

Evaluating Post-Pandemic Cultural Regeneration Strategies in North East England



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Executive Summary

England's North East region has been rooted in industrial heritage for much of its history. However, the region experienced a sharp economic decline by the second half of the 20th century. Many urban areas in the region have used arts, culture, and creativity as key sectors for economic regeneration, compelled by the need to develop a new place-based economic development strategy in a post-industrial era. The COVID-19 pandemic has created numerous challenges for cultural regeneration efforts. The continued efforts of governmental devolution present a unique set of opportunities and challenges. This report focuses on these challenges for the arts and creative sector in cultural regeneration.

The following report offers an analysis of the newly established Cultural and Creative Zone (CCZ) program in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, North Shields, and Berwick-upon-Tweed, along with the continued cultural regeneration of the Ouseburn Valley area of Newcastle. This case study report, produced by a graduate student research team at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, evaluates how cultural regeneration strategies are employed, experienced, and perceived in the post-COVID era.

This report aims to address the following research questions:

- What are the different cultural regenerations models being used and how do they operate in practice?
- How are these regeneration efforts viewed and experienced across stakeholder groups?
- In what ways has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the creative and cultural sector and related regeneration efforts?
- How has devolution and a greater focus on regional governance influenced cultural planning and policy?
- In what ways can the evolution of the Ouseburn Valley serve as a nuanced model of cultural regeneration?

The research team embarked on an 8-day field research trip to Newcastle, England, to conduct over fifty semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in addition to site visits in each zone and in the Ouseburn Valley. The team conducted content analysis of strategic plans, COVID-19 reports, and local publications.

The Cultural and Creative Zone (CCZ) is a place-based cultural regeneration program recently established by the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA). Sites in the Clayton Street corridor of Newcastle's city center, the seaside town of North Shields, and the rural border town of Berwick were each selected to become a CCZ, with each program being administered by their respective local authority. The CCZ program offers a range of interventions to address key areas for the cultural and creative sector, such as affordable workspace, business support, skills development, and community engagement.

The Ouseburn Valley, with its notable revitalization over the past 40 years, serves as both a model and a cautionary tale for cultural regeneration. The area has transformed from a heavy industrial site into a thriving cultural locale – characterized by its eclecticism and charm – thanks to the

grassroots, bottom-up approach driven by residents, creatives, and local organizations. However, as the valley gains popularity, it faces challenges in maintaining a balance between preserving its unique character and accommodating new developments, especially with competing private interests entering the scene. While the Ouseburn Valley can be viewed as a model for successful community-driven regeneration, it also highlights the need for vigilance and ongoing collaboration among stakeholders to ensure that the essence of the community is preserved amidst evolving challenges and opportunities.

The research team made several findings following fieldwork in the North East region:

1. By nature of strong cultural ambitions and limited public funding, local authorities' programs like the CCZ must leverage strategic partnerships, patchwork funding for large projects, and identification of large anchor organizations to serve as "success" stories to the wider creative ecosystem.
2. Access and affordability of creative spaces will be a difficult task to address for multiple stakeholders. Lack of incentives amongst property owners, the barriers associated with heritage listings, and the lack of permanent affordability mechanisms are prominent issues.
3. Local pride and preservation are important considerations in current regeneration efforts. Despite the geographic diversity of the research sites, each had a similar and strong sense of collective memory of the region's past.
4. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have rippling effects on actors across the cultural and creative landscape, causing shifts in audience engagement patterns and program delivery while elevating the economic uncertainty of creative practitioners. The crisis has made the long-term outlook on cultural consumption and sector participation in doubt but has offered promising examples of community-building and resource-sharing.
5. The prospect of a further devolved North East region would allow for more comprehensive collaboration between localities. This relationship would reflect a more economically cohesive region. There is uncertainty about what devolution would mean over the long term, including program continuity and attention to local sensitivities.
6. Culture and creativity are understood differently across creative practitioners and government entities. Some understandings are more rooted in the intrinsic value of art and artistic process, while other understandings are more economically driven. Economic austerity matched with a history of non-interaction between stakeholders has further strained this relationship, although there are growing attempts at achieving mutual understanding.
7. Ouseburn serves as a mixed model for how cultural regeneration can mature and take root in a community. Strong community engagement, the presence of anchor sites, and a commitment to heritage highlight the area's ability to transform into a key site for cultural production. Yet, Ouseburn faces persistent challenges of funding, contending priorities, and the threat of gentrification.

These findings informed a set of recommendations for: 1.) policymakers and government officials, 2.) creative practitioners and partners, 3.) researchers and evaluators:

- 1.) Local and regional policymakers should continue to pursue and increase robust collaboration between themselves to share best practices and unexpected obstacles. This will be critical as devolution plans continue. As a place-based intervention, cultural regeneration strategies must ensure that they are people-centered, guided by more substantive community engagement practices, and equipped with a stronger working knowledge of an area's creative assets. Local and regional authorities need to raise further awareness and effectively communicate the CCZ program.
- 2.) The pandemic highlighted the stark inequalities that exist within the creative sector, as some larger organizations were able to weather the storm while smaller groups and freelancers experienced exacerbated precarity. As creative practitioners consider their personal and professional futures in a post-COVID world, formal and informal networks offer opportunities for collaboration, resource sharing, policy leveraging, and mutual aid. Developing these can also help bolster stronger "culture champions" in different localities who can act as intermediaries that advocate for artist communities to the government. Through these networks, creative practitioners can situate their activities to align with the wider inclusive economy narrative of the region.
- 3.) Continued research and evaluation of cultural regeneration efforts during this period is vital, and embedding equity and resilience-related measures can result in sustained affordability and a greater focus on small organizations and individuals.

Acknowledgments

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New Pathways to Cultural Regeneration in the North East of England

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on cities worldwide. In particular, the creative and cultural industries were dramatically disrupted. Programs were shut down or made into a virtual format, operations were halted, employees lost their jobs, and people were forced to re-engineer their own cultural consumption patterns. In the city of Newcastle, these impacts were felt deeply. A part of the greater North East region of England, Newcastle represents the economic transformation of urban areas following the large-scale deindustrialization and decline of the 20th century. Newcastle and other post-industrial areas began to employ cultural regeneration strategies as a new mode of economic development and revitalization, which have had far-reaching influences on the built environment, labor force, and overall quality-of-life for communities. These strategies encompass a diversity of interventions and activities from a broad spectrum of stakeholders across public and private spheres.

This report examines current and historical cultural regeneration strategies implemented in Newcastle and the North East region, focusing on the establishment of Creative and Cultural Zones (CCZ) and continued cultural evolution of the Ouseburn Valley area. The circumstances of the pandemic and framing of a post-COVID “new normal” allows for rich comparison and analysis in how new strategies are implemented by local and regional authorities, experienced by the creative sector, and perceived by a wider range of stakeholders. Before examining these case study areas, culture will be situated in the broader context of place, history, and theory.

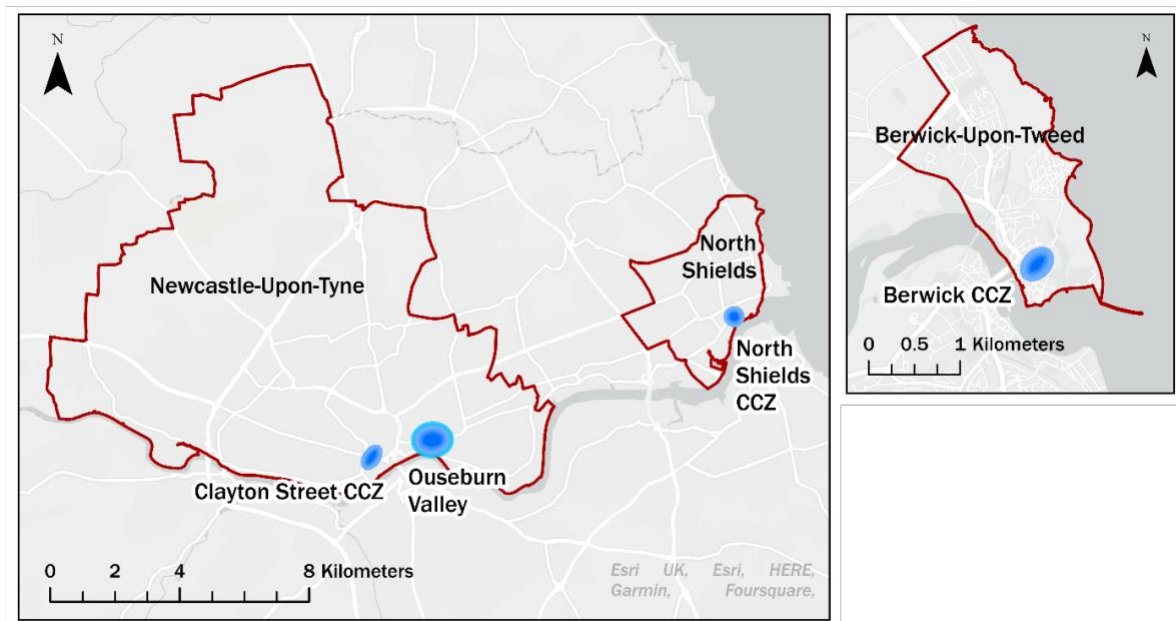


Figure 1: The four key areas of study for cultural regeneration strategies in the North East England: Newcastle-Upon-Tyne (Clayton Street CCZ and Ouseburn Valley), North Shields, and Berwick Upon Tweed

What is Culture?

Articulating the concept of *culture* is challenging; in some ways, it is reductive to attempt to encapsulate so many varied aspects of daily life – ranging from music, visual arts, sports, monuments, vernacular, and more – into a brief definition. Culture is an ever-evolving object, process, and idea that spans regions, people, and the senses.

The Department of Digital, Culture, and Media, and Sport (DCMS) collects economic data estimates on various sectors within the country that can broadly be construed as cultural. To categorize which workers are part of the arts and culture sector, the Department has published several definitions (DCMS Sector Economic Estimates Methodology, 2022):

Creative Industries: “Those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill, and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property.”

Cultural Sector: “Those industries with a cultural object at the center of the industry.”

Tourism: “Defined by the characteristics of the consumer in terms of whether they are a tourist or resident.”

The areas of focus of this report also offer definitions of culture, albeit within more localized scales. Through local authorities, cultural organizations, and regional bodies, vision statements and long-term strategic plans work to conceptualize culture in order to fulfil broader sets of goals.

Beyond definitional operations, culture is about what is experienced and perceived within these areas. Evident through fieldwork, culture embodied an array of forms. In Newcastle, the Newcastle United football club, the rich architecture, the street performers, the vibrant nightlife, and the historical landmarks all contribute to the collective identity of the city and those who inhabit these spaces.

