

Cultural Framework

January 2025



Foreword

I am pleased to share our Cultural Framework which sets a new direction for Westmorland and Furness Council's work in and with culture, arts and heritage in our area for our economy, our communities, and environment.

Westmorland and Furness has an exceptional cluster of cultural and creative organisations. We have a wealth of cultural assets, a strong cultural and creative offer, distinctive heritage, landscape and identity, and creative potential to deliver long lasting benefits for the whole area. We want to build on our strengths and utilise our assets effectively.

Our cultural potential is significant. Our goal is for a dynamic, growing, vital and diverse cultural ecosystem which extends throughout our rural areas as well as our towns that underpins the creative economy, supporting the economic and social growth of our area, enhancing our reputation both nationally and internationally.

The framework intends to facilitate creativity, innovation, learning and growth, to create opportunities for communities across W&F, to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone living here, and to develop the economic potential of the creative industries for our visitor and night time economies, for our high streets, and for employment and enterprise.



Cllr Virginia Taylor



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Credit - Steve Barber

Introduction

Westmorland and Furness Council is a new local authority supporting the Furness, Eden, and South Lakeland area, with an outstanding unique cultural landscape and history which inspires creative people, its residents, and visitors alike.

The Council want to work in deeper partnership with the creative and cultural sector, and with wider stakeholders, to agree a coherent, shared ambition and develop new opportunities around our outstanding cultural and natural assets and our creative people, places and cultural communities.

The Council want culture to be a driver for the health and wellbeing of all our residents, enabling and providing early prevention pathways through participation and engagement opportunities in cultural initiatives and programmes. Culture plays a pivotal role in the socio-economic and health development of Westmorland and Furness by fostering community cohesion, enhancing wellbeing, and driving local economic growth. Through cultural initiatives such as local festivals, arts programmes, and heritage projects, the Council can strengthen social bonds, reduce isolation, and improve mental health, providing residents with a sense of identity and belonging. Furthermore, culture attracts tourism and boosts local businesses, creating job opportunities and supporting the local economy. By investing in accessible cultural programmes, the Council can also address health inequalities by promoting physical and mental health through activities like dance, music, and creative expression. Culture can be a powerful tool for sustainable development and making Westmorland and Furness a place to live, work and thrive.

This Framework is an initial piece of work which aims to set the direction of travel for Council-led and Council-supported culture, creativity and arts, identifying the immediate actions to kickstart this work. It sits alongside and intersects with the ongoing development of the Council's Library, Playgrounds, Parks and Open Spaces, and Active Wellbeing strategies, as well as preparing the way for development of heritage-focused strategy in the future. The huge economic benefit of arts, culture and heritage and the creative industries is undeniable and this will be explored in line with the Council's evolving Economic Strategy.

The creation of the new Council brought together four different councils' ways of investing and supporting the independent arts, culture and heritage sector. The current inherited models together are inequitable and inconsistent. We want to work with the sector and partners to level the playing field whilst also ensuring that our resource is used for public benefit in line with Council priorities and objectives.

Where the Council seeks to continue financial support of the independent cultural sector, this will be done within the scope of the Grant Giving Policy approved by Westmorland and Furness Council in February 2024.

The aims of the Cultural Framework is to identify the Council's priorities for culture; align the delivery of culture in which the Council invests with the strategy and principles of Arts Council England's 'Let's Create', and Creative People and Places programme, and the Council's own Community Power strategy; and act as a catalyst for conversation, partnership-brokering, place-making, collaborative working and investment in culture, ensuring efforts and resources are co-ordinated and focused.

