manage access to the Borough Art Collection and support the return of parts of this to Darlington Library and manage the exhibition programme there. · Maintain positive working relationship with Darlington for Culture, other Darlington and Tees Valley enterprises, networks and organisations to develop creative programmes in Darlington.

Completed By Lead Officer:

Name

Stephen Wiper

Post

Creative Darlington Manager

Date

15th June 2023

Reviewed By Assistant Director:

Name

Ian Thompson

This document was classified as: OFFICIAL

Post

Assistant Director – Community Services

Date

16th June 2023