To account for the diversity of definitions, the report will use culture and creativity interchangeably and references to the sector will be inclusive of all definitions from the DCMS. The use of term “creative practitioners” in this report will be used to describe all individuals engaged in creative and cultural practices—including those that are employed in DCMS sectors—but also spanning to include freelancers, hobbyists, and other creative producers (with both “creative” and “producers” being defined broadly).

The Current Cultural Landscape

The specific cultural regeneration strategies being researched exist and adapt along with a broader set of urban development goals in localities. These goals and their motives are illustrated by a multitude of strategic plans, sector reports, and long-range initiatives directly focused on or related to the culture and creative sector. This includes *The Case for Culture: What Northern Culture Needs to Rebuild, Rebalance, and Recover* (Northern Culture All Party Parliamentary Group), *Combined Authorities and the Creative Industries* (Local Government Association and BOP Consulting), *Our Creative Landscape: A Cultural Strategy for Northumberland 2018-2030* (Northumberland County Council), *Newcastle Inclusive Economy Strategy: Wealth that Flows to All* (Newcastle City Council).

A comprehensive literature review delves into the historical context and theoretical background of cultural regeneration in the North East England, with emphasis on the interplay between arts and culture, urban economic development, and neoliberal ideology. The review also investigates Ouseburn Valley as a case study, highlighting tensions between commercialization, regulation, gentrification, and the role of local institutions. Understanding cultural dynamics, community involvement, and the forces shaping the preservation of unique cultural spaces is crucial in the face of market pressures and policy shifts.

The North of Tyne's vision for 2030 includes the development of CCZs that will leverage partnerships with national and regional arts organizations, like Creative UK who acts as an investment partner, and the North East Cultural Partnership which supports local cultural funding. The program aims to revitalize the creative sector, which was heavily impacted by the pandemic. This will be done through investing in the cultural and creative sector via greater collaboration between local authorities and the creative sectors in each zone. The CCZ program focuses on affordable workspace, business support, financial incentives, skill development, and community engagement, all of which are viewed as essential for long-term resilience and economic growth.

The three Cultural and Creative Zones are:

1. Newcastle: Focused on the Clayton Street Corridor and its surrounding areas, the Newcastle CCZ aims to revitalize underutilized and vacant spaces in this architecturally rich region. With £1.7 million in funding, the project initiates feasibility studies to attract further investment for larger projects, striving to create a sustainable model that contributes to Newcastle's broader regeneration strategy.



Figure 2: Cover pages of four reports on the creative and cultural sector in the North East.

2. North Shields: Part of the larger "Ambition of North Shields" plan, this CCZ is situated in the coastal landscape of the North of Tyne Region. With additional funding from Historic England, anchor sites like Northumberland Square and Howard Street receive capital improvements. Central cultural nodes, such as The Exchange Theater, The Globe Gallery, and The Customer-First Centre, set North Shields apart from other zones, promising a successful pilot with a well-defined plan and steady funding.
3. Berwick: Building upon existing creative businesses and activities in Berwick, this CCZ puts creative organizations and individuals at the forefront of planning and development. Berwick-upon-Tweed, a small rural English town, aims to become an international cultural tourism destination. Its cultural assets include the annual Berwick Film and Media Arts festival, galleries, and historical landmarks. The CCZ project manager emphasizes the importance of supporting the local creative community and arts organizations while considering the town's unique characteristics and addressing challenges like low housing costs and underused properties.

Each zone carries a unique set of challenges and looks to its respective programs for varied goals. A site of underused spaces and low-value commercial spaces amidst higher activity corridors, the Clayton Street CCZ sees potential in the physical transformation of the upper stories of heritage-listed buildings along the main spine of the zone. The North Shields CCZ looks to create both a physical and social connection between the town's high streets, home to established cultural organizations, and the nearby fish quay, which symbolizes a rich history of commercial fishing activities. The Berwick CCZ seeks to elevate itself as a destination for culture and to create a wider synergy of cultural activity, enhancing upon an established creative community. Each zone highlights its views of how success in the program needs to be based on local context.

The Ouseburn Valley, once an industrial center, experienced decline until revitalization efforts led by organizations like the Ouseburn Trust emerged. Today, the valley serves as a successful example of cultural regeneration, offering valuable insights for future projects and the development of Creative Cultural Zones (CCZ). This paper explores the impact of COVID-19 on the Ouseburn Valley, addressing challenges such as reduced public funding, lost European funding streams, and gentrification. It emphasizes the importance of community engagement, anchoring institutions, and preserving heritage while also discussing the challenges of transitioning from public to private funding and the potential pitfalls of gentrification.

History of Cultural Regeneration in North East England

The historical context for cultural regeneration as an emergent urban economic development strategy in North East England begins with the large-scale decline of traditional industries in the region by the 1970s, which included coal mining and ship building. Heavy industry up to this point came to define the region, with millions of tons of coal being exported from the Tyne Port and the population enjoying relatively low unemployment (Middleton and Freestone, 2008). Yet starting at the end of the 1950s through to the 1970s, an increasingly competitive market of foreign producers spelled the beginning of the end for heavy industry and manufacturing.

Coupled with this decline was a growing recognition that arts and culture-led regeneration strategies could help revitalize places such as Newcastle and its economic challenges and spur new investment (Middleton and Freestone, 2008). Arts and culture could bolster visitors and tourism, retain, and attract people to live and work nearby, generate compelling place-making strategies, and ultimately help usher in a new identity for these urban areas. Starting in the 1980s, the North East region began to see strong investments in the arts via funding from both the United Kingdom and European Union. The creation of Local Arts Development Agencies helped further formalize the structure to which the North would fund and deliver arts policies, programs, and projects. What guided cultural regeneration at this time were two general motives:

1. Increase *access* to existing cultural opportunities via democratization of culture.
2. Empower local groups and communities to chart their own course of cultural and creative discovery via cultural democracy.

Both schools of thought were still seen as goals under greater regional economic development in which place and people-based strategies worked in tandem.

By the 1990s, the promise of urban revitalization by way of arts and culture was being realized. Although the North East region enjoyed a relative increase in their funding for the arts throughout this time, weaknesses and challenges in the sector were becoming clear. These included the lack of large, well-staffed arts organizations, a sense of cultural isolation and lack of choice, and poor availability of major traditional arts repertoire (Bailey, Miles, & Stark, 2007). It became clear that to justify strong national funding in the region meant needing to develop the large-scale infrastructure to sustain and grow the sector. The subsequent construction of the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Arts (opened in 2002) and the Sage Gateshead (opened in 2004) illustrated a new commitment to cultural regeneration via the transformation of former industrial sites and the creation of new strategic partnerships, such as the Newcastle-Gateshead Initiative. Playing in the political background at this time was Prime Minister Tony Blair, his 'New' Labour movement, and more focused attention on arts and creativity as an engine to a knowledge-based economy (Mould, 2018). This was enforced with the creation of the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) in 1998.

Momentum in arts and culture in the North would continue to grow, particularly in Newcastle and Gateshead. Even though the dual cities failed in their bid to be the 2008 European Capital for Culture, participation in and attitudes towards arts and culture at this time highlighted success in the various initiatives and projects. Public investment in the arts peaked during the decade.

The global financial crisis of 2008 was a turning point for the sector. Although it continued to see growth, it also had to deal with the new governmental agenda of austerity, in which key cultural institutions and spaces had to become more creative to financially sustain themselves in the absence of enough public funding. Funding insecurity was further influenced by the decision of Great Britain to leave the European Union via the Brexit referendum in 2018. The sector became more exposed to market conditions, which has informed the evaluation criteria for remaining sources of public funding and exacerbated the influence of the private sector on cultural and creative activity. This recent economic and political shift, paired with continued regional devolution and the wide-ranging impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, puts the future of established cultural regeneration strategies into greater question.

The Impact of COVID-19

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 impacted nearly every aspect of life and society in the North East England, including cultural activities. Initial disruptions to program activities and operations were exacerbated by the continued uncertainty of the public health crisis. Job losses and extreme changes to consumption behaviors are still occurring throughout the sector. As doors remained shuttered, organizations turned to virtual and outdoor activities. Lockdown measures disrupted the routines of residents, the provision of essential services, and the decision-making of public and private organizations. Scholars have conceptualized these changes within the growing scholarship about “post-COVID Cities” (Florida et al. 2021; Batty et al. 2022; Glaeser 2022).

During this challenging time, members of the arts and culture sectors faced challenges in obtaining funding, keeping jobs, and a drop in professional opportunities for newer artists. In certain situations, arts and cultural workers protested inadequate responses by government officials to address the needs of their sector (Tangheti et al. 2022). The creative sector in North East England was particularly hit hard by the pandemic. Between 2019 and 2021, employment in DCMS sectors (excluding tourism), creative industries, culture sector, and digital sector saw a 14.9% reduction in the North East. The North East saw the largest reductions in its workforce compared to other regions in England. Compounded by this was the unequal impact on self-employed workers in the sector, who saw larger levels of unemployment.

Number of North East Employees	2019	2020	2021	% Change 2019 - 2021
DCMS sectors (excluding tourism)	124,000	118,000	111,000	-10.48
Creative Industries	56,000	47,000	45,000	-19.64
Culture Sector	19,000	18,000	13,000	-31.58
Digital Sector	43,000	45,000	37,000	-13.95
Total	242,000	228,000	206,000	-14.88

Figure 3: DCMS employment estimates for North East creative sectors, adapted from the North East Culture Partnership Report “Employment in the North East’s creative sectors since 2015 and the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic”

The governmental response to the pandemic for the creative sector was varied, including the DMCS Cultural Recovery Fund and a government furlough program for workers. Scholarship has highlighted how local authorities, such as city mayors and local councils were able to act efficiently with limited resources (Warner 2021). The ongoing challenges from the pandemic put the resiliency of the sector as a regeneration strategy for the post-industrial North into continued uncertainty. The post-COVID era can be an illustrative time to design and develop new cultural regeneration strategies that consider the deep inequities that the pandemic created or revealed.

Devolution and Levelling Up

The national economic landscape of England over the course of the last two decades helped promote conversations on new forms of regional governance. The process of devolution, in which governing executive authority is transferred from central government to regional elected bodies, began to take shape in the late 1990s. The premise of devolution is rooted in the idea that more decision-making power should be located closer to those most affected by them.

The North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) was formally established in 2018. The combined authority encompasses the areas overseen by the Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council, and Northumberland County Council. The NTCA has legal authority to collaborate and make collective decisions for the region related to education, workforce development, economic regeneration, trade and investment, and transport.



