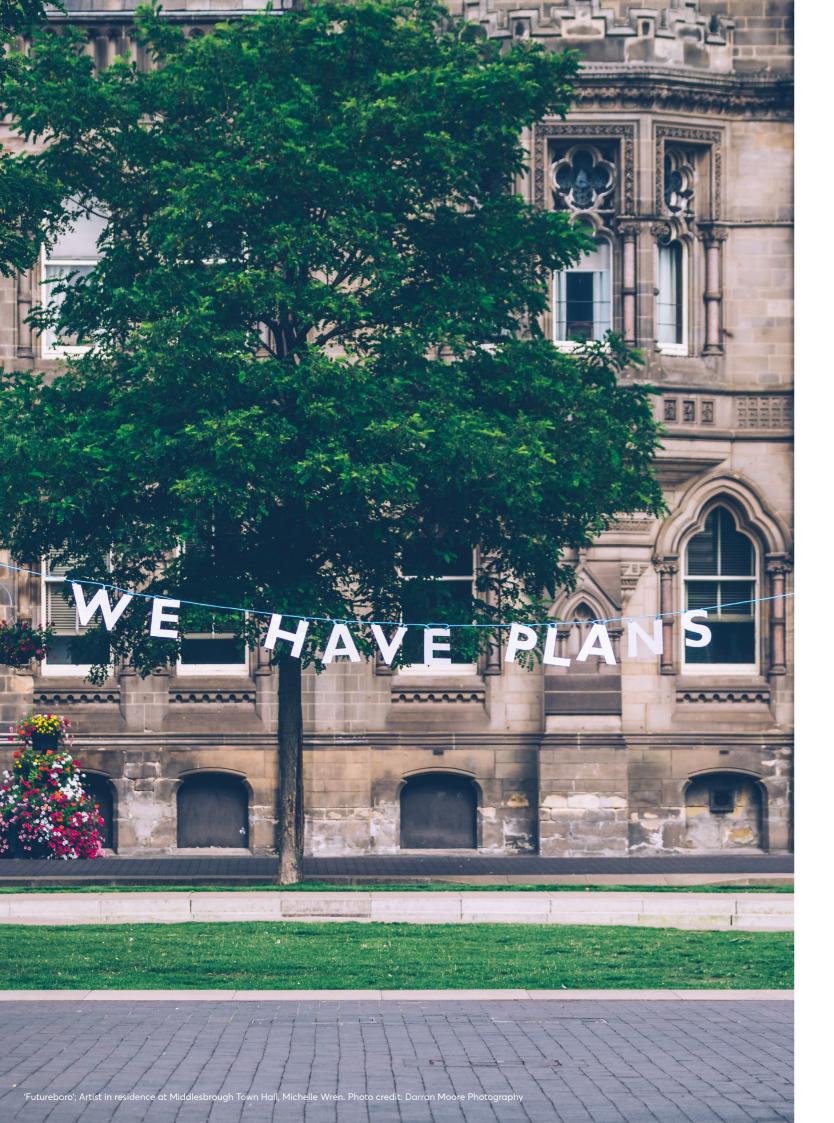




Our vision is that Middlesbrough will be internationally renowned for a citizen centred approach to culture, where creative practitioners and communities are agents of change in the town.



Introduction

We are a brave Local Authority, enabling ambitious and radical approaches to culture.

Our vision is that Middlesbrough will be internationally renowned for a citizen centred approach to culture, where creative practitioners and communities are agents of change in the town.

This means committing to nurturing a growing cultural sector, promoting a citizen centred approach to culture within our own venues, and placing culture at the heart of everything we do as a council.

This document is intended to set a clear vision and strategic plan for Middlesbrough Council over the next three years. The approach will be iterative: evaluated by clear indicators of success and updated accordingly.

By culture we mean crafts, street arts, computer games, film, song, theatre, heritage, virtual reality and digital industries, sculpture, music, dance, visual arts, cross-arts, drawings, paintings, moving, creating, playing and making.