Our Mission

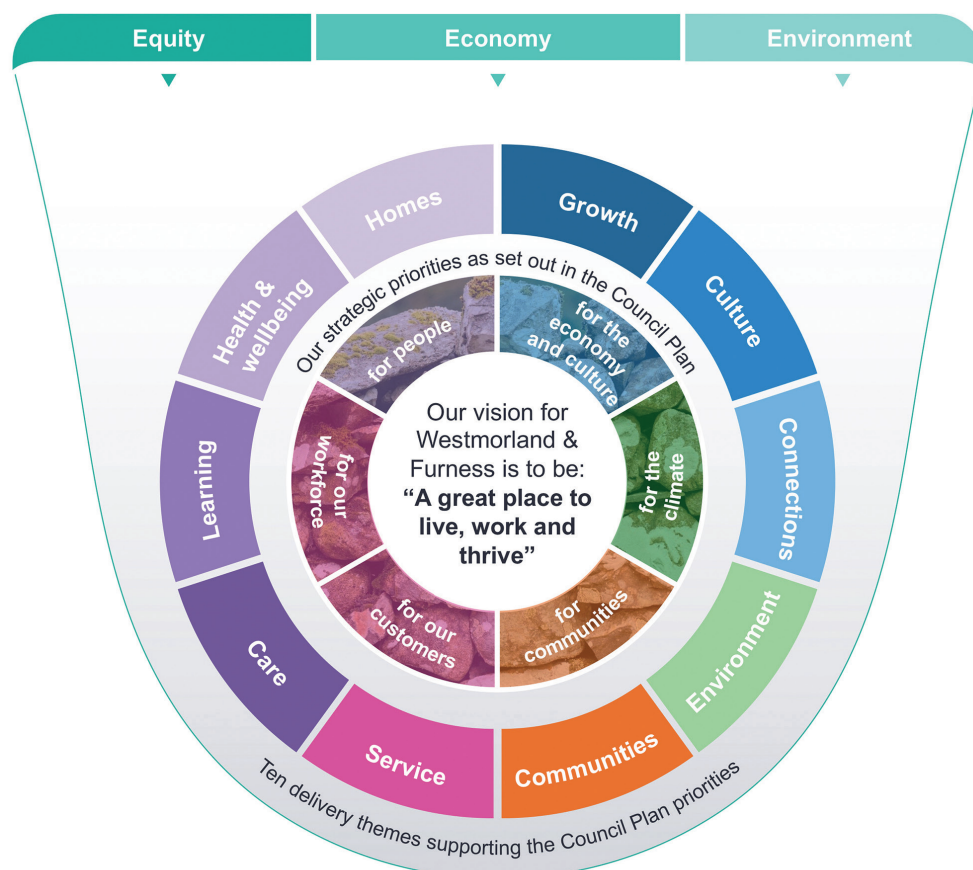
Our Council Plan clearly references that a thriving cultural economy is one of our key priorities. Our mission to achieve this is set out in our Council Plan Delivery Framework which states:

Culture is central to our place shaping, the development of creative people and places, our economy and visitor offer, the health and wellbeing of our communities and the promotion of both our unique natural and world heritage cultural landscape. In parallel, everyone has access to a diverse and distinctive range of opportunities to be creative and enjoy high quality cultural experiences across our area.

Culture is embedded in all we do and contributes to improved health, wellbeing and quality of life. Everyone has access to a diverse and distinctive range of opportunities to be creative and enjoy high quality cultural experiences across our area.

In delivering our mission for culture, this Culture Framework will contribute to the delivery of a wide range of ambitions within our Council Plan and Council Plan Delivery Framework:

- Empowered places – towns and countryside
- Welcoming, proud and resilient communities
- Opportunities for children and young people to live healthy, happy lives
- Opportunities for jobs, learning, skills and enterprise
- A sustainable, inclusive, diverse, economy
- Opportunities for education, health, and wellbeing
- A great and diverse visitor offer in our towns and countryside
- Thriving cultural economy



This Framework has been created using the design principles in Westmorland and Furness Council's target operating model.

The operating model helps us plan and deliver activities, projects and programmes that will support the Council's priorities.

The Westmorland and Furness operating model has been designed with a focus on early intervention, health and wellbeing and improving the customer experience.

Community focus



We will focus on early intervention and prevention, working with individuals, community groups, parish and town councils, the voluntary sector and partners to reduce need for our services and improve health and wellbeing.

Easy access



Services will be user friendly, caring and accessible through multiple channels. Wherever possible services will be available and delivered digitally, reducing demand for phone and in-person interaction so those resources can be focused on those most in need.

Effective services



Services are outcome focused and maximise use of technology to drive efficiency and effectiveness. Service delivery is citizen-centred and seamless between services and partner organisations

Enabling processes



Internal processes and functions are supported by key enabling functions including Human Resources, Project Management Office, Legal, Commissioning and Procurement working closely with service delivery teams.