Figure 4: The North of Tyne Combined Authority encompasses three local government authorities: Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council, and Northumberland County Council

Nationally, there is continued momentum to further transform local authorities into larger, regional ones. In January of 2023, a new devolution deal was signed by the Levelling Up Secretary Michael Grove, which would create a new North East Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA). This would cover Northumberland, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland, and County Durham. The deal is currently going through public consultation before it is officially declared. As the Cultural and Creative Zones and other forms of cultural policy continue to be administered through combined authority, the future of devolution in the North will be important to keep in mind to.



Figure 5: The new devolution deal that was agreed to in principle would include local government authorities in both NTCA and the North East Combined Authority, which includes Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, South Tyneside Council, and Sunderland City Council

The national government’s agenda to “Level Up” is an important aspect of regional economic development along with more devolved forms of government. The premise of the levelling up agenda is to address funding disparities amongst the varied areas of the United Kingdom and to spur new activity and investment. The growing evidence of the benefits of culture and creativity in placemaking, well-being, and resilience have made it a key component of the agenda. Funds have already been awarded to key cultural assets in North East England such Newcastle’s Grainger Market and South Shields’ High Street Fund.

Theories of Cultural Development

The adoption of culture-as-development strategies aligns with the broader neoliberal economic development approach, emphasizing entrepreneurialism which prioritizes individual success over collective well-being. This entrepreneurial focus further incorporates capitalism into culture, shaping perceptions and values surrounding creativity and cultural experiences. This process was exacerbated by COVID-19, but such strategies were present in the earlier cultural strategies, including the lottery system, Thatcher, and the Green Book's requirement that all proposed policies be justified through economic, quantifiable means (Hewison, 2014). All policy interventions had to be financially viable, disregarding social or environmental impacts, including the impacts of arts and culture. By default, this oriented arts and culture assessments toward their economic impacts, with less priority to "soft" or socio-emotional impacts.

As arts and culture became influenced by market-driven strategies, the idea of individual entrepreneurialism emerged, suggesting that personal creativity could be achieved and measured, and that its success relied on one's own efforts rather than external factors or privileges. This perspective simplifies and commodifies arts and culture. Scholars extensively debate the consequences of such "creativity" and how these efforts can be limiting due to their easily replicable and narrow approach (Mould 2018; Peck 2011; Rossi and Vanolo 2011). These arguments present the creative city concept as a disguise for imbalanced, unoriginal, and homogenizing capitalism.

Culture & Creative Zones

Overview and Governance

As part of a wider regional strategy, the NTCA has launched a place-based approach to investment in local culture and creativity through Creative and Cultural Zones (CCZ). This model is based on previous cultural quarter policies in the UK, such as St. John's Development in Manchester and the Creative Enterprise Zones in London (North of Tyne Combined Authority, 2021). During the pandemic, the North East experienced job losses in the creative and cultural sector at higher rates than the rest of England (Case for Culture, 2023). The NTCA has ambitions to designate the creative and cultural sector to be the main economic driver for the region by 2030 (North of Tyne Combined Authority, 2021). The CCZ will test new strategies to build resiliency in the sector and rethink places post-COVID (LGA, 2022). An investment of 3.35 million in public funds will be delivered through a partnership with Creative UK (North of Tyne Combined Authority, 2021). After reviewing the diverse assets of urban, coastal and rural places within the North East, Newcastle, North Shields, and Berwick were selected (North of Tyne Combined Authority, 2020 pg.21). Funding efforts will go towards ongoing local efforts organizations in each of the zones.

Local Authorities are consulting with the creative and cultural sector to draft proposals that drive investment through a 5-year pilot project. The proposed pilot projects for the CCZs would support financial sustainability, add value to existing programs and creative infrastructure, and stimulate partnerships between sectors (North of Tyne Combined Authority, 2021). The NTCA provided suggested program deliverables for the zones in their prospectus, which include:

1. Affordable Workspace – workspaces that are built for purpose and accessible to creatives.
2. Business Support – tailored business support for small businesses and artists.
3. Financial Incentives – capital to bring in creative businesses and support start-ups.
4. Place-based – acting in a local context to support places.
5. Skill Development – working with artists and creatives to develop skills that will help drive economic growth from the creative sector.
6. Community Engagement – the community should be informed and involved in CCZ activities.

The NTCA developed suggested program deliverables for local authorities and project teams to recognize barriers to a thriving creative and cultural sector. The councils of Northumberland, Newcastle, and North Tyneside act as intermediaries between the NTCA and CCZ project managers. The NTCA pioneered activity plans to help local authorities and project teams identify barriers to a thriving creative and cultural economy. As devolution advances in the area, many interviewees expressed optimism that, if successful, these pilot projects could be incorporated into the new North East Mayoral Authority, which includes areas south of the Tyne (see figure x. below). By partnering with regional and national groups through devolution, the NTCA believes the CCZ program can effectively facilitate collaboration between councils, creative practitioners, and the larger creative ecosystem.

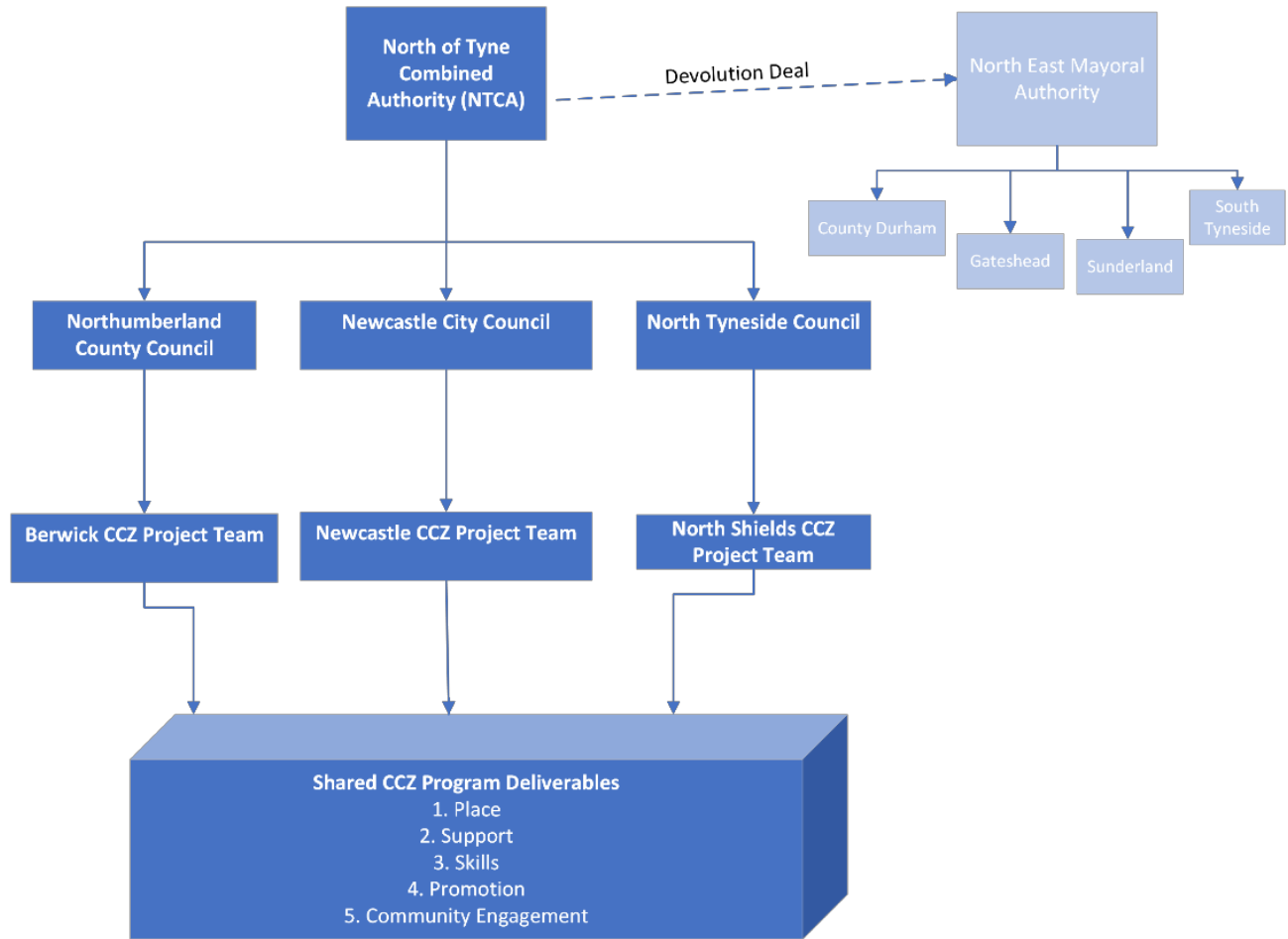


Figure 6: CCZ program governance structure.

Partnerships

Dynamic partnerships are vital to success in cultural regeneration efforts (Doeser, n.d.). The CCZ is being delivered in cooperation across intergovernmental organizations, arts nonprofits, universities, and economic development groups – which can be essential for governing creative and cultural districts. Local authorities are acting as an intermediary between the NTCA, and the creative and cultural sector.

The NTCA in its devolved form works with the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) as a partner for economic development in this region. Working toward development in an economic lens and measuring culture against GVA there is a tension with other regional development groups. The North East Cultural Partnership (NECP) views culture as having an inherent value, not just economic output, which aligns with most of the stakeholders in the region (Interview, 15 March 2023; interview, 14 March 2023).

Creative UK is the investment partner managing the Cultural and Creative Investment Program (North of Tyne Combined Authority, 2021; Interview, 14 March 2023). While Creative UK frequently recognizes the inherent value of culture in its reports and materials, the organization still utilizes monetary return on investment as a crucial metric in evaluating the success of the CCZs.

With tensions around trust and defining culture's place and relationships to value there is a need for engagement at all levels, a clear understanding of the goals of the program, and recognizing the perspective and terminology of each group. By addressing and confronting the conflicting views on the creative and cultural sector from these essential partner organizations, there can be clear objectives delivered to creative practitioners.

Partnerships with Universities

Universities play a fundamental role in the creative and cultural sector at large, and their partnerships with national funding bodies for research agendas and program strategy are notable. Universities in the region were vital to establishing the CCZs. Newcastle University and Northumbria University had representation on the Task & Finish Group (T&FG), which is the group originally researched the creative sector in the North Tyne region for the project. Andrew Wathley, the Vice Chancellor of Northumbria University led the T&FG in cooperation with the LEP, local



Commercialization without Compromise

Students at the Newcastle University Business School are actively working on “Commercialization without Compromise”. This NTCA funded program helps artists monetize their practice without sacrificing their artistic values. A small cohort will have fully funded personal and business development plans delivered by local business owners.