Introduction

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The associated strategic framework outlines the council's proposed actions with a focus on creating a thriving cultural sector and taking a more innovative approach to delivering council services in Middlesbrough.

It is the first step to achieving a town wide cultural strategy. It will provide a clear vision of Middlesbrough Council's place in the local and national sector and accountability to facilitating a stronger sector. It is Middlesbrough Council's commitment to prioritising culture ahead of the Tees Valley City of Culture bid 2025.

What does culture mean to people in Middlesbrough?

Middlesbrough is the urban centre of the Tees Valley with a diverse population.

Helen^{aged 29}

Helen left school at 18 and went to work with an international leisure and entertainment firm. After three years, she returned to her home town and undertook a cultural apprenticeship programme where she developed an arts project for young people. She now leads a programme to support young people who are not in education or employment to gain confidence and work skills through arts engagement. Each year over 100 young people develop the skills to take steps into the workforce through this programme.

Jack aged 23

Jack has been running a digital business from Teesside Launchpad for two years: Being initially funded through a private grant scheme meant that he could simply rent an office space. 'I was able to start our business and get creative quick and without that I wouldn't have started at all."

Doreen aged 67

Doreen retired a number of years ago and was always keen on theatre: 'I suppose in the last 8 or 9 years I've seen a big increase in regular professional theatre work for Middlesbrough. I've been doing it for 40 years, as a hobby at first but more recently I did some TV and quite a bit of professional theatre. It's been a long while coming, it's still got a way to go mind. It's strange but over the last few years lots of people have begun to really pay attention to the stories we have to tell here. The characters, our history, who we are is so important and showing that creatively is great, long may it continue."

Arooj aged 19

Arooj is a Middlesbrough Council cultural services apprentice. 'I didn't know much about Middlesbrough's heritage or what was happening in the cultural sector and I want to be a project manager so that I can attract more young people into the world of arts and culture. I want to change their perspective about the arts, it's not just a paint brush on a canvas, it's so much more than that. I want the arts to be more diverse and more out there so that a young person can see that it is for them and that there are jobs in the sector here. There's a future in the cultural sector in Middlesbrough.'

'I suppose in the last 8 or 9 years I've seen a big increase in regular professional theatre work for Middlesbrough.' Doreen



Where we are now: The Cultural Sector

active cultural sector, with particularly strong visual arts, digital and music sectors.

The city centre has three National Portfolio Organisations, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA), Middlesbrough Town Hall, and the Dorman Museum and Captain Cook Birthplace Museum, part of the Tees Valley Museums Group NPO.

MIMA has pioneered the role of the museum in the civic, community life of cities through an international partnership programme that has influenced cultural policy nationally and internationally. The spirit of the 'useful museum' programme is drawn from the town's cultural history of commissioning avant-garde artists to work collaboratively with local people to produce unique artistic work including opera, pottery and furniture. Democratic, porous, socially-engaged and citizencentred - we will build on this learning across the venues that we have in our portfolio while building new cultural assets for the future.

Middlesbrough's heritage is important to the town's sense of pride. The town has a strong industrial heritage, particularly connected to the iron and steel industries, it is the birthplace of Captain James Cook and the home of Linthorpe Pottery. This is reflected in the town's built heritage, such as the Transporter Bridge, as well as the collections held by the museums and archives. We have the potential, through our collections, spaces and cultural activity, to capture the spirit of and interest in our past to create a positive future for Middlesbrough and its citizens.

Middlesbrough has a thriving digital and innovation sector, with a growing number of creative and digital start-ups, the town was highlighted by Tech Nation in 2017 as a 'high growth potential' area, and in 2018 as one of the FDI's Top Ten small European cities and regions of the future 2018/2019. Teesside University is recognized as a leading higher education institution for digital and creative industries. The Animex International Festival of Animation and Computer Games brings visitors to Middlesbrough from all over the world. We are home to The Northern School of Art that supports young people into creative career paths - boasting a 96.3% employability rate for their most recent graduates. Middlebsrough's new place brand will support the town to attract over £625 million of inward investment by 2022.

