



Northumberland
County Council

Communities and Place OSC

Councillor Jeff Watson
Portfolio – Promoting Healthy Lives

Archive Service
Library Service
Sports Development
Leisure
Culture and Tourism

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Archive Service (1)

- Work towards a long-term accommodation and repository storage solution for the Archive Service at Woodhorn and Berwick.
- Woodhorn - evaluation of strong room storage to understand how archival storage needs can be met over the longer term by existing on-site resource.
- Berwick - collaborate as an active member of the 'Living Barracks' project to realise the objective of the service relocating to the regenerated Barracks site in 2026.
- Engage with new and diverse audiences, including young people.
- Further development of the Archive Service educational offer - continuance of the successful 'Blyth to the Future' programme, extended across other communities across the county (Ashington).

Archive Service (2)

- Continue to work with the Northumberland Archives Charitable Trust (NACT) established in 2020 to explore grant funding streams to deliver archival projects which extend beyond core service delivery.
- Extend direct community links by creating and delivering a regular community activity and outreach programme.
- Creation and curation of exhibitions with varied and compelling content for the County Hall exhibition space, underpinned by a series of events and talks.
- Archive Service to begin service delivery in County Hall reception area 'study area', offering a regular timetable of in person officer resource and scheduled events.
- Understand customer demand across Archive Service points of delivery to ensure the service is meeting needs post pandemic and has an awareness of any changing customer requirements.

Library Service (1)

- New Public Library Strategy due for publication early 2024. Baroness Sanderson, Independent Chair of the advisory panel whose work will inform the new strategy, will report to Lord Parkinson, Libraries Minister, shortly.
- Library Service to review following publication of refreshed strategy, to ensure NCC delivers a Library Service which is relevant for 2024 and beyond.
- Expansion of 'blended working' pilot across Library Services and Customer Services, aimed at delivering an excellent in-person customer experience and achieving first point of contact resolution.
- Completion of the Mobile Library pilot, using the new resource which was deployed in June 2023. Analyse user feedback to shape the future service.

Library Service (2)

- Develop the digital offer across Libraries, expanding reach to those who seek digital support to improve their wellbeing and life outcomes.
- Increase the range of digital services on offer by introducing improved printing facilities across the five hub libraries.
- Develop and implement a local 'Area Prospectus' for each Local Area Committee area, ensuring that the delivery of the Universal Library Offer is informed by local need and able to realise maximum benefits for the communities served.
- Continuance of the 'Warm Spaces' initiative across the Library Service, providing a warm, safe, and neutral space for anyone who needs it, with opportunities to join in Library events or the regular activities programme.

Leisure and Sports Development (1)

- The Council is repositioning the traditional leisure offer and is moving towards supporting and delivering services with a focus on active wellbeing. The newly defined strategic objectives inform a Service Specification (2024-2034) that clearly describes the Council's requirements, and ambitions, for the role of the County's Leisure facilities. The Strategic Objectives aim to reduce the inactivity gap and have a more physically active population.
- The provision of opportunities to engage in physical activity through the Leisure Centres is recognised as key driver in achieving the Council's corporate objective of tackling inequalities. This will be achieved through planning delivery and monitoring through an inequality lens, to improve equity in access to opportunities including that of sports development from grass roots to elite level sport across the county.

Leisure and Sports Development (2)

The key Strategic Objectives of the Leisure Service are:

- To increase physical activity participation in leisure services amongst all residents, with the demographics of service users being representative of the Northumberland population.
- To contribute towards closing the health inequalities gap in the county by increasing physical activity in leisure services for specific groups identified as inactive or at risk of poor health outcomes.
- To deliver, enable and promote specific mental and physical health, recovery and preventative interventions.
- To deliver high quality leisure facilities and services for physical activity and wellbeing.
- To ensure the leisure facilities deliver an improved social impact by contributing towards building stronger and more connected communities.

Leisure and Sports Development (3)

- Northumberland were invited by Sport England / Football Foundation to apply for Playzone funding to create outdoor spaces, enabling increased activity levels across communities.
- 16 communities and viable sites were identified within the county, and local consortiums have been developed to engage with stakeholders as part of the design and delivery aspect.
- Playzone Portfolio 1 (six sites) - informal offer letters have been received from the Football Foundation to support the development of six Playzone sites in Northumberland during Spring 2024.
- Playzone Portfolio 2 (ten sites) – anticipating build Autumn 2024 subject to Football Foundation timescales.

Leisure and Sports Development (4)

- The Sports Development Service will be reviewed during Autumn 2023 to ensure it can continue to meet the needs of the community, providing physical activity opportunities for everyone, and enabling positive health outcomes.