To be considered for this program applicants will need to be a North of Tyne resident, a creative practitioner, and already selling or have the intent to sell their work. The workshops will be a mixture of in person and online, with ample time for creatives to network. At the end of the workshop participants will walk away with a 6–12-month business and marketing plans.

Other workshops include:

- Communicating your practice.*
- Professional portraits and representations.*
- Product photography.*
- Creating graphics for social media.*
- Selling online.*
- Visual marketing and merchandising pop-ups.*

The first cohort will be running in May and June of 2023. The website for this program was established in early April 2023, with an application deadline on April 16, 2023.

describes what the creative and cultural sector will look like by 2030 (North of Tyne Combined Authority, 2020 pg.26).

“For the Culture and Creative Sector is for the North of Tyne to be renowned across the UK and globally as an exemplar place for culture and creative-led inclusive growth. Culture and creative industries will be at the heart of driving North East economic growth and productivity and enhancing the quality of life, wellbeing and opportunity for people and communities.”

Northumbria and Newcastle University are both present on steering groups for each of the zones, take part in student projects to support the zones, and can act as advisors when delivering cutting-edge research that impacts the region at all levels (interview, 6 March 2023; interview, 7 March 2023).

On a larger scale, universities in the region also take part in the NE Creative Fuse, a collaboration of 5 five universities (Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland, Durham, and Teesside). The Creative Fuse aims to retain college graduates in the region, engage the community through tech and digital, and add skills development to create good jobs (Interview, 7 March 2023). Creative Fuse does this through direct business support, cash infusions to small businesses, and are partnered with Creative UK in delivering the Creative and Cultural Investment Program (Project Background – Creative Fuse, 2022).

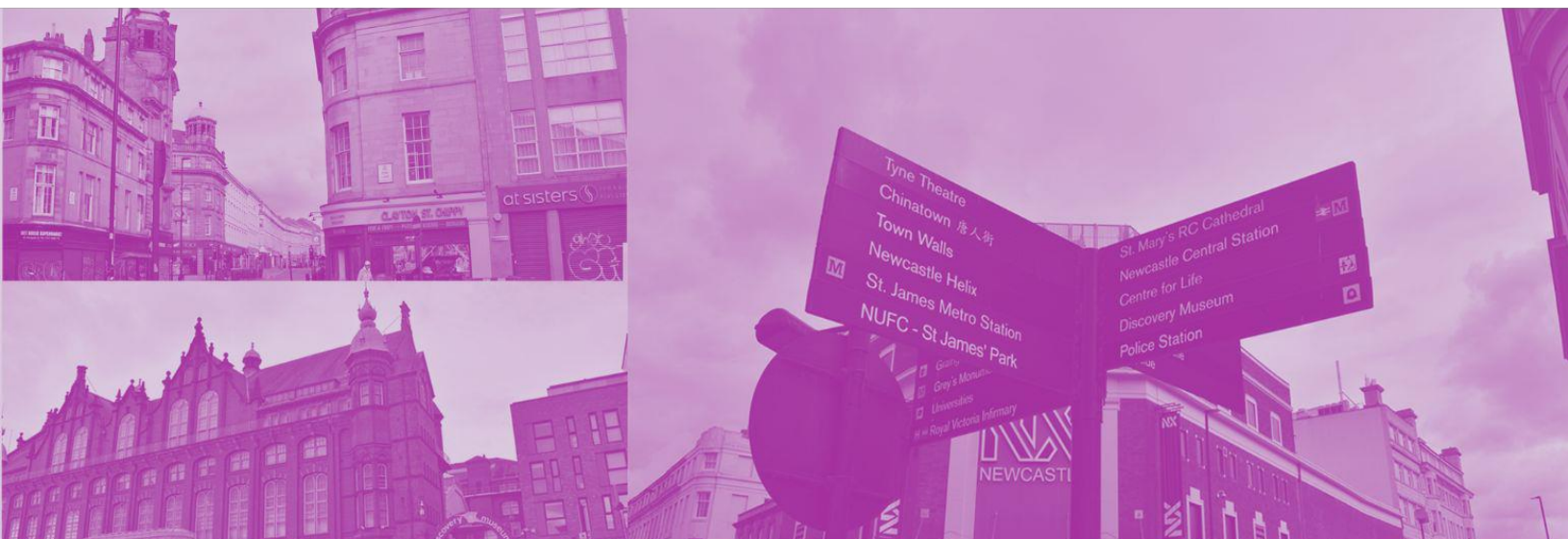
Universities can collaborate with governments, develop programs, and deliver resources to their localities and beyond. As a partner in the creative and cultural sector, there are avenues for program development, research, funding, and student development. Universities also benefit from programs that make places more desirable to live. Training students that will stay in the area with new skillsets will contribute to a thriving community.



Clayton Street Corridor

Culture and Creative Zone

Newcastle
City Council 



Newcastle Clayton Street Corridor Cultural & Creative Zone

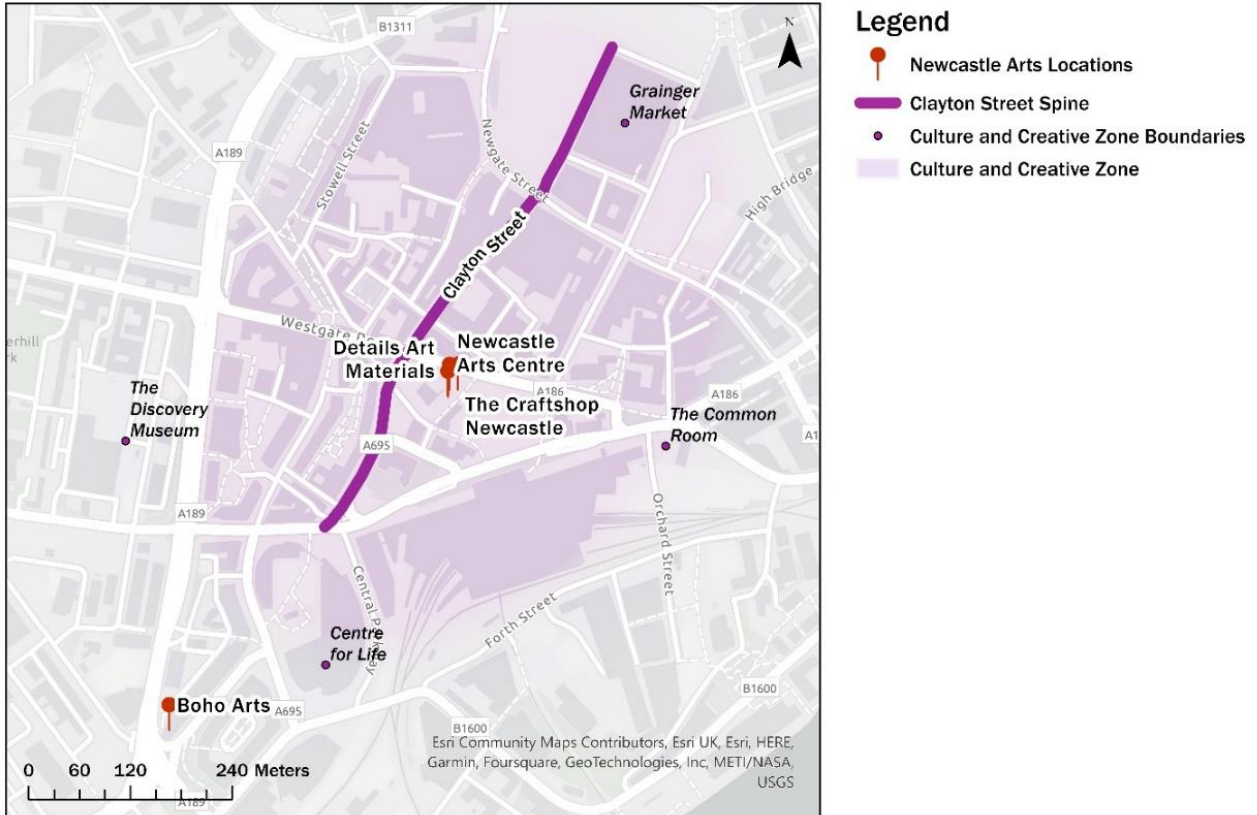


Figure 7: A map of Newcastle’s Clayton Street CCZ with key arts locations, CCZ boundaries, and the general area of the zone

Newcastle is the urban CCZ location, which focuses on the Clayton Street Corridor between the Centre for Life and Grainger Market but includes areas as far east as the Common Room and as far west as Discovery Museum. Clayton Street is an architecturally rich area, with heritage-listed buildings running up and down the street. Although many street-level storefronts are occupied, the area is noted for underutilized and vacant second and third stories. What does exist on street level includes tech repair shops, sports betting locations, convenience stores, and some bars and restaurants. Well connected to transit and nearby city-center destinations, Clayton Street’s CCZ designation is part of a broader regeneration strategy for the city, which includes Northumberland Street, Old Eldon Square, Blackett Street, Grainger Market, Ridley Place, Saville Row, Pilgrim Street, and Grey Street (Newcastle City Council, 2023).

An important issue and focus for the Clayton Street CCZ will be funding capital projects to deliver on the workspace package. The buildings are listed as heritage sites, and they are not required to pay business fees. In an interview with Vix Leaney, the Project Manager for the Clayton Street CCZ noted there are buildings that currently lack access to heating elements, which will make

making them fit for purpose a long road. Other stakeholders have presented this as an issue around projects like Grainger Market. It was not that the Clayton Street Corridor was excluded, but that property owners had no incentive to sell (Interview, 7 March 2023).

£1.7 million in funding was allocated for Newcastle CCZ. People familiar with the project around the city viewed this as an extremely low number, nowhere near the funding of a capital project. In our interview with Vix she noted “This is not a lot of money, but it does allow us to fund feasibility studies that can hopefully drive more investment for the larger projects” (Interview, 7 March 2023). Carol Bell of Creative UK echoed this referring to the funding as an intervention rather than a truly top-down approach. The funding needs to be utilized in a way that creates a sustainable model, so that this creative initiative will thrive past the interventions (Interview, 14 March 2023).



Figure 8: A portion of the Clayton Street Corridor, near Grainger Market

Greater Regeneration

As the urban center of the North East, Newcastle is a space of various regeneration efforts, particularly in its city centre area. Clayton Street is “filling a cultural gap in a greater regeneration scheme” (Interview, 6 March 2023). Clayton Street will be the corridor that connects the city center and lower west Newcastle. Rather than being a destination, Clayton Street will be an access point. As the street wasn’t touched by nearby regeneration projects it was picked as the CCZ location because “it was cheap,” which was stated bluntly during an interview (Interview 15, March 2023).