Supporting technology



'Fit for purpose' technology across the council that supports the delivery of services, promotes digital ways of working, and enables organisational efficiency.

Where Are We Now?

1. Westmorland and Furness Area Cultural Offer

Westmorland and Furness as a place has a wealth of cultural assets, many that have been established for many years, which includes independent arts, heritage and cultural organisations; venues and community arts spaces; museums and areas of natural heritage; and an array of diverse place-based events across the towns, villages and open spaces of the area.

Local professional arts, culture and heritage organisations are regionally, nationally and internationally renowned and include 11 Arts Council England National Portfolio organisations and one Creative People and Places organisation:

- Art Gene – art-gene.co.uk
- BarrowFull – barrowfull.org.uk
- Brewery Arts – breweryarts.co.uk
- Eden Arts – edenarts.co.uk
- Full of Noises – fonfestival.org
- Grizedale Arts – grizedale.org
- Highlights Rural Touring – highlightsnorth.co.uk
- Lakeland Arts – lakelandarts.org.uk
- Lakes International Comic Arts Festival - comicartfestival.com
- Signal Film & Media – signalfilmandmedia.com
- Theatre Factory – theatrefactory.org
- Wordsworth Trust – wordsworth.org.uk

Many arts centres, studios and other venues present rich programmes of film, music, theatre, dance, comedy, visual arts, literary events, community-engaged practices, classes and workshops. Festivals bring large-scale participatory experiences and high-profile artists to our places and regular events celebrate the diversity of our people, places and past. These showcase music, lanterns, seasonal festivities, multiculturalism, heritage, theatre and more. Formal and informal artists' networks bring people together and share insights to different practices. Histories are celebrated in small and large museums, heritage sites including castles and abbey ruins, and archives and collections. Across our area there are numerous music societies and associations celebrating different genres, brass and silver bands, jazz and samba groups, choirs, amateur operatic and dramatic societies, dance academies, arts and artist associations, youth theatres and more.

Other projects of note include Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's work in Barrow which is funded by Arts Council England to engage with Barrovians in a targeted and committed way over the next few years. The Borderlands Place Plans are progressing in Dalton, Penrith and Ulverston identifying the priority cultural and creative projects for investment of £3m that will help to boost town vibrancy, vitality, community and visitor offer. The Grange Lido project is bringing the site back into use as a facility for the local community and visitor destination.

The sector in Westmorland and Furness and across our neighbouring Cumberland benefit from the invaluable support, organising and advocacy of Cumbria Arts and Culture Network, which the Council in turn aims to continue to support. Other cultural steering and networking has been offered by the Cumbria LEP and is part of the early development of its successor Enterprising Cumbria. The Council will continue to work in partnership with all relevant bodies such as these.

Facts and Figures:

- The Westmorland and Furness area received **£3,609,705** of funding for arts and culture in 2023-24 from Arts Council England, equivalent to £15.85 per head of population. The Council has invested £315,000 in grants to cultural partners each year which has helped to facilitate the level of support from the Arts Council of £3.6m. Each pound invested by the Council generates a return on investment from the Arts Council of around £10.
- **70.22%** of people attended an arts event, museum or gallery or participated in an arts activity at least once in the year.
- **255** creative and cultural sector businesses in W&F (2.63% of total).
- **2075** people employed in creative and cultural sectors (1.99% of total, not including self-employed/freelance – this sector has more than double the number of self-employed people than other sectors).
- **4.1** creative companies per 1000 people.

2. The Council's Cultural Offer

The scope of this Cultural Framework mainly covers the Council's engagement with the people of Westmorland and Furness through culture and collaboration with the independent cultural sector, including support with finances and in-kind support.

Of course, the Council has a wide range of its own cultural assets, officers, and in-house provision which includes libraries; the Dock Museum, Penrith Museum, and the collections at Kendal Museum and elsewhere; venues; civic buildings and spaces including town halls; and community centres.

In November 2024, the Council recruited a Strategic Lead for Culture who will bring independent cultural sector expertise to the Cultural Services Team from early 2025 and oversee much of the future development of the actions set out in this Framework.