Visitor Economy Update (1)

- **Visitor Economy Growth** - Northumberland visitor economy has seen continued strong year-on-year growth and recorded the highest ever gross value of £1.169billion, supporting 14,683 jobs in most recent data from 2022 visits.
- 9.972 million people visited Northumberland, up 28% from 2021 but still 6.7% lower than pre-pandemic levels. Staying visitors account for 19% of visits but 67% of spend
- **Local Visitor Economy Partner (LVEP) Status** – Visit Northumberland confirmed as LVEP, one of first 15 nationally, in response to national review of Destination Management Organisations.
- Greater coherence and strategic approach to destination management.
- Official status as LVEP
- Access to expert advice, dedicated toolkits and training programmes from VisitBritain/VisitEngland, including innovation, distribution, accessibility and sustainability to business support and marketing

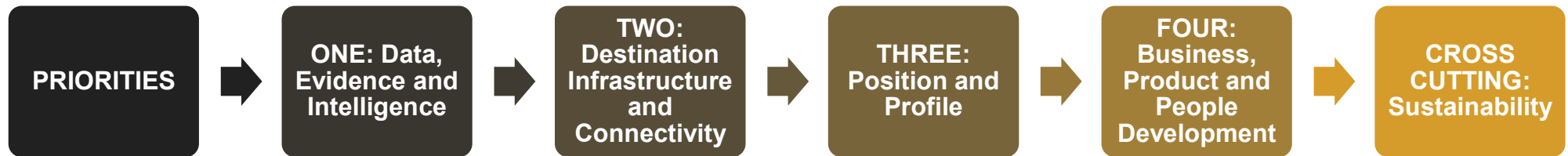
Visitor Economy Update (2)

- **Destination Development Partnership (DDP)** - together with Newcastle Gateshead Initiative and Visit County Durham, Visit Northumberland form the DDP national pilot. The pilot provides the opportunity to prove the DDP concept and the impact the model can have on growing the visitor economy, strengthening the case for future funding and future national arrangements.
- £2.5m of funding will develop the regional tourism eco-system including: skills co-ordination; sectoral business support; accessibility best practice; sustainability support; business events development; and product development
- **Destination Management Plan** - Visit Northumberland has overseen the creation, adoption and implementation of the Northumberland Destination Management Plan, and establishment of a public/private sector board to oversee its governance and delivery.

Visitor Economy Update (3)

Northumberland Destination Management Plan

- Developed by Visit Northumberland and key strategic partners – a 10-year vision of sustainable tourism development; monitored quarterly, reviewed annually.
- It is embedded with the strategic framework of all partners active in its development, its implementation and in the sustainable development of the visitor economy.
- Priorities identified and short, medium and long term actions taken forward by industry-led Action Planning Forum.
- DMP board oversee the annual review and refresh of the DMP.



Visitor Economy Update (4)

Business Development

- **Visitor management** – support for ‘Love it Like its Yours’ summer visitor behaviour campaign, including water and fire safety, Holy Island crossing; business toolkit
- **Dark Skies Star Trails** – product development to improve the user experience for Northumberland’s Dark Skies, integrating events, accommodation and attractions
- **New Adventures** - product development and integration of active/outdoor, food and drink and seasonal products
- **Everybody Welcome** - five Visit Northumberland partners to feature in the North of Tyne funded accessibility programme delivered by NewcastleGateshead Initiative: Alnwick Garden; Bamburgh Castle; Northumberland College Zoo; Queen’s Hall Arts Centre; Woodhorn Museum.

Culture Update (1)

- **Development of new cultural attractions**
 - The Maltings and the Barracks complex in Berwick
 - Ad Gefrin Distillery and Visitor Centre
 - Lilidorei at Alnwick Garden
 - Blyth Cultural Hub
- **Blyth Culture Placemaking programme**
- £1.5m programme to raise the profile of culture led regeneration to compliment the new Culture Venue
- It will include an exciting new brand, name and website, artist commissions that are visible, assessable and engaging for local people and visitors to Blyth's town centre
- As Cinema is a key element of the new Venue, the focus of the programme is film, light, photography and words. These will be integrated into hoardings, streetscapes, interiors spaces, architectural lighting and impactful events.

Culture Update (2)

Berwick Culture and Creative Zone – Create Berwick

- The Cultural Investment Plan, informed by Advisory Group, to attract further funding (alongside £1.5m NTCA funding) was launched with cultural partners
- The programme will launch in October to raise the profile of opportunities for the sector, local people and businesses in Berwick town centre, and include activities such as: a large-scale annual commission, community radio, a resource hub, public realm design and a sector led training and skills programme

Hadrian's Wall Partnership

- Hadrian's Wall UNESCO World Heritage Site was formally adopted into NCC's cultural portfolio with an investment contribution that reflects its role as an international and national destination
- Hadrian's Wall 1900 yearlong event in 2022 – successful with 100s of events
- Community focused publication to celebrate
- Borderlands Hadrian's Wall Investment Programme; development underway

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