Clayton Street's omission from development projects was not an oversight or purposeful. With the buildings listed as heritage sites, property owners are not required to pay business fees which gives little incentive to sell. Additionally, there has been limited interest in redevelopment of building interiors, as the process of acquiring these buildings can be a major financial undertaking.

With a variety of developments around Newcastle, it is important to consider how these spaces can work together in pursuit of culture for culture's sake, not just purely as an economic driver. Establishing Clayton Street as a CCZ will give more salient place-making and relieve the city of feeling like pockets of development that perpetuate the inequalities present in the North East.

Zones will not be restricted to the designated areas, rather than using signage to create the boundaries of a zone the zones will act as access points to culture. Just as Nick Kemp, Leader of the Council, touched on, "I have always been committed to the principles of culture as being absolute, it is the thread that runs through the vitality of the city" (Interview, 15 March 2023).



Figure 9: Space above street level shops on the Clayton Street Corridor

Underutilized Spaces

Clayton Street has truly beautiful architecture, but as the project manager for the Clayton Street CCZ put it, "The buildings are unloved" (Interview, 6 March 2023). Clayton Street is contaminated with underutilized space, and vacant top stories above the street-level shops. In response to questions about gentrification and pushing out the current occupants we found that there was no plan to make changes to the street level storefronts, but rather to utilize the rest of the buildings to be affordable creative workspace.

Without ownership of the buildings, the council finds itself in a precarious spot in their attempt to deliver affordable workspace around the city center. Moves toward cultural regeneration will begin to increase the perceived value of the area, increasing the value of the properties it could begin to price out artists, like the Hybridge Street project (Interview 14, March 2023) that also took place in Newcastle.

In Newcastle a beginning part of the solution is the appointment of what is being called a “Property Champion.” Broadoak Asset Management who will act like a broker and property manager who will engage property owners to bridge the gap between them and creative practitioners who are looking to move into the CCZ and start-up or grow their practice in affordable fit for purpose space (interview, 6 March 2023). Broadoak is based in the North East and manages regeneration efforts for private and public sector partners (Broadoak Asset Management, n.d.).

Utilizing a property champion to act on behalf of artists will be a start toward breaking down the barrier to acquiring buildings to deliver on the CCZ. As they work in collaboration with Broadoak there will be the ever evolving need to drive investment in the area to continue building a strong and vibrant area for creative practitioners.

Grant Schemes

There are currently two active grant schemes being employed in the Clayton Street Corridor focused on workspace and skill development. The workspace scheme currently has funding for projects up to £15,000. Two spaces have been funded, a hot-desking (co-working) space for creative practitioners by Project North East. Project North East focused on bringing in tools that would be useful to creatives like drawing tables or a 3-D printer. This funding was also distributed to a live music venue to open podcasting space for creators (Interview, 7 March 2023). The workspace scheme provides an opportunity to use CCZ funding to drive investment via feasibility studies to develop new workspace.

The second grant scheme to fund skills development has been more popular. Through consultation with the sector the project team has worked to identify skill gaps within the cultural industry. Creative practitioners and organizations can apply to lead skills building independently or in collaboration. The project team that reviews these proposals to deliver skills programs also works to connect practitioners of similar skill sets to build networks or create more robust programming.

Public funds only supported creative practitioners who were registered as businesses and paid business fees, leaving freelancers and other independent creative practitioners without any subsidy. The grant schemes of Newcastle have the same caveat. While trying to respond to a decrease in the sector workforce and build networks to support creative and cultural practitioners, this comes off as a clear exclusion of key members of the sector.

A more people and sector-based approach is absent, as with the feasibility funding, much of the grant money for creative and cultural organizations is spent on consultations, and not to deliver creative work, or fit for purpose spaces to create and drive the sector.



The Power of Connection

Bev Fox, the founder of Boho Arts, provided valuable insights into the challenges faced by her organization while attempting to establish itself as an inclusive creative arts hub in the Newcastle CCZ. The main goal of the Boho Arts project is to support artists and creatives in the Newcastle area. Bev discussed how there had been a lack of accessible creative spaces in central Newcastle for a long time and how many artists were struggling to come to terms with the demolition of the few meanwhile spaces during the pandemic, leaving some artists feeling lost, upset and frustrated at the council. The project was created as a response to these challenges, with the aim of providing a space for artists to work and collaborate with the public. Bev also mentioned that she would love to see a "new renaissance" in the area, with a focus on supporting local talent and creativity.

One of the challenges that Boho Arts faced was affordability. She believes that due to the high number of heritage buildings on Clayton Street (the long street that is the spine of the zone), property owners have little incentive to rent at low prices as they aren't charged 'council rates' while they are unoccupied, and therefore it would be unlikely that artists would get anymore than other 'meanwhile' spaces. Boho Arts wanted to find a permanent space and were only able to negotiate the lease for its current building because it was not a heritage site. Despite this challenge, Bev's longstanding presence in the arts community and her ability to rally support through a successful crowdfunding campaign have been critical to Boho Arts' success. The campaign garnered support from a broad range of individuals, from local artists and creatives to the mayor of Newcastle and even people overseas who wanted to support the local arts community.

Thanks to Bev's leadership and the support of the community, Boho Arts was able to secure funds to move it forward. The crowdfunding campaign, combined with the grant received from the CCZ, and the benefit of the council's property champion, John Seager who remains a constant source of advice at this 'pointy end' of the project, has allowed the organization to develop a good relationship and open communication with the council and overcome the challenges that will ultimately provide a space for artists and creativity to thrive.

Boho Arts' experience offers valuable insights for creative organizations looking to establish themselves within new cultural and creative zones (CCZs). Bev's and her team's experience highlights the importance of adaptability, perseverance, and a strong support network in overcoming obstacles. The case also emphasizes the need for more effective communication between funding bodies and the organizations they support, as well as the importance of allocating resources efficiently and equitably. Ultimately, Boho Arts' commitment to supporting local talent and creativity serves as an inspiration for others looking to establish creative organizations within CCZs.

Meaningful Engagement and Process Improvement

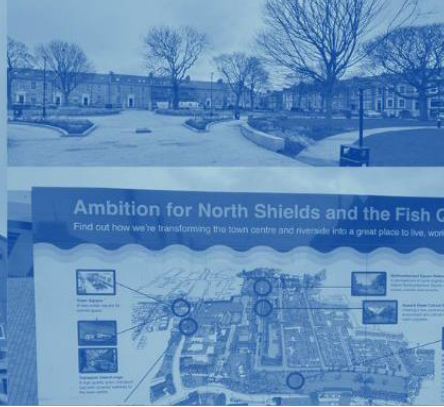
Community engagement is one of the key activity streams suggested by the NTCA for delivering creative and cultural resiliency. In Newcastle this engagement is taking form in creating welcoming and creating spaces for voices that are not traditionally involved in decision making, adding understanding to the policy and planning process, and welcoming people via a crafted and inclusive welcome statement (Coffield et.al., 2022). Meaningful engagement with the sector will be welcoming new voices and perspectives to repair the current distrust that exists between local authorities and artists.

The distrust of local authorities from creative practitioners stems from former creativity and culture strategies being based on large flagship sites rather than grassroots creatives (Interview, 15 March 2023). In the post-COVID environment there is a focus in the North East to bring a more experiential and inclusive feel to the creative and cultural sector. The focus of the CCZ's will be engaging with grassroots organizations and practitioners.

Engagement needs to come from both sides. There is a need for council and other officials to go to creative practitioners. The CCZ manager for Newcastle shared that her and a teammate attend coffee hours hosted by creatives to have a more organic touch toward engagement. Building relationships through the cultural sector and government can lead to building trust that will assist in driving the CCZs toward success.

Through meaningful engagement across partners and sectors there is an opportunity to better align stakeholders. Universities and local councils can have contentious relationships. Having different resources, management, and language tension can rise when it comes to place making or economic programs like the CCZ. A member of the cultural sector familiar with development near Clayton Street said there should have been engagement starting at site selection. That would eliminate some of the biggest hurdles in delivering on the CCZ pilot.

Building trust and networks will drive success through the CCZ pilot, despite some hurdles and roadblocks early in the process, the Clayton Street CCZ is working to meet the community where to fill gaps in skills and in the wider process of urban regeneration.



