

ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP REVIEW FORM YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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

- Support the development of a Culture Strategy for Darlington Borough Council during 2021/22.
- 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, including work to extend the In2 programme.
- Seek additional funding for programmes which creatively explore local heritage.
- Manage and promote exhibition programmes at Darlington Library and Town Hall exhibition space and manage access to the Borough Art Collection.
- Maintain positive working relationship with Darlington for Culture and other Darlington and Tees Valley enterprises, networks and organisations, to lead, support or encourage the development of positive creative programmes in Darlington.

PERFORMANCE AGAINST OBJECTIVES

Support the development of a Culture Strategy for Darlington Borough Council during 2021/22

- During 2021/22 Creative Darlington engaged with partners including Arts Council England, Darlington for Culture, Teesside University, Tees Valley Combined Authority, Theatre Hullabaloo, The Forum Music Centre and Creative Darlington board members to discuss a proposed Darlington Cultural Strategy 2022 – 2026. Using research and discussions including a Creative Darlington board meeting, Darlington Cultural Strategy 2022 – 2026 was written and agreed by Darlington Borough Council. The Darlington Cultural Strategy 2022 – 2026 is currently with Design and Print.

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

- Creative Darlington managed the commissioning and installation of rail heritage themed coloured railway signs by artist Andrew McKeown depicting particular locomotives with associations to Darlington, these being Locomotion No. 1,

Derwent, The Prince of Wales and Tornado in spring 2021. Creative Darlington produced a paper on the potential application of railway themed public art in Darlington which was considered by Darlington Rail Heritage Quarter capital programme group. Following this Darlington Borough Council commissioned Andrew McKeown to produce a document outlining a variety of proposed applications of public art on or around the Rail Heritage Quarter site and Creative Darlington managed this contract. The Darlington Railway Heritage Quarter Artwork Strategy was received in November 2021 and has been shared with those working on the RHQ capital programme.

- During 2021/22 Creative Darlington also engaged with a working group in Middleton St. George around their interest in exploring whether a 2D piece of artwork and another 3D piece might be taken forward. During 2021/22 an indicative quote for the 2D work has been shared this with the group and approaches made to other artists around the creation of 2D work.

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

- During 2021/22 Creative Darlington supported Theatre Hullabaloo in taking forward their Hullabaloo in the Park programme which was staged in South Park, Darlington between 12th and 25th July 2021, with further activity held in Firthmoor Community Centre. Creative Darlington allocated £5,000 budget support to the programme: 6,188 people attended shows and events at Hullabaloo in the Park, 4,674 attended free / non ticketed events, 1,514 attended ticketed events, bookers came from 16 different Local Authorities with the top 3 for household reach being Darlington, Richmondshire and Stockton-on-Tees, 50% of bookers came from 1km of The Hullabaloo, in Darlington.
- Creative Darlington supported Papatango theatre company in bringing a free five session playwriting course for adults to Darlington, with sessions held at Darlington Hippodrome and The Hullabaloo, between 14 March 2022 and June 2022.

Supporting an accessible, distinctive and excellent cultural offer through a combination of events, festivals and programmes, including work to extend the In2 programme

- An unsuccessful application was submitted in 2021/22 for Project Funding to Arts Council England for the In2 programme Year 3 through Creative Darlington for The In2 programme which continued in 2021/22 with Darlington Borough Council support.
- Creative Darlington supported Neighbourhood Watch Stilts International in bringing their Arts Council England Project Funded Insectopolis programme to Darlington, which staged activity in Darlington Town Centre. The programme secured a significant public audience and explored environmental themes.
- Creative Darlington supported Cabinet of Curiosity Ltd in bringing their Arts Council England Project Funded programme to Darlington, 300 people participated directly in workshops and through the paper toy templates distributed in Darling Library. The programme concluded with an exhibition of work created in Queen Street Shopping Centre with several thousand viewers

estimated based on average footfall.

- Creative Darlington supported a programme where Bradburn Films worked with clients of the Community Arts Project and Grassroots Training and Therapeutic Service to create two films which both parties will use to promote their services, as part of National Autism Week.
- Creative Darlington supported Orchestras Live in developing the Song of The Skerne programme working with pupils of various schools in Darlington Borough. A film created during the programme was screened before an audience at Darlington Hippodrome during 2021/22.