Venues

The Council runs a number of cultural and community venues across Westmorland and Furness Council. Unfortunately, one of our popular places The Forum in Barrow in Furness has to close temporarily from 31 March 2025 to enable works to be done to the building and to transform the inter-connected Market. Work is happening to look at what we can provide elsewhere whilst the Forum is shut as we recognise how valued it is by the community.



Barrow Market is undergoing a significant upgrade through the Government's Levelling Up Fund. A new improved entrance, bar, café and accessible toilet facilities will be created, alongside a new community hub, with a focus on social enterprise.

The Coro in Ulverston is a community hub with a diverse programme of entertainment and plays a major part in the town's year-round festival programme. The Council took over the running of the Coro in January 2024.



Additional to these Council-owned and run venues, the Council also funds and commissions venues, spaces and organisations as noted on page 4.

Libraries

Westmorland and Furness Libraries' cultural offer has grown significantly since the Libraries Connected Universal Offer for Culture was initiated. In Quarter 1 of 2024-25, library membership was up +4.5% on the previous quarter with a 10% increase in active members in Q1 on the previous year. Libraries have produced a number of local history talks in schools and to local groups on various subjects, and a number of exhibitions on a variety of subjects in libraries. The Council's commitment to continue to improve and promote the use of our libraries as centres for culture, literacy and learning is exemplified by £874,000 of improvements made to Kendal library.



Museums and Collections

The Council continues to develop our museums, including the creation of a new heritage gallery called 'Shipyard Town' at Barrow's Dock Museum utilising £0.8m of funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Also, the amphitheatre at the Dock Museum has been overhauled as part of the Brilliant Barrow Town Deal Place Development project.



Music Hub

Cumbria Music Education Hub is a collaborative partnership led by Westmorland & Furness Council's Music Service (Children's Services). Working with the Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness Music Services, schools and educational settings within our two unitary council areas, and several local, regional and national partners we support the delivery of the vision and three goals of the National Plan for Music Education through the Arts Council England Hub Grant. We work together to enable all children and young people to learn to sing, play an instrument and create music together, and have the opportunity to progress their musical interests and talents, including professionally.

Adult Learning

Spanning the whole of Cumbria through both Westmorland and Furness Council and Cumberland Councils – Adult Learning has the remit to support the people of Cumbria in terms of skills development alongside supporting their mental health and employment chances. Through both their Arts and Crafts and Arts and Wellbeing curricula (seen here Arts and crafts (adultlearningcumbria.org/arts-and-crafts), not only do local people learn skills and develop their knowledge, but actively improve their confidence, self-expression, creativity, social connections and overall wellbeing. Some highlights of 2023-24 delivery in Westmorland and Furness were:

- **Kendal** - Arts for Wellbeing learners piloting E3 Skills for the Creative Industries, one going on to HE another getting an exhibition.
- **Penrith** - Arts delivered to Learners with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities via Independent Living qualification. Visit to gallery at Rheged as part of programme.
- **Barrow** - Arts for Wellbeing delivered face to face and online.
- **98.8%** of Health and Wellbeing learners were satisfied or above with their overall experience on their course.
- **99.4 %** of Art learners were satisfied or above with their overall experience on their course.

3. Centring Sector Voice and Partnership

April 2023

At a sector-led meeting at Brewery Arts in Kendal, a group of 55 local arts, culture and heritage workers and leaders from across the Westmorland and Furness area met to consider the future of culture here.

Part of the outcome of that day was an offer the sector felt they could make to the Council which included:

- Collaborating with the Council to help it achieves its objectives.
- Being part of the solution to local challenges, not another challenge. For example, looking for environmentally responsible ways to tackle transport challenges across our area.
- Helping to recognise and continue the sector's contributions and impacts on visitor economy, employment, education and skills, regeneration, inclusion, social issues, health and wellbeing, the environment.
- Ideas and solutions to help make things thrive, for example:
 - Disused, underused or empty buildings and venues could thrive with our activity and creative solutions.
 - Collaborative programming across our whole area, including programmes developed for schools or across isolated communities etc.
 - Creation of a 'knowledge hub' for local culture
- Joining forces with the Council and each other to better communicate, cross-promote and advocate more strongly for culture locally and bring in more investment.