We actively recognise art, heritage and culture as a transformational tool to positively change educational attainment and deliver wider social outcomes. Middlesbrough hosts dementia friendly cinema screenings and performances, is home to the Arts Trust Fund at James Cook Hospital, and is home to two large parks, Albert Park and Stewart Park which are used as cultural venues in their own right.

Children and young people are active creators and makers, from being part of the class in residence at the Captain Cook Museum, developing youth led programmes with Creative Learning North East, co-creating Taste of Africa, and working with MIMA as constituents.

Creative practitioners are shaping the reputation of Middlesbrough's future as a sustainable, creative city centre. The annual Art Weekender initiated in May

\bigwedge Middlesbrough's new place brand will support the town to attract over £625 million of inward investment by 2022

2017 explores the process of transition to becoming a creative 'industrial town'. Navigator North provides artists and creative businesses with affordable space to make and show work alongside opportunities such as bursaries, mentoring, residencies and commissions. Tees Valley Arts has been embedded within communities across the Tees Valley since its formation as Cleveland Arts in 1982. It uses arts for social change and recognises that creative participation can be a tranformational tool for improving life and learning for inividuals and communities.

The increasing number of artist led initiatives like Orange Pip Market signal both the capacity of artists to see opportunities where others may not, to take risks and explore opportunities which can then be institutionalised and scaled.

Artists and cultural organisations in Middlesbrough are also connecting the town to international communities who have relevant experience to share. From the AUXiliary's Creative Arc project fostering creative links between Middlesbrough, Detroit and Berlin, Teesside University's ability to attract international students, Navigator North's residencies and MIMA's international reputation, culture, heritage and the arts are both able to co-create meaningful relationships and impact at a local and also a global level. Platform Arts, an extension to Platform Art Studios is a gallery dedicated to innovative developments in contemporary art through its diverse programme of exhibitions and has welcomed a number of international artists.

We are twinned with Oberhausen in Germany, home to the artists collective Kitev and the International Short Film Festival. We have a long-standing cultural partnership between the North East and the Swedish region of Västra Götaland which has led to cultural exchanges.









Cultural Strategy / Middlesbrough Council 9

Where we are now: Middlesbrough Council

Middlesbrough Council's cultural venues include Middlesbrough Town Hall, a newly renovated Town Hall for the 21st Century, re-opened after a £7.7 million renovation funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England. We are home to the Dorman and Captain Cook Birthplace Museums, our beautiful Central Library, Middlesbrough Theatre and Teesside Archives. We are working collaboratively and strategically with Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art.

We are the only local authority in the UK to lead a Fund C Musical inclusion programme, working collaboratively with multi-agency partners across the Tees Valley using music as a positive intervention in young people's lives.

Middlesbrough is part of the Tees Valley Combined Authority, one of two combined authorities nationally to place culture at the heart of its strategic economic plan, and will be submitting a bid for the City of Culture 2025 as part of the Tees Valley bid.

We have a strong programme of community events supported by Middlesbrough Council including Middlesbrough Mela, the largest mela in the North East and Orange Pip Market. Middlesbrough's history, heritage and culture is celebrated each year through Discover Middlesbrough, an annual festival that highlights the work that is taking place to maintain and enhance our heritage, culture and environment. Our museums protect and engage people with the town's strong historical narrative, through the stories and objects they hold. We recognise the importance of celebrating the achievements of our past in order to define our present and shape our future.

Middlesbrough Council's new Great Place Creative Factory programme actively supports grass roots artists through development opportunities, training, enterprise support and creative mentoring. We will partner with Teesside University to share resources and assets with the wider community. This programme of work has the potential to transform the cultural sector in Middlesbrough, with a particular focus on the visual arts.