Seek additional funding for programmes which creatively explore local heritage

- Creative Darlington allocated budget to artist Anton Hecht to develop and deliver activity and filming in Darlington exploring communication through semaphore, with filming undertaken in various locations including The Head of Steam railway museum, and activity included in Darlington Arts Festival 2021. 50 people were involved in the programme.
- Creative Darlington supported Darlington Library Service in their submission of an unsuccessful application to the first round of Arts Council England's Libraries Improvements Programme in 2021/22.
- Creative Darlington allocated budget to support The Middlesbrough Art Weekender 2021 programme, with activity held at The Head of Steam railway museum, Jo Lathwood's 'Is It Magma?' Lava Pour and Enviro Bike. These attracted 150 participants and 200 audience members in total.

Manage and promote exhibition programmes at Darlington Library and Town Hall exhibition space and manage access to the Borough Art Collection

- There were no exhibitions held at Darlington Town Hall in 2021/22, as access to the building was promoted as by appointment only, and in these circumstances the Darlington Town Hall exhibition programme would not have attracted sufficient visitors to make it viable.
- The exhibition programme at Darlington Library restarted in June 2021 when parts of Darlington Library service reopened to the public. The programme ran between June 2021 and 16 December 2021 and four exhibitions were shared, before the exhibition programme ceased as a result of the first phase of the Darlington Library restoration programme.
- As part of modifications to how space is used within Darlington Town Hall, the John Dobbin watercolours formerly displayed in the corridor space outside Committee rooms on the first floor of Darlington Town Hall were packed and transported to safe and secure storage in Darlington Library.
- As referenced above phase one of the restoration of Darlington Library began in December 2021, including roof-work above two of the rooms there, FF1 and FF4, in which works in the Borough Art Collection have been stored. Within the Darlington Library restoration plans these rooms will be repurposed to offices. During 2021/22 Creative Darlington worked with a colleague in Darlington Borough Council's corporate landlord service and identified and advised on

necessary modifications for storage to a space to which the works in the Borough Art Collection which were previously stored in rooms FF1 and FF4 have been relocated. An audit of the storage of Darlington Borough Art Collection began in 2021/22. Various works in Darlington Borough Art Collection were bubble wrapped and prepared for relocation to a new space in 2021/22.

Maintain positive working relationship with Darlington for Culture and other Darlington and Tees Valley enterprises, networks and organisations, 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. 11 applications were assessed in 2021/22.
- Darlington for Culture attended Creative Darlington board meetings, and good links were maintained between both parties during 2021/22.
- Creative Darlington attended North East Cultural Partnership events including their annual conference.

BUDGET ADMINISTERED

- 1) DBC funding - revenue and capital £137,585
- 2) Other –

DBC RESOURCES CONTRIBUTED e.g. finance, employees, accommodation, other assets

Finance

- 1) DBC funding – revenue and capital £137,585

Staffing (FTE)

- 1) Creative Darlington Manager – 1.0

Accommodation

Not applicable

Other assets

None

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS OUTSTANDING ACTIONS, IF ANY, FROM PARTNERSHIP TOOLKIT QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1) Provide evidence of DBC risks being considered throughout the year – Risk assessment has been an agenda item within the two Creative Darlington board meetings held in 2021/22 (Monday 20 September 2021 and Monday 7 February 2022).
- 2) The Creative Darlington board terms of reference were considered as an agenda item at the meeting on Monday 7 February 2022 and agreed by the board.

ISSUES OF CONCERN, IF ANY e.g. finance, staffing etc

- During 2021/22 scheduled Creative Darlington board meetings were called via Microsoft Teams, rather than held at Darlington Hippodrome, to maximise attendance.
- The chair of Creative Darlington is expected to step down in 2022/23 on retirement from their substantive post.
- As Creative Darlington Manager I worked from home for the vast majority of 2021/22, working within Darlington Library and at Darlington Town Hall on occasion around the Borough Art Collection where required. With the restoration of Darlington Library underway alternative permanent storage for those parts of the Borough Art Collection formerly located in rooms FF1 and FF4 at Darlington Library will be required.

ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS ISSUES OF CONCERN (including responsible officer and timescales)

- We intend to call the first Creative Darlington board meeting in 2022/23 by Microsoft Teams then to call following meetings in person where possible at Darlington Hippodrome.
- We will liaise with Darlington Borough Council colleagues and Creative Darlington board members to identify another chair, to replace the current Creative Darlington chair, Sharon Paterson from Teesside University.

IS THE PARTNERSHIP TO CONTINUE?

YES

OBJECTIVES FOR NEXT 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.

Completed By Lead Officer:

Name

Stephen Wiper

Post

Creative Darlington Manager

Date 9 June 2022



Received By Assistant Director/Director: **Name** Ian Thompson
Post Assistant Director –
Community Services

Date 5 July 2022