

What does culture mean to you? Have your say



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North Tyneside residents are being asked 'what does culture mean to you?' as part of a project to develop a bold new cultural strategy for the borough.

North Tyneside's 2030 Cultural Strategy will set out how the council aims to improve the cultural offer for residents and visitors over the next eight years, putting culture at the heart of communities, and making cultural activities accessible for all.

Face-to-face consultation has already taken place with a host of cultural organisations, freelancers, and communities in the borough.

Now an online survey is giving people the opportunity to express themselves about all things cultural and to help inform the development of the strategy.

Councillor Carl Johnson, North Tyneside's Deputy Mayor, said: "Culture plays a hugely important role in our daily lives and our identities, our history, our sense of place, our family life, and our communities. A strong cultural sector can enrich people's lives and lead to a range of positive outcomes that we are keen to tap into and maximise."

“We recognise that, whilst there may already be a good cultural offer in some parts of North Tyneside, there are geographical disparities as well as physical and financial barriers may hold some people back. By working together to develop a strong cultural strategy, we can overcome these barriers and come up with a plan that reflects the diversity of people across North Tyneside.

“And that’s why we are keen to hear from as many people as possible about what culture means to them, why it matters, and how they take part in it.”

The council has been working with specialist consultants Catherine Hearne and Iain Watson OBE to begin consultation with local organisations.

Iain, a former Director of Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums and a visiting professor at Newcastle University, said: “First and foremost, the groups were committed to increasing equal access to the culture and heritage of North Tyneside, and the other thing that stood out was the real cultural confidence in the groups. They demonstrated specific knowledge and expertise in particular areas whether running cultural events with older people or children, whether it was in their own artistic practice or running heritage groups...a huge range.”

Catherine, former CEO of Helix Arts, added: “We were struck by community pride across the towns and villages of North Tyneside and a cultural confidence about what’s on offer. The groups demonstrated a confidence about high level skills and talents, a confidence about what North Tyneside culture is and can be – and concerns for example about entry into the culture sector for young people. The willingness to collaborate was encouraging as was a determination that the strategy produced shouldn’t be a dust-gathering document. Significant challenges were identified, such as concerns about equality of access.”

[Complete the short survey here.](#)