North Shields

Culture and Creative Zone



North Tyneside Council



North Shields Culture & Creative Zone

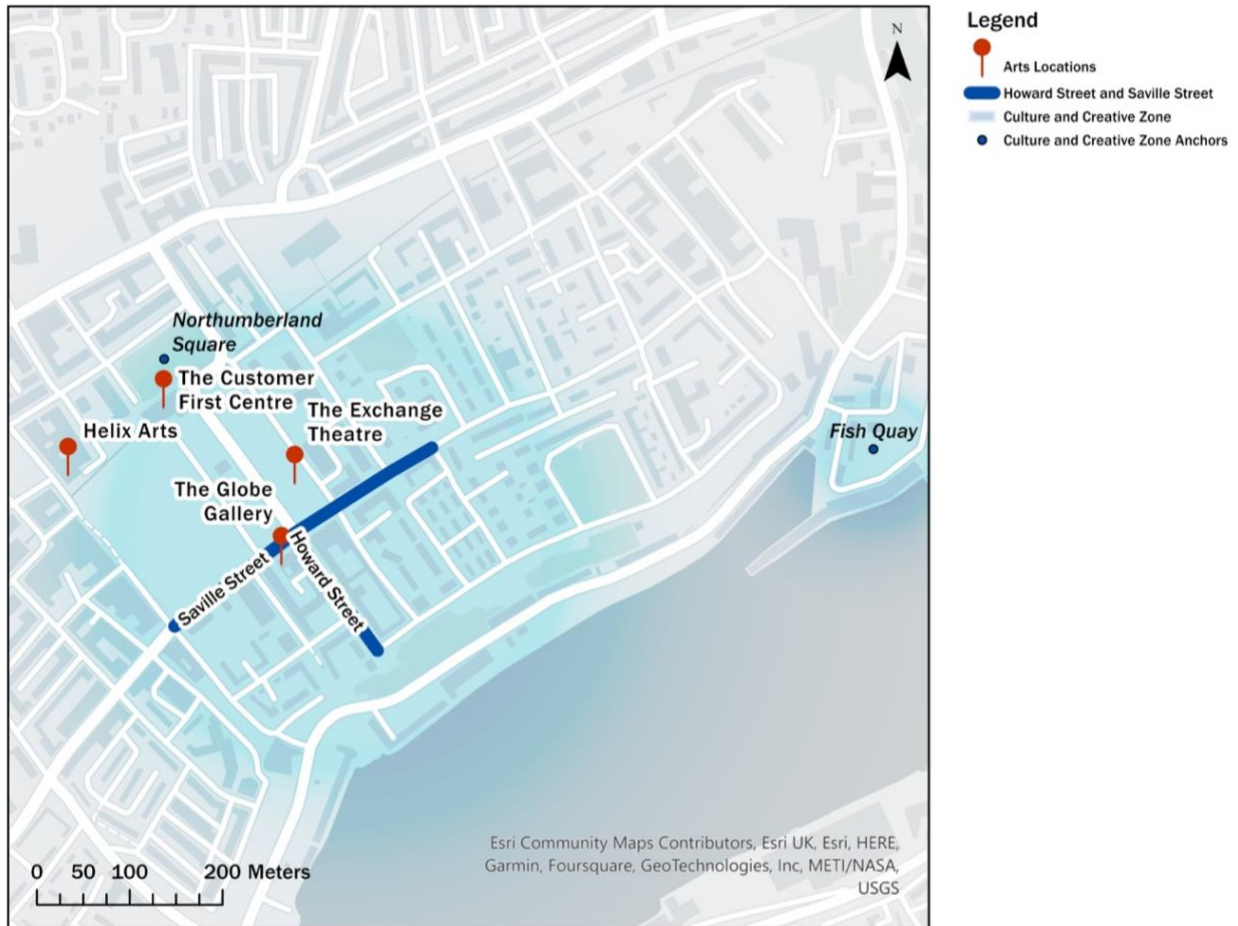


Figure 10: A map of North Shields with key arts locations, CCZ boundaries, and the general area of the zone

The North Shields CCZ represents the coastal location and landscape of the North of Tyne Region. The larger comprehensive plan, “The Ambition of North Shields,” articulated the need for a cultural quarter within North Shields, which helped justify the CCZ’s placement.

North Shields utilized additional funding from Historic England in the cultural quarter for capital improvements to the Exchange Theater, Northumberland Square and Howard Street (interview 9 March 2023). The Howard Street interventions aim to create a fluid transition between the town center and the vibrant coastal Fish Quay.

The North Shields Public Library serves as an accessible touchstone for the community. This is the only CCZ which contains a public library on its central spine, which can be a key institution in removing barriers to access culture, and could be utilized for skills development or youth STEAM programs (NP11, 2022).

Several significant anchor sites exist within the zone’s boundaries, offering a unique opportunity as they are owned by the council and have existing creative and cultural significance. The Exchange Theater, the Globe Gallery, and the Customer-First Centre are centrally located in the zone and are the priority for continued improvements. With the comprehensive plan, steady flow of funding, and key anchor sites identified in the zone, council and cultural leadership are in a strong position to employ strategies and utilize their present assets to bolster cultural value within and beyond the zone.

Art Scene Through COVID-19

Respondents emphasized the community-based nature of art and art organizations in North Shields. One respondent said that “it hasn’t got a huge sort of traditional theater-going audience,” while another said, “North Shields isn’t about high culture in the classic sense,” comprised of smaller, more localized networks of freelance artists and arts organizations. (Interview with Artist, 9 March 2023).

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has brought fundamental changes to arts and culture in North Shields, especially in the ways that people seek out art and art experiences. One respondent mentioned that people are booking tickets to performances much later than previously, which makes it difficult for arts organizations to plan attendance numbers (Interview, 8 March 2023). This impacts front-of-house staffing, food to order, and time to budget in getting people through an arts experience. Additionally, arts audiences are “not taking risks”, only attending programming that they “know they’re going to really enjoy” (Interview, 8 March 2023). Maintaining and predicting attendance has been more difficult since COVID-19. Similar impacts occur in recruitment efforts within the sector for technical roles, event support management, and production (Interview, 10 March 2023). North Shields stakeholders are addressing these challenges through expanding the perceptions of cultural spaces and who cultural spaces are for.

The North Shields Approach

Interviews stressed the permeability of CCZ boundaries and the malleability of program design. Stephen Bishop called it “very much a process of co-design”, giving artists the opportunity to create the guidelines surrounding business support, mentoring, and grant application schemes that will be part of the CCZ initiative (Interview, 8 March 2023). Although the process can be more time consuming, this approach leads to higher levels of ownership from participants as they are engaged early on and share a sense of control over the program implementation.

Leaning into Complexity

Helix Arts is the only National Portfolio Organization within North Shields. Their approach aligns with that of the broader CCZ in expanding the perception of cultural spaces and who cultural spaces are for. One respondent from Helix Arts said:

“we're constantly seeing who's not in the room, fighting to make sure that things are as democratic as possible, and really trying to broaden that out... to try and create something, the model which can be transplants, encourages other people to maybe think of doing similar things and thereby shift in the field” (Interview, 10 March 2023).

HELIX ARTS.

A Cultural Champion for the Community

Helix Arts was established in 1983 as an arts organization dedicated to creating community art interventions which addressed social and environmental problems. Cheryl Gavin, director of Helix Arts, and her team of creative practitioners are committed to serving the North Shields community across various sectors. They are recognized as a cultural champion by the local authorities within North Shields.

Cheryl and her team recognize the dynamic nature of the arts and cultural sector. Long-term planning is not possible when funding sources are limited, and project timelines are uncertain. For this reason, Helix Arts engages in short-term planning which adapts to the situation and needs of the community. This approach provided them a way to navigate the precarity of the creative and cultural sector and develop resilience during the pandemic.

As its only National Portfolio Organization, Helix Arts is a driver of arts and cultural policy in their area. Cheryl works closely with North Tyneside Council to advise and drive different types of community arts projects and programs. The North of Tyne Council has set space for Helix Arts within the Globe Gallery to aid their work and strengthen their partnership.

During the last decade, Helix Art has witnessed the resurgence of community pride in North Shields. This resurgence can be attributed to the various economic development strategies engaged by the North of Tyneside Council and the community arts projects pushed forward by Helix Arts. In many ways, Helix Arts is an example for how arts organization can bridge cultural policy from the top and creative practitioners who drive change from below.

Helix Arts approaches its programming through participatory art methods. They facilitate relationships between less common stakeholders--football clubs, pubs, people in schools, parks, community groups, and others--and local and international artists to create co-produced art as well as art processes (Interview, 10 March 2023). This model rethinks traditional arts engagement to develop audiences.



Figure 11: Cheryl Gavin, Director of Helix Arts, and Helix Arts Meeting Room

This approach leads to highly involved, process and product-led outcomes that mutually reinforce each other. In regeneration spaces, this can add to the nuances needed for artists, cultural regeneration, and economic development stakeholders to effectively communicate. As Helix Arts operates in these spaces, internally they consider how to articulate their work:

“[Helix Arts Board Member] said ‘lean into the complexity...describe it like that. We know that it’s not going to be one size fits all, it’s always going to be evolving and changing. It’s our mission. We’ve got that vision and values and I think as long as we’re doing this kind of work, we will collaborate, and it’ll be creative” (Interview, March 10, 2023)

“Leaning into the complexity” acknowledges that arts programming and the impact of the arts is not always compatible with the more-rigid language of economic development. This understanding is shared by Steve Bishop in the quotation below:

“Essentially, the North of Tyne Combined Authority is driven by economic development and economic development language, [creating] a tension at each level about that... we’ve challenged them on some of the language and some of the outputs... [as] it’s not always comfortable in a cultural setting or cultural organizations. So, we’re trying to translate that... while, at the same time saying, well, actually, there’s some ways you can’t influence because we just have to do this in order to get the money... that’s part of the challenge, I think, to make this work” (Interview, 8 March 2023)

These perceptions are shared across artists, artist organizations, and government officials in North Shields. The work of reattributing cultural currency value is necessary to improve effectiveness of the CCZ policy, and anchor institutions as well as policy leaders are important in delivering this need.



Figure 12: Interview with Steve Bishop, Head of Culture for North Tyneside Council at North Shields Library (Left) and Globe Theater (Right)

Connecting to the Quay

In the North Shields CCZ, furthering connectivity between the town center of North Shields and the Fish Quay repeatedly emerges as a major ambition. Located just southeast of North Shields, the Fish Quay is home to a robust commercial fishing industry, which is complemented by a growing number of local eateries. The working fisheries have a major influence on the character and culture of the area, as do the preserved historic remnants of the past fishing industries on the Fish Quay.

Addressing the built environment is a key aspect of connectivity efforts between the two areas. North Shields is situated at a higher elevation than the Fish Quay, and a steep slope separates the town centre and the quay. Work began in September 2022 on the Embankment Walkway, a project of the North Tyneside Council which aims to improve accessibility by constructing a set of stairs, ramps, and other walkways on the hillside separating the two areas. The explicit goal of this improvement to connectivity is “to attract more people to the area and vastly improve the appearance of the local landscape” (North Tyneside Council, 2022).



Figure 13: A sign for the Ambition for North Shields and the Fish Quay plan on display in North Shields.

Allowing for easier transit and interplay between the two areas creates a more attractive destination offer for both – as such, the cultural landscape of the Fish Quay raises important questions regarding the cultural strategy of the North Shields CCZ. The cultural influence of the fishing industry is highly visible in the Fish Quay, concentrated in historical buildings and projects like the Fiddler’s Green sculpture. On the other hand, there are no major art institutions in the Fish Quay that could serve as anchor sites for a more traditional view of culture and creativity.

This also demonstrates the complex relationship between the cultural and commercial sectors in North Shields. The fishing industry is not only important as an influence on culture and creativity – it’s a fundamental aspect of the area’s character and functionality. Included in this impact on the area is the fishing industry’s importance as an anchor of commercial development. Steve Bishop articulated the connection between the cultural and commercial sectors as follows:

We don't have a huge opera house or anything like that, you know, so there's.... very strong emphasis on the kind of community engagement side.... the commercial development's important in terms of bringing people into the area, especially the Fish Quay area (Interview, 8 March 2023)

While the Embankment Walkway will improve physical connectivity, these varying cultural landscapes present a challenge for the North Tyneside Council in their aim to improve social connectivity. The CCZs explicitly strive to take a place-based approach that is tailored to the existing cultural infrastructure in each Zone – for North Shields, establishing fluid social connectivity to the Fish Quay may necessitate an approach to culture and creativity that goes beyond the arts organizations and anchor sites present in the town centre and incorporates the outside influence of the historic and contemporary commercial fishing industry.