October 2024

The Council hosted sector consultations sessions (in Ulverston, Penrith and online) led by an external consultant and designed to inform the development of this initial Framework, attendees reviewed the above offer (with attendees who had both been present in April 2023 and hadn't) and it was received positively and seen as relevant and appropriate. The principle of working as partners welcomed with the acknowledgement of scale of the challenge to bring the sector together.

The sessions explored much of the groundwork and ideas set out in this Framework. The responses and provocations from the sector are integrated and directly referenced throughout this Framework.

Some specific challenges and concerns the sector have raised through consultation include:

- The challenge to improve the relationship between the Council and the sector, to build trust and enable constructive collaboration based on mutual understanding and appreciation.
- The need to improve sector networks and address lack of join-up.
- The need to build understanding and fruitful exploration of Westmorland and Furness' new geography and with it opportunities for leveraging new investment.
- The need to raise the profile of culture and its benefits to Council services (e.g. health benefits) to ensure that our vision is achieved.

During discussions exploring matching the Council's evolving cultural vision with overall Council priorities, sector representatives expressed:

- General approval of this approach and the language proposed within this document.
- Strong support for community-led and asset-based approaches.
- Development of wider, collaboratively created, place-based cultural strategy could be a critical next step.
- The Council's sustainability principles are important for culture and future investment.

Some representatives also said:

- "There is a great resource in arts practitioners employed by Westmorland and Furness; the Council needs to find new and better ways to harness this for long-term community benefit especially marginalised groups in our community"
- "We need to find a way to articulate the very different roles our institutions play and the very different communities they are focused on... looking at the entire offer holistically we start to see how each community can be served effectively and that together we are greater than the sum of parts."

These consultations have directly informed this Framework and hopefully contributors will be able to see their input reflected in it. The Council is grateful to everyone who has contributed to this process and respect the wide array of opinions and suggestions, and acknowledges this Framework cannot provide all the answers to the challenges both the sector and Council face, and that there is a need to move forward with open and honest collaboration with the sector to keep developing and strengthening this work. This commitment to co-working and partnership will be evident as priorities and actions for culture are set out.

4. Overview of Main Challenges For Audiences and Participants

Main challenges are around accessibility and barriers to engagement, including cost, limited transport, geographic and inconsistent spread of facilities, events and activities, and limited awareness of what's on offer.

For the Sector

The UK's arts and culture sector has been found to be in crisis financially, it is "running on empty"¹. Smaller organisations and freelancers are those struggling the most to balance their books and navigate the fragmented range of limited funding sources.²

For the Council

At a time of change and whilst many new strategies and models of working are being created, the main specific challenges for the Council in achieving its mission for culture will centre around joining things together internally within the Council; collaboration and mutual communication with the sector and fully understanding the needs and opportunities of all parties; transitioning from historic models of collaboration and support for culture; and the running of the Council's assets alongside and with communities to find appropriate and mutually beneficial solutions.



Credit - Caroline Robinson

¹ <https://www.ft.com/content/101416b4-d62c-43e6-901e-aec0f5754112?countryCode=GBR>

² <https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/smaller-arts-organisations-facing-worst-financial-struggles>

Where We Want to Be

The Council's own cultural assets are developed and strengthened to work towards the aim that everyone's life is enriched through culture, those working in culture are supported, and communities and individuals who have additional challenges in life are able to thrive through engagement in arts, creativity and heritage.

The Council engages the local expertise and creative might of Westmorland and Furness' professional arts and culture workers – as well as the creativity of all its communities to promote socially-engaged creative and cultural practice and, community decision-making, useful art, arts education, and creative health practices which have positive impact on society and its problems. Recognising different places in our area have their own unique challenges, and even where challenges are shared, responses may need to differ.

The Council's priorities for culture combine to ensure that Westmorland and Furness is a distinctive, outward-facing, attractive place with a strong cultural identity. The Council supports the area achieve its potential, catalysing growth and change, and innovating ways communities can have choice and power in decision-making and place-making.

Theme 1: Live

Ambition: The people of Westmorland and Furness live lives enhanced by culture and creativity, through which mental and physical health and wellbeing are improved. 70% of our people currently engage in arts and culture, The Council wants to help the remaining 30% to gain access to, enjoy, and be inspired by them too.