External arts organisations and artists such as Tees Valley Arts and Michelle Wren have worked with partners within and beyond the cultural sector to explore civic co-production, connecting decision making and the council's priorities with a broad range of constituencies.

We are actively exploring how arts, heritage and culture can provide new approaches to achieving council outcomes and priorities in innovative ways. Never has this been more important for the growth of local economies, but also for cultural understanding as our community diversifies through migration, for adaptation to political changes as significant as Brexit, for the definition of what a healthy civic society looks like, and for the culture of creativity, innovation and curiosity that Middlesbrough will consistently require to be economically thriving, environmentally sustainable and creatively alive in the 21st Century.

X We are actively exploring how arts, heritage and culture can provide new approaches to achieving council outcomes.



Where we want to be

Our vision is that Middlesbrough will be internationally renowned for a citizen centred approach to culture, where creative practitioners and communities are agents of change in the town.

We want Middlesbrough Council's contribution to culture to be leading the field of "citizen-centred" approaches to arts, heritage and culture. Our definition of "citizen-centred" puts local people, their needs, aspirations and diverse experiences, at the heart of shaping Middlesbrough's cultural life.

This can be expressed through many different creative outputs – sociallyengaged artwork, everyday creativity, "useful" art, and all artforms – with the guiding principle being the democratisation not only of access to the arts, but of how it is commissioned, where it is performed, and the issues it reflects.

A "citizen-centred" approach also opens opportunities to recognise the significant capacity that the arts, heritage and culture, and individual artists, have in shaping the town's tangible and intangible assets. Creative Practitioners will be critical contributors to shaping the town's infrastructure, economy and identity to enable a bright and sustainable future. This means pro-actively overcoming the barrier of a narrow definition of art, heritage and culture through:

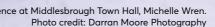
- Defining arts, heritage and culture in its broadest sense
- Developing cross-sector working groups
- Using the city centre as our canvas, stage, and performance space – not just our venues



The vision is underpinned by three pillars of work, innovation, infrastructure and inclusion:

Innovation

- The town is a canvas for professional and everyday creativity – cultural experience and expression is not limited to venues and designated cultural spaces, it's happening everywhere.
- Creative practitioners and communities are valued as experts in imagining new possibilities across all aspects of city life.
- The commissioning of services that lead to social and physical regeneration involve the cultural sector. The cultural sector is actively collaborating and responding to Middlesbrough Council's Regeneration, Public Health, Adult Social Care, and Children's Services teams.





Infrastructure

- Sustainable income streams are developed to facilitate the funding of the cultural partnership action plan.
- Creative practitioners have access to space to create, opportunities to grow and develop their practice, particularly within the "citizen-centred" field, and feel part of a creative community united by a shared vision whilst also encouraging diversity in expression and content.
- Cross-disciplinary relationships are encouraged – artists, the digital sector, Middlesbrough Council services, and communities will regularly network and collaborate to create change.
- Specific criteria and explicit outcomes aligned with MBC's strategic priorities are met by all Council-funded cultural proposals and commissions.

Inclusion

- Actively seek diverse artists and audiences.
- Make space for community led decision making.
- Co-production and engagement are embedded into programmes of work from the very beginning.

We want Middlesbrough Council's contribution to culture to be leading the field of "citizen-centred" approaches to arts, heritage and culture.

Why will Middlesbrough Council continue to invest in culture

Financial resilience for Middlesbrough Council

Investing in culture will deliver savings, increase income from non-Council sources; reduce the demands on the public sector through innovating existing council services. Culture will enable statutory services to deliver savings through new approaches, such as dance for fall prevention, music to prevent social isolation and embedding culture within our treatment and care pathways as a non-medicalised option, supporting the reduction of prescribed medication. An arts on prescription project has shown a 37% drop in GP consultation rates and a 27% reduction in hospital admissions. A social return on investment of between £4 and £11 has been calculated for every £1 invested in arts on prescription programmes. £1 spent on early care and education has been calculated to save up to £13 in future costs.