Challenges in North Shields

Local arts organizations struggle to retain and recruit local cultural practitioners. There are more creative opportunities in major metropolitan hubs in the North East. As a result, smaller areas struggle to compete and cannot develop a thriving creative and culture sector. Steve Bishop has recognized this challenge within North Shields:

“Recruitment is really hard at the moment, and I think that's probably true of most sectors, and most industries at the moment, this side of COVID...But that means it's hard to recruit people for technical roles, like events support management roles for producing, (Interview, March 9, 2023)”

Additionally, proposed place-making policies and community arts projects have the potential to destabilize or destroy what has already been developed by the residents of North Shields. Helix Arts is aware of this tension and engages in business development which relies on community input:

“Yeah, [we] connect with most people who live here, and we put forward an idea which was we'll give you an outside international street artist who will work with local artists from the from North Tyneside, to work with football clubs...all of the ideas and work are produced and coproduced with and by local people. (Interview, March 10, 2023)”

Tension can also arise between the desires of NTCA who have been assigned to redevelop the North East and residents who see North Shields as their home. There is a risk of losing the nuances of local identities when plans and strategies are developed outside of the areas where they will be implemented.

Challenges for the local authorities and arts organizations of North Shields are opportunities for its CCZ program. The North Shields CCZ can succeed in providing avenues for skills development that can provide creative practitioners the technical skills and resilience needed to navigate the precarity of the arts sector. CCZ managers and local arts organizations should be sensitive to the local identities formed in North Shields. Engaging residents during the implementation phase of place-making and community arts projects will ensure that they are received by the community as welcomed additions to the built environment rather than unnecessary detractors.



Berwick-Upon-Tweed Culture and Creative Zone



Northumberland
County Council



Berwick-Upon-Tweed Cultural & Creative Zone

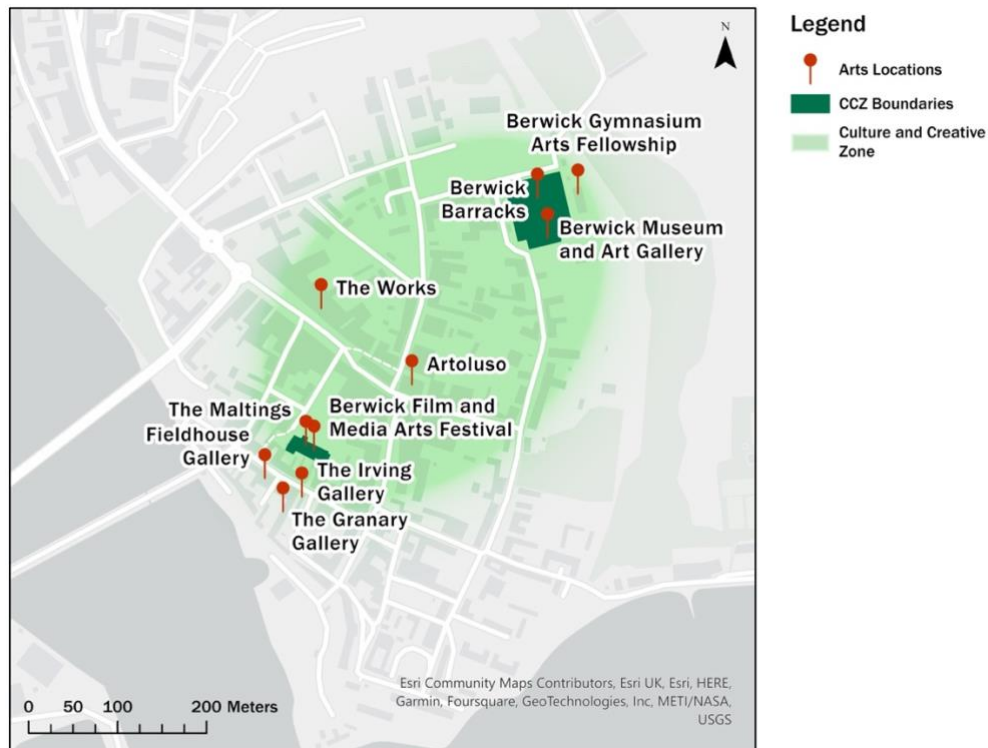


Figure 14: A map of Berwick-upon-Tweed with key arts locations, CCZ boundaries, and the general area of the zone

Berwick-upon-Tweed is a small, rural English Borders town in Northumberland County, with a population of about 12,000 people. The county is marked by a rich tapestry of histories, from being the frontier of the Roman Empire, part of the Debatable lands between England and Scotland, and a key area for mining during the Industrial Revolution.

Currently, Berwick is noted for its service, hospitality, and retail industries. It is home to The Maltings and Berwick Barracks, which will both serve as anchor sites for Northumberland County Council’s CCZ program. The Zone will receive £1.5million and will be overseen by a recently hired Project Manager. Berwick has a variety of cultural assets such as the annual Berwick Film and Media Arts celebration, several galleries along commercial streets, and various historical markers and landmarks. It is the location of many “second homes” which are occupied seasonally.

The CCZ will be implemented alongside other pre-existing cultural plans. The Northumberland County Council’s *Our Creative Landscape: A Cultural Strategy for Northumberland 2018-2030* sets out the priorities and overarching goals to guide future programs, policies, and developments in the county. Berwick is identified in the report as a specific focus for regeneration efforts to bolster its status as an international cultural tourism destination with transit access from London and Edinburgh.

Artist Ecosystem

Described as an “artist ecology,” Berwick has many creative practitioners, including composers, illustrators, fine artists, sculptors, poets, and visual artists. Within these mediums, some require more materials than others. An array of framers, supply stores, and custom sketchbook outlets exist in Berwick, highlighting a closed-loop ecosystem of art production and consumption, with material, production, and exhibition all occurring in proximity, to each’s benefit. An interviewed artist self-referred to himself and his partner as “gallerists...and people who make art all the time” (Interview, 8 March 2023). This distinction shows the perception of art beyond its economic means and instead as an intrinsic process that is part of his life in addition to livelihood.

Most artists and cultural practitioners are older and more established. While there are some younger and emerging early-career artists, they are less financially comfortable (Interview, 8 March 2023). An Artist Intermediary mentioned that “we know from talking to [the younger and emerging artists], that they have issues finding housing to live here” (ibid).



Figure 15: Signs outside the Granary, a community arts space.

The affordable housing issue is related to real estate shifts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Only domestic travel was allowed in England during the pandemic, bringing more visitors to towns like Berwick. As jobs stayed at least partially remote, people saw the attractiveness of Berwick – affordable rents, interesting cultural happenings, a seaside landscape, proximity to Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Newcastle, and a train ride (albeit lengthy) away from London. People bought second homes or sold their London flats for a full house in the North East countryside. These

second estates became holiday homes and have often evolved into sophisticated Airbnbs that the owners let, resulting in temporary visitors who serve as a catalyst for economic growth. The influx of new population and the “destination” aspect of Berwick has pivoted the businesses towards specialty shops, including galleries and art merchants. While this pivot is beneficial to some, this population influx impacts affordability for creative practitioners.

This localized arts scene is coupled with transnational art programs such as the Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival. The festival is described by CCZ Program Manager Andrea Oliver as one of Berwick’s “high quality, international, outward looking festivals,” which “draws attention to Berwick as a kind of interesting, cultural, curated place”. Additionally, Berwick artists participated in artist residencies in Sweden, exchanging artistic practice and creative communities with one another (Maltings, 2023). Berwick’s current arts ecosystem is active within the area as well as externally with global projects and opportunities for exchange.

One reason Berwick has been attractive to artists and gallerists is because properties such as those on Bridge Street are parceled into smaller-sized retail units for let. As per the Valuation Office Agency, business rates are lessened when the units have a smaller square meter (Valuation Office Agency, 2023). On Bridge Street, this translates to galleries not paying business rates, making gallery operation economically feasible. An artist explained in an interview:

“...we've paid 500 pounds a month in rent, but no business rates... That was why we could do what we did. It was quite easy. We just had to sell either one big picture, or a handful of little prints somewhere throughout this period for that. So that was brilliant.”

In different ways, an artist and artist intermediary who were interviewed both drew similar conclusions: artists create a cultural asset and their sector’s new condition impacts real estate, rendering their continued creation of cultural assets to be unsustainable as they can no longer afford the new costs of living. “Housing prices have gone up because of artists” and “artists price themselves out” are two interviewee observations that show that artists increase the value outsiders are willing to pay, thus being unable to afford these new market rates themselves (Interviews, 8 March 2023).

The Berwick Vision

The CCZ policy may help with adaptive reuse of older, underutilized, or vacant buildings. These interventions would be sensitive to the needs of different artists; for example, the needs of an illustrator, a composer, and a screen printer are drastically different and require distinct resources and amounts of space.

Another facet of CCZ intervention would increase the visibility of galleries, workstations, and open studio events to showcase creative outputs to the local public and tourists. Artists who were interviewed concur that creating a publicly visible presence was key to their success. One artist noted intentionally painting in public spaces so that people would become cognizant of their work.

When it came time for this artist to have an open studio, people noticed and wanted to support them, thus these open studios were a “massive success” (Interview, 8 March 2023).

As the structure of CCZs is intentionally flexible to allow for local adaptation, CCZ managers are tasked with building the path as they walk it. Part of this position is balancing the need to act relatively quickly to address the short-termism of the CCZ funding (set to end in 5 years) with the need to move gradually, spending time to develop the specifications of the CCZ policy to Berwick. The CCZ manager Andrea Oliver comments during an interview:

“We've got a draft, but it's not very, it's not very authentic to Berwick. It's very bland, formulaic and we have to... really extract the uniqueness. And get that in there before we can launch any of that stuff. So, there's a fair bit of building block foundational work to be done before we can even do a launch.”

Oliver stressed the need for localized information so that the plans enacted meet the existing needs and expectations of Berwick. Oliver mentioned the consultant who will be delivering workshops and sessions to identify needs and “determine the appetite” of the stakeholders.

In taking a step back to refine her understanding of Berwick, Oliver is aware of the short-termism implied in the CCZ structure. However, in the CCZ implementation’s most early stages, Oliver posits that “the challenge for [her] right now...is to grasp control over the CCZ program... not follow a formula...kind of insert [herself] into shaping it...because there are things in there that aren’t wrong, it’s just that it's too narrow” (Interview, 8 March 2023). Oliver’s awareness of needing to be in tune with the Berwick community demonstrates the potential community engagement processes that the CCZ can use to decide its strategies.