Theme 2: Work

Ambition: Those who work in the independent arts, culture and heritage sector are supported and championed. The Council will collaborate with sector partners to address local challenges.

Theme 3: Thrive

Ambition: Our place, its communities, and the Council itself thrive through engagement with a rich and diverse arts, culture, heritage and visitor economy.





Credit - Grizedale Arts

How We'll Get There

1. Approaches

Collaboration

We are stronger together and building on existing partnerships and forging new connections, the Council will work with the creative and cultural sector and with wider stakeholders to achieve our shared ambitions. This work will range from supporting external, independent work in culture to co-production and co-creation of new projects and events and will reach beyond those working in the sector to communities and associations who will benefit from working with the Council.

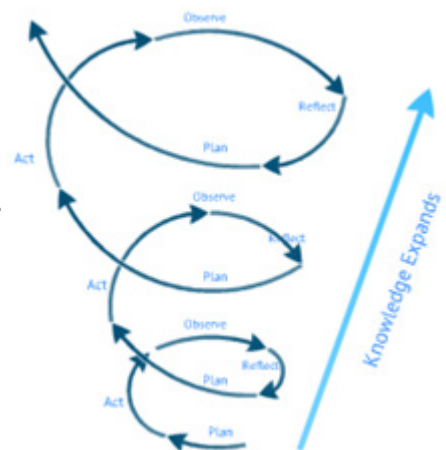
Partnerships between the voluntary, professional, the public and private sectors will be encouraged to help realise new opportunities, share resources, nurture creativity, increase awareness and reach those who have been previously excluded. There are already many effective partnerships and the approach will be to build on these and to instigate partnerships only in areas of need to avoid duplication.

Commitment to build on existing collaborations to create stronger, dynamic partnerships was evident at events co-hosted by University of Cumbria, Arts Council England, Westmorland and Furness Council and Cumberland Council which focused on the impact of the arts and creative sectors in addressing social issues. Bringing together arts, industry, civic and employer partners in Barrow and Carlisle to showcase how organisations are working together to address key challenges such as health, education, and social disparities. The event held in Barrow, focussing on the Westmorland and Furness area, brought together the University of Cumbria, Westmorland and Furness Council, Arts Council England, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board, BAE Systems Submarines, University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust, Imperial College London and the Pears Cumbria School of Medicine, Arts Gene and BarrowFull amongst others. These sessions highlighted the deep commitment to work collaboratively, in creative ways, to address inequalities, deprivation, and isolation, to enhance place attractiveness and vibrancy, and retain and attract more people to live, work and thrive in our area.

Being Responsive, Being Flexible, Learning & Adapting (Action Research)³

Taking an action research approach, this Framework is the first step in a process of arts and cultural development in our area and the actions within the accompanying Delivery Plan will themselves be adapted and developed based on learning and responsiveness. This approach relies on flexibility, embracing some risk, and the ability to be fleet-of-foot, adapting to emerging and developing needs.

The approaches, priorities and actions within this Framework will be adaptable, reviewed and developed regularly to ensure we are meeting need.



Community Power

‘Community power is the belief that people should have a say over the places in which they live and the services they use. It is a growing movement – with communities across the country, and the world, working together to improve places, public services and each other’s lives.’

The Council agreed its Community Power Strategy in July 2024 which sets out a new and exciting approach to working with our communities - making sure that communities of place, experience or interest in the Westmorland and Furness area have greater influence over the places they live and the services that affect their lives

The Council is ambitious and working towards being a community powered council we will therefore

- Recognise and include community skills, capabilities and expertise.
- Work proactively and with honesty.
- Work with the Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise sector.
- Listen to our communities and use this to inform how we work.

³Dr Matteo Fumagalli, QMUL. <https://prezi.com/ehts4zbcng6m/action-research-cycle/>

Delivering cultural initiatives in a community powered way will enable us explore how to resource arts and culture work which enhances community engagement and empowerment and community resilience as well as having local economic benefits and improved health and wellbeing.

An Asset-Based Approach

We will take an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach with our work in and with culture, principally on 'what's strong?' rather than 'what's wrong?'

We will build on:

- A strong and diverse collection of arts, culture and heritage organisations and independent workers.
- Infrastructure, our wide array of buildings, venues, equipment.
- Existing relationships, networks, partnerships.