A stronger economy and more jobs

In the North East £710 million was generated in 2015 in cultural tourism and in 2014 it saw a 7% increase in visits to visitor attractions, above the national average of 4%. Tees Valley Unlimited estimated the annual economic impact of the visitor economy in Tees Valley to be £110 million per year. This is set to increase post Great Exhibition of the North 2018, which, though physically focused in NewcastleGateshead, has delivered knock on benefits to the wider region with its broad interpretation of culture to include science, technology and design.

For every £1 of GVA generated by the arts and culture industry, an additional £2 of GVA is generated in the wider economy. The creative industry has been the fastest growing sector of the UK economy since the 2008 crash, worth £87 billion, more than car manufacturing or aerospace.

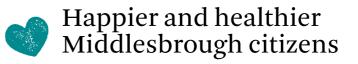
Transformed perceptions of Middlesbrough

Culture will transform overall perceptions of the town. A recent UK survey found that perceptions of Hull's arts and cultural offer have improved significantly after the City of Culture 2017. The year saw a 9% increase in positive perceptions in comparison to 2016. Hull has since invested in a legacy programme, Absolutely Cultured, to continue reaping the benefits of their investment in 2017. Middlesbrough Council is uniquely placed to facilitate and drive place making activity. It will bring a broad range of different partners together, from the smallest community group or an individual artist to the largest employers and the public at large.

Middlesbrough Council can create the conditions for innovation by providing leadership, facilitation and a platform for new voices and ideas.



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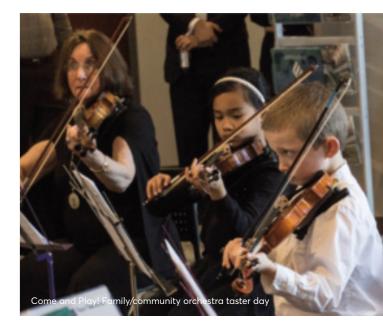
People who take part in the arts are 38% more likely to report good health. Arts and culture has been shown through a range of project examples and evaluations to contribute to primary and secondary prevention, which aim to prevent harm occurring, and reduce the impact of a disease or injury that has already occurred. According to analysis of the Taking Part survey 'people who visit museums and galleries are disproportionately prosperous, well-educated professionals in the 55 to 74 age range, who also visited museums and galleries when they were young. By contrast, disadvantaged and marginalised groups are disproportionately affected by ill health and, as a result, are well represented within publically funded arts activities experienced through health routes.' Middlesbrough Council can help to unblock barriers to cultural participation by offering and promoting arts activities aimed at promoting health and wellbeing.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing recommends that 'NHS England and the Social Prescribing Network support clinical commissioning aroups, NHS provider trusts and local authorities to incorporate arts on prescription into their commissioning plans and to redesign care pathways where appropriate.'

Why will Middlesbrough Council continue to invest in culture

Improved social outcomes and educational attainment for young people in Middlesbrough

According to the Cultural Learning Alliance, participation in structured arts activities can increase cognitive abilities by 17%. The Cultural Learning Alliance has shown that students from low-income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to aet a degree. Employability of students who study arts subjects is higher and they are more likely to stay in employment. Students from low-income families who engage in the arts at school are 20% more likely to vote as young adults. Participatory arts activities with children improve their cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development and enhance school readiness.



Priorities

Middlesbrough Council's cultural strategy sits within the context of the council's corporate priorities, with particular focus on physical and social regeneration:

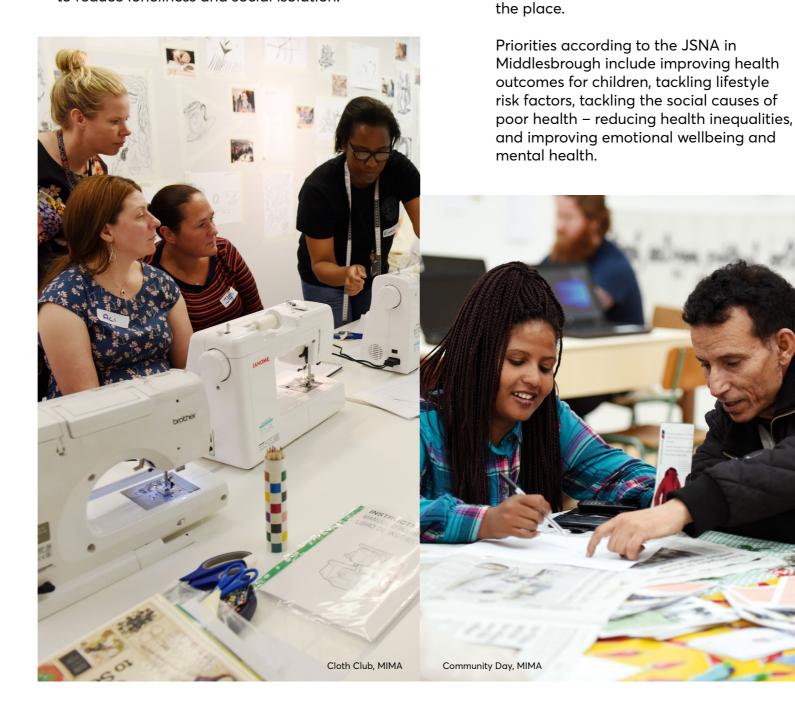
Physical regeneration

- Creating a Middlesbrough 'brand' to improve the town's reputation, attract new investment, visitors and residents, and enhance civic pride.
- Transforming and restructuring Middlesbrough's city centre to create an iconic and regional destination for media, digital creativity, learning and leisure.
- Developing Centre Square as the Tees Valley's premier office location, and a major hub for cultural and leisure activity.
- Working with local communities to drive the regeneration of Middlesbrough's disadvantaged estates, for example those within North Middlesbrough, and to implement our empty homes strategy.

Social regeneration

- Working with our partners to engage and empower local communities in the transformation of Middlesbrough, and the reform of local public services.
- Increasing educational and vocational attainment for all children and adults, working with nurseries, schools, colleges, Teesside University, other education and vocational training providers and local employers.

- Improving local health and wellbeing, and reducing health inequalities within the town, focusing particularly on self-care, community-led prevention and early intervention.
- Improving community life, working with local residents to ensure that all adults and children and young people feel safer and happier with the place that they live, and to reduce loneliness and social isolation.



Responding to the place

Steered by the Joint Strategic Needs

Analysis, strategic funders, the 2016 Culture

White Paper, Arts Council England's Great

best practice from across the world, whilst

Art for Everyone, and Audience Agency

data, we will actively seek examples of

maintaining relevance to the context of

in a global context

The key areas of innovation for Middlesbrough Council where we see culture playing a significant role are in the following strategies:

- Middlesbrough Council's Social Regeneration Strategy
- 2. Future Public Health/Adult Social Care/ Children's Services Strategies
- 3. Middlesbrough Council's Town Centre Strategy
- 4. Middlesbrough's Place Brand

When commissioning new work with third sector and voluntary agency partners, we will focus specifically on:

- 1. Improving children and young people's educational outcomes
- 2. Reducing health inequalities
- 3. Improving mental health and wellbeing for Middlesbrough citizens

We will evaluate programmes of work using measurements of success outlined at the end of this document.



How will success be measured?