Previous and ongoing excellent outreach work by us and others

We will trust Westmorland and Furness' greatest cultural asset – the cultural experts themselves: artists, producers, makers and connectors – to guide development of our action plans and strategies.



Strategic Alignment with Arts Council England

'Let's Create', Arts Council England's strategy for 2020-30, seeks delivery of three outcomes: everyone can develop and express creativity throughout their life; villages, towns and cities thrive through a collaborative approach to culture; and England's cultural sector is innovative, collaborative and international.

In addition, Arts Council England's vision for Creative People and Places (CPP) is to include more people from places with statistically less engagement in a wide range of arts and cultural experiences as audiences and participants; empowering communities to lead and shape local cultural provision; and ensuring both the engagement process and the creative and cultural experiences on offer are relevant and excellent.

Westmorland and Furness Council sees a direct link between our own vision and the aims of both Let's Create and CPP. Taking inspiration from these, the Council's thinking around culture will learn from and be shaped by these commonalities.

Previously, former local authorities and cross-sector partners began to scope out an Cultural Compact for the Bay area and now, with encouragement from Arts Council England, the Council sees a Cultural Compact for our area as a real opportunity to enhance collaboration in the creation of a unified vision and future strategy for culture in our place. Cultural Compacts bring together representatives from cultural and creative organisations, local authority, universities, colleges, business, practitioners, destination marketing organisations, health sector, industry, community representatives and voluntary sector. By connecting the sector and building capacity and leadership the Compact can develop shared ambitions and the coherence and capacity to deliver. Ultimately, successful Cultural Compacts have often been the forum in which a strategic plan for cultural development and investment is formed. A Cultural Compact here would be outward looking and provide leadership and a shared voice for Westmorland & Furness.





Credit - Abel Holdsborough

2. Priorities

We have identified 9 priorities to deliver our vision for culture. In working to achieve the ambitions below, the Council acknowledges:

- The need to keep this conversation going, reviewing and strengthening the actions and outputs collaboratively;
- That more diverse and local voices, especially including young people, need to be included in this collaboration;
- That we need to progress with trust, generosity, openness and respect;
- That there is a need to be adaptable, responding to changing community and sector needs

Theme 1 – LIVE

Ambition: The people of Westmorland and Furness live lives enhanced by culture and creativity, through which mental and physical health and wellbeing are improved. 70% of our people currently engage in arts and culture, we want to help the remaining 30% to gain access to, enjoy, and be inspired by them too.

Priorities

- 1) **Everyone in Westmorland and Furness has access to a high-quality, rich and diverse cultural offer across the area.** We agree with sector opinion that there should be 'creative pathways' from childhood to adulthood and older age, including in education. Throughout this work we need to be in direct conversation with communities based on what they think and want.
- 2) **Those who haven't engaged** in culture will be a special focus, especially the most vulnerable and those with the most barriers to participation, in particular **rural residents and those in areas of multiple deprivation, especially children and young people.**
- 3) **Physical and mental health and wellbeing** of people should be improved through participation in arts and culture.

The Council will

- Raise the profile and appreciation of culture as essential to Westmorland and Furness as a place, as a Council, and to those considering living, working or visiting here.
- Collaborate with communities and partners to promote the local cultural offer, events and experiences across our area.
- Encourage an increase in arts in our schools and 'put the A (Arts) in STEAM' (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics).
- Promote and where possible support Arts Awards and Artsmark initiatives.
- Where possible support grassroots and everyday creativity with investment and in-kind support, including advice and signposting.
- Promote and enable the use of Westmorland & Furness' natural assets, parks and public areas as spaces for accessible participation in activities.
- Facilitate projects that help to fulfil this ambition and align with Council priorities through service planning, grant-giving and co-production.



Theme 2 – WORK

Ambition: Those who work in the independent arts, culture and heritage sector are supported and championed. The Council will collaborate with sector partners to address local challenges.

Priorities

- 4) **Supporting a creative, culture and heritage independent sector.** This includes understanding both national and local challenges faced by the cultural sector.
- 5) **Supporting improvement in sector collaboration and partnership working** across our area, sharing learning, and best practices.
- 6) Supporting organisations and individuals in **tackling climate change and increasing environmentally sustainable working.**
- 7) Exploring how to support **an increase in opportunities to study, develop skills and work** in the creative industries, heritage and culture.