Success will be measured according to the following metrics:

- 1. Levels of engagement and participation
- 2. Arts Council England quality metrics
- 3. Gross Value Added
- 4. Audience and community feedback
- 5. Direct and indirect jobs created
- 6. Gross economic impact measurement for visitors

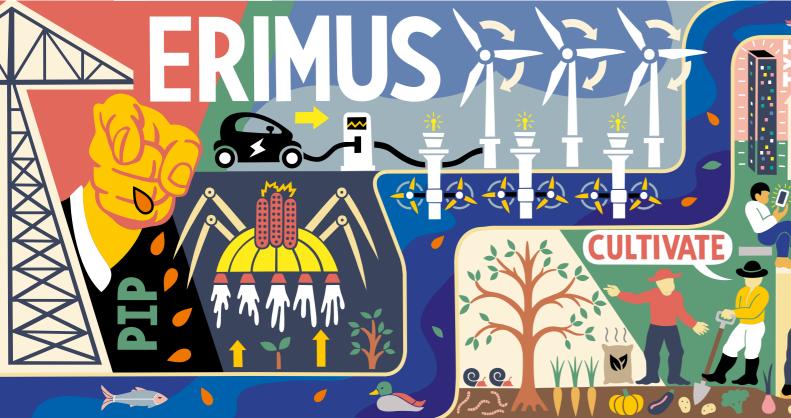
This strategy is intended to be iterative and will be reviewed every six months by the Cultural Partnership Board in order to remain relevant to the town and the cultural sector.

Next steps

The Middlesbrough Cultural Partnership Board will be established and chaired by MIMA. The partnership board brings together leaders from across the town to develop and drive cultural ambition that will contribute to the transformation of Middlesbrough and the Tees Valley.

This will include securing funding for the first year for a full-time champion to drive the group forward, Middlesbrough Council will support the board with space and co-ordination support in kind.

Middlesbrough Council will deliver the strategic framework in appendix 1. This framework outlines clear objectives under each theme.





Appendix Strategic Framework 2018-2021

Theme 1: Innovation

Objective 1: Harness and platform the health & wellbeing benefits of arts, heritage and culture

Action	Owned by	Implementation Date
Arts and Health symposium outlining national best practice resulting in Middlesbrough Arts/ Health Working Group	Head of Culture/Director of Public Health	December 2018
Culture officer dedicated to signposting of cultural activities with Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Public Health and consideration to 'social prescribing' for cultural activities	Arts Development Officer	January 2019
ARC Stockton partnership with Middlesbrough Town Hall to develop capacity of creative practitioners working in social care setting placements	Head of Middlesbrough Town Hall	January 2019
Cross-sector evaluation methodology developed	Head of Culture/Heads of Service	January 2020
Three year parks cultural commissioning programme launched	Head of Culture/Director of Environment and Commercial Services	January 2020
Creative Factory Artist in Residence programme piloted in council service	Creative Factory Producer	September 2020
Partnerships developed with internal and external strategy leads, enabling a cultural sector input in future consultations	Director of Culture, Communities, and Communications/Head of Culture	Ongoing

Theme 1:ObjectInnovationrealm,

Action	Owned by	Implementation Date
Creation of Cultural Partnership Board	Head of Culture, MIMA	November 2019
Three year large scale city centre events programme developed	Cultural Infrastructure Manager, Head of Middlesbrough Town Hall	March 2019
City centre animation and busking policies and programmes developed	Head of Culture, City Centre Manager	September 2019
Public Art working group leading to public realm and public art strategy	Cultural Partnership Board	January 2020
Cultural quarter venue and event plan jointly developed	Head of Culture, City Centre Manager	January 2020
Council cultural venues capital development plan created with strategic funding partners Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery Fund, prioritising capital development of the Dorman Museum and Central Library. Small scale rennovation work will continue in Middlesbrough Theatre	Museums Head of Transformation, Theatre Manager	January 2020
Develop and fundraise for cultural capital masterplan, including the development of the Teesside Archives, to build inner-city physical infrastructure and bespoke resources around core cultural capacity	Head of Culture, Cultural Partnership Board	January 2021

Objective 2: Embed culture in the public realm, regeneration, and city centre



Theme 2: Infrastructure

Action	Owned by	Implementation Date
Creative Factory artist bursary programme launched	Creative Factory Producer	November 2018
Middlesbrough Council match funding guidelines launched	Arts Development Officer	November 2018
Robust commercial income generation plan developed for each Middlesbrough Council cultural venue	Museums Head of Transformation, Head of Middlesbrough Town Hall	May 2019
Relationships developed with potential national funders including NESTA, Esmee Fairbairn and Paul Hamlyn Foundation	Cultural Partnership Board, Head of Culture	September 2019
Financial resilience and income generation plan for culture in Middlesbrough developed	Cultural Partnership Board, Head of Culture	September 2019
Development manager fundraised for and recruited to increase funding bids and income therefore reducing council spend on cultural activity	Head of Culture	January 2021

Objective 1: Strengthen financial support for the creative and cultural economy

Theme 2: Infrastructure

Objective 2: Strengthen development of the creative and cultural economy

Action	Owned by	Implementation Date
Approach developed for business rate relief and planning permission to encourage pop-up exhibitions, performances and programmes in empty shops	Head of Culture	September 2019
Artist in Residence opportunities within Middlesbrough Council, Private Sector and Education	Head of Culture	December 2020
Artistic policy and commissioning opportunities for Middlesbrough Council cultural venues developed	Theatre Manager, Head of Middlesbrough Town Hall, Museums Head of Transformation	January 2020
Marketing and PR plan developed for Cultural Partnership Board and Middlesbrough Council cultural outputs	Head of Culture, MIMA	January 2020



Theme 3: Inclusion

Objective 1: Support creative and cultural learning

Action	Owned by	Implementation Date
Support and launch the development of the Middlesbrough Promise: improving the life chances of our young people	Arts Development Officer	November 2018
Musinc project launched as the only local authority led Youth Music Fund C programme for young people in challenging circumstances	Musical Inclusion Manager	Ongoing
Free programme of cultural activities developed for young people in foster care	Cultural Partnership Board, Head of Culture	January 2019
Youth sub group of Cultural Partnership Board	Cultural Partnership Board, Middlesbrough Council	January 2020
Learning and engagement roles recruited to relevant Middlesbrough Council cultural venue	Head of Culture, Arts Development Officer, Learning teams in Middlesbrough Council	January 2020
Cultural apprenticeship with cultural sector mentoring in every cultural venue	Head of Culture	January 2020
Child-centred engagement opportunities across all council venues	Museums Head of Transformation, Head of Middlesbrough Town Hall, Theatre Manager	January 2020
Life-long learning opportunities across all council venues that support the health and wellbeing agenda	Museums Head of Transformation, Head of Middlesbrough Town Hall, Theatre Manager	May 2021

Theme 3:Objective 2: Develop cultural communityInclusionled decision making and engagement

Action	Owned by	Implementation Date
Cultural Congress piloted by Tees Valley Arts placing communities and artists at the heart of cultural participation and decision making	Head of Culture, Arts Development Officer	Ongoing
Review programming to ensure our venues represent the communities that we serve in Middlesbrough	Museums Head of Transformation, Head of Middlesbrough Town Hall, Theatre Manager	March 2019
Audience development, community engagement, and strategic plans reviewed for all Middlesbrough Council cultural venues	Museums Head of Transformation, Head of Middlesbrough Town Hall, Theatre Manager	September 2019
Community led decision making such as Middlesbrough Town Hall's artist in residence Michelle Wren's Futureboro project rolled out and maintained	Creative Factory Producer, Head of Culture, wider Middlesbrough Council	September 2019
Embed inclusive performances and programming including signed and relaxed performances, ensure all venues are dementia friendly	Museums Head of Transformation, Head of Middlesbrough Town Hall, Theatre Manager	December 2019
Embed co-production into all elements of programming across council venues	Museums Head of Transformation, Head of Middlesbrough Town Hall, Head of Culture	May 2020
Collaborate with non-cultural organisations and sectors including the voluntary, third sector, private sector and digital	Museums Head of Transformation, Head of Middlesbrough Town Hall, Theatre Manager	May 2020