The Council will

- Identify opportunities for financial and in-kind support for local organisations and individuals.
- Ensure all processes, decision-making and communications are clear, timely, and accessible.
- Be central to the development of a Cultural Compact as a new, unified voice and vision for culture.
- Support opportunities and solutions for reducing negative impacts on the environment.
- Promote opportunities for training and education locally; look to support organisations offering opportunities to gain work experience and/or apprenticeships.
- Explore ways in which the Council can further support creative industry start-ups and established creative businesses.



Theme 3 - Thrive

Ambition: Our place, its communities, and the Council itself thrive through engagement with a rich and diverse arts, culture, heritage, and visitor economy.

Priorities

- 8) The integral role and value of culture to the **visitor and wider economy** is understood and promoted.
- 9) **Enable and support directorates** to appreciate and embed cultural activity in order to improve outcomes in their service areas.

The Council will

- Encourage and where possible support existing and new place-based events and festivals.
- Actively seek external cultural development funding opportunities and embed culture at the heart of any regional economic development and possible future Devolution.
- Ensure Council venues, libraries, museums and outdoor spaces are beacons for cultural strategy and enable wider reach of activity, especially in widening access to participation.
- Strengthen our partnership working with Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Also locally with Lake District National Park, Cumbria Tourism, and Cumberland Council amongst others.
- Strengthen the collaboration between the tourism sector and arts and culture to ensure the offer is fully communicated to both our communities and visitors.
- Seek to improve links between seasonal visitor economy and year-round cultural offerings.
- Engage Council staff to better understand the local independent sector and where to signpost people to experience excellent arts and culture.
- Encourage Council teams to explore arts and culture in the delivery of Council services and priorities.
- Internally, raise the profile of Cultural Services and strengthen their collaborative working and learning with other colleagues to maximise impact for all.



What Success Looks Like

We need to know that our Cultural Framework is fulfilling our ambitions, so it is important that we measure and evaluate our success. There are several ways in which we will monitor and measure how well we are doing, and if we are achieving our aims and objectives.

Our measures, together with our priorities, will need to be reviewed and may need to be adapted and developed on an annual basis to ensure we are measuring our achievements in the best way we can.

Key success measures:

Theme 1: Live

The people of Westmorland and Furness live lives enhanced by culture and creativity, through which mental and physical health and wellbeing are improved. 70% of our people currently engage in arts and culture, we want to help the remaining 30% to gain access to, enjoy, and be inspired by them too.

We would expect to see:

- Residents, communities and local partners are aware of the range of cultural activity available locally.
- Some of those who previously didn't engage try new things.
- Arts and culture projects contribute to achieving Council priorities.
- Westmorland and Furness Council are felt by the independent sector, partners and internally to be raising the profile and appreciation of culture.
- Collaboration with communities, associations and local councils in culture-based work.

Theme 2: Work

Those who work in the independent arts, culture and heritage sector are supported and championed. The Council will collaborate with sector partners to address local challenges.

We would expect to see:

- Local independent arts, culture and heritage organisations and individual professionals feel connected to the Council and its Cultural Services Team.
- Local independent arts, culture and heritage organisations and individual professionals feel supported by the Council and its Cultural Services Team.
- Projects and local challenges are addressed through collaboration and in partnership with the sector.
- Cross-sector collaboration regarding culture, including the initial development of a Cultural Compact.

Theme 3: Thrive

Our place, its communities, and the Council itself thrive through engagement with a rich and diverse arts, culture and heritage economy.

We would expect to see:

- Residents, communities and local partners feel they have been listened to in the decisions being made by the Council.
- Council staff feel more connected to the work of the Cultural Services Team.
- External partners – regionally and nationally – feel connected to the Council and its work in arts and culture.

This Framework will be reviewed annually and a new annual delivery plan will set out key activities each year.

If you have any questions or feedback about our Cultural Framework, please contact us:
artsandculture@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk





Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 373 3300**.

للوصول إلى هذه المعلومات بلغتك، يرجى الاتصال 0300 373 3300

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