Oliver’s said her perspective is informed by John Holden’s “Capturing Cultural Value,” hoping to reprioritize the assumptions about culture and what makes it valuable (Holden, 2005). In doing so, this democratizes cultural spaces and works toward eliminating previous barriers based on assumption. This process fosters cooperation between artists and between art organizations more broadly.

CCZ efforts are generally quantifiable and focus on feasibility. As mentioned, the CCZ implementation approach is patient on implementation and is prioritizing the consultation and feasibility study phase in order to identify needs. The focus is localized while also being means-driven. In the CCZ manager capacity, communication between and among artists, artist intermediaries, and other regeneration economists is necessary and a role of the CCZ.

Bridging Gaps Between Artists, Cultural Regeneration, Economic Development

One notable finding from stakeholders across Berwick is that each group mentioned the communication missteps in working across artists, proponents of cultural regeneration, and proponents of economic development. The language of creative practitioners, cultural regeneration, and economic development more broadly is not shared or mutually understood for all stakeholders. Disconnects exist between what regeneration programmers understand about artists and vice versa. Similar disconnects exist between the language used by cultural regeneration actors and economic regeneration actors more broadly. In this nexus of communication, terminology, skillset, structural understandings vary widely and are not understood the same way through all stakeholders. An artist intermediary stated that there are knowledge gaps in the understandings of “culture and how artists work,” and that “people leading the day-to-day economic regeneration don’t necessarily understand cultural regeneration” (Interview, 8 March 2023). For the CCZ strategy work, it must create a common understanding from the artist perspective and from the regeneration perspective — it would allow artists to effectively engage in the strategy.

Artists interviewed discussed accessibility in relation to funding proposals, describing “[the application process] is ticking boxes. It’s jumping through hoops. It’s knowing the most words,” going further to say that “some people, bluntly, are very good at ticking those boxes and jumping through those hoops” (Interview, 8 March 2023). CCZ interventions that are sensitive to the array of artist skills and abilities to “jump through hoops” should be prioritized, and bridging these communication gaps is crucial to the CCZ success. An artist intermediary interviewed stated that CCZs should be making the standard policies...in supporting organizations to make [bridging the gap between artists and stakeholders] happen” (Interview, 8 March 2023). Although there is this voiced need to bridge this gap, poor representation of the CCZ and its Steering Committee are discussed below in *challenges*. To understand the collective nature of the CCZs strategy so far, the next section explains a case study in the call for collaborative coworking spaces in Berwick.

Collaborative Spaces as Part of CCZ Strategy

In alignment with the need to make cultural practitioners “visible”, one potential CCZ intervention is the creation of collaborative spaces for artists to work. The main issue with iterations of collaborative spaces for artists to work is affordability. In a group interview, two artists said:

Artist 1: *“The question that has been asked when we had the gallery by various people is how much would you pay for an artist studio? for which the answer generally is free, but I could afford a tenner? a month?”*

Artist 2: *“We couldn't afford a tenner a month now”*

An artist intermediary acknowledged that, although there is opportunity to develop live/workspaces for artists, he continued, “I think some of those things around affordable housing and stuff are kind of beyond the remit” (Interview, 8 March 2023). This perception shows the awareness of artist attitudes and needs, yet also the awareness of what programs like the CCZ are willing to implement. These broad artist perceptions – that collaborative spaces are only beneficial and financially viable to artists if they can afford them – were prominent in interviews beyond the Berwick CCZ.

For long-term artists, the costs of letting space in collaborative workspaces over the span of years and decades is more costly than it would be for the artists to purchase their own equipment. Thus, artists with the means to are less incentivized to pay to “collaborate” when they can organize informal partnerships, mentorships, and collaboration on their own

“We work with younger artists, basically, for free, we give them free use of the studios, and we let them use. And I'm doing that... we don't charge them for these things. And we find other options too so that we can balance the free with the pay”
(Interview, 8 March 2023)

For the artists interviewed, a related concern is that the people who could afford the collaborative spaces would be the older, retired people and “not the vibrant artists they want” (Interview, 8 March 2023). However, the artists showed hope that the older artists that get in there will be able to train and mentor younger artists (Interview, 8 March 2023). Although this does not address affordability directly, perhaps a sliding scale price could be implemented depending on some demographic factors.



A Cultural Hub in Transformation

Opened in 1990, The Maltings Trust is a charitable organization with a multi-use facility (The Maltings) which serves as a cultural anchor site for Berwick. Funded by the Arts Council England and the Northumberland County Council. It is used for film screenings, theatre, concerts, children's shows, community events, and is the primary social and cultural hub for the town.

As part of the ongoing cultural regeneration efforts in the town, The Maltings will undergo a complete transformation on the existing site to create a 21st century venue for cultural activities. The Trust has secured funding in partnership with the county council through the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal to create a new Maltings facility. The design of the new Maltings is being decided through a Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) competition.

During the research phase, stakeholders invited the research team to The Maltings to conduct the interviews. Scheduling the interviews at The Maltings highlights how it physically articulates the cultural importance of Berwick while simultaneously provides residents and visitors a comfortable location to relax and convene. This mix of cultural form and civic function makes The Maltings a truly unique anchor site.

Benefits to Collaboration

Collaboration and the exchange of ideas, processes, materials, and more aid in the creative process for artists. One artist participant mentioned that artists can be insular and hesitant to share ideas under the fear that their ideas will be stolen. This artist went on to say that “it’s only through communication and networking, and sharing that things actually move on and develop” (Interview, 8 March 2023). Collaboration can take many forms and can be unexpected or unconventional. Often, collaborators work in entirely different mediums and find ways to engage across them.

Challenges

Artists and art intermediaries are keen to the ways that collaboration and networks are important for the success of artists. They are also keen to the concerns relating to top-down arts funding.

The quotations to the right show a sense of distrust and awareness of how, structurally, similar cultural policies have brought mixed outcomes. The artists and artist intermediaries interviewed were quick to mention the fact that only one artist (an illustrator) is a part of the 16-person CCZ Steering Committee for Berwick. Government formalization of arts and culture reproduces itself and its rigidity while missing the mark in the community engagement it hopes to foster. The artists interviewed clarify that “it’s not like [they’re] stepping backward without trying to go forward” hoping to be involved because of their experience (Interview, 8 March 2023).

According to an artist intermediary who is part of the Steering Committee, it is comprised of mostly organizations, investor representation, and the Chamber of Commerce (Interview, 8 March 2023). Artists interviewed relayed their perception of representation without power or change.

Overall, there are riffs in the attitudes across artists, artist intermediaries, and the frameworks of the CCZs. The collaborative workspace case

*“Experience shows that... the majority of the money is going to be wrapped up in administration”
(Interview, 8 March 2023)*

*“Experience shows us that creative change tends to happen through individual effort, not a committee driving things forward”
(Interview, 8 March 2023)*

*“I’d like to have...involvement because we’ve started off as artists who cleaned toilets in order to be artists and ended up being artists at popular galleries, So I think we actually have some sort of idea about...the problems that artists have
(Interview, 8 March 2023)*

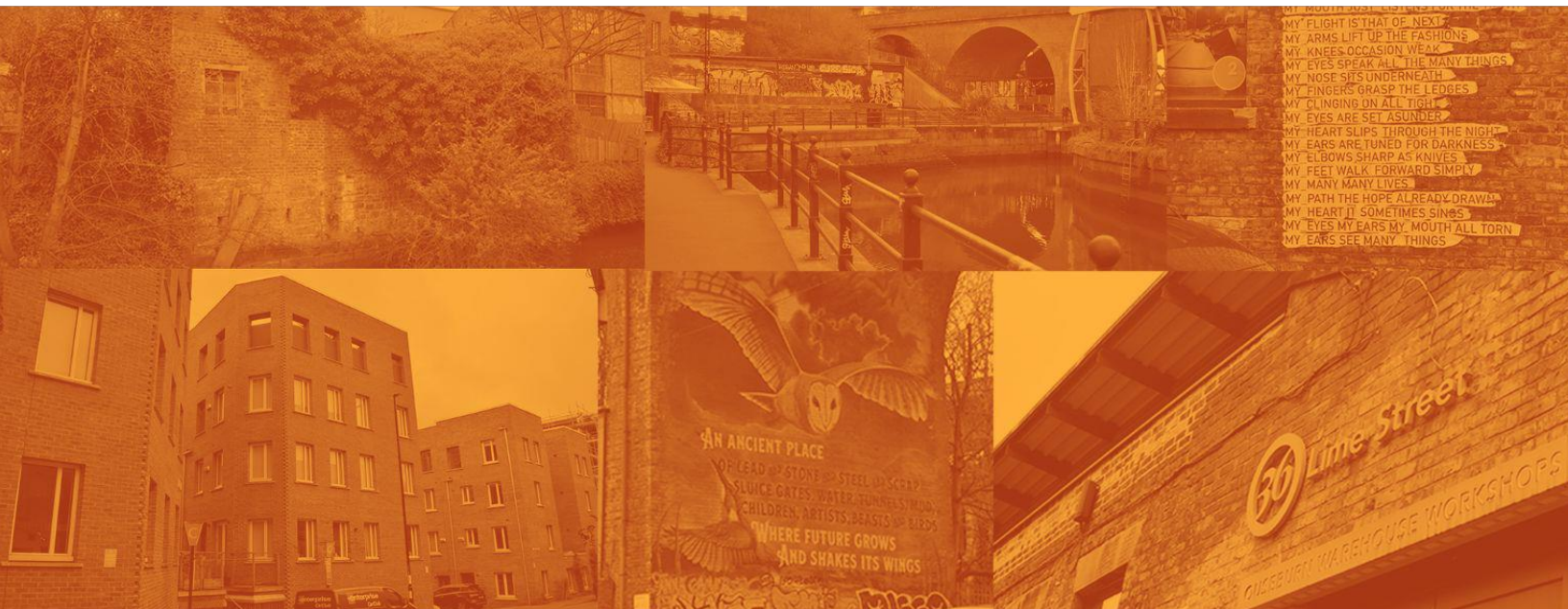
*“They gave us the space for feedback... But [we’re] not actually sure whether they’re listening to what people are saying, as a lot of good ideas came out”
(Interview, 8 March 2023)*

*“It’s the quantifiable that you mentioned before-- art’s benefits are unquantifiable. That’s why it’s problematic when it comes to government”
(Interview, 8 March 2023)*

study showed the opposing understandings of the problem, why it's a problem, and the solutions that address it. As artists and proponents of regeneration efforts have varying understandings of art and its functions, it is evident that the aforementioned groups use culture as a means to different ends. Determining if these can be compatible and how these differences can be mitigated would be useful for the CCZ implementation strategy.



The Ouseburn Valley



Cultural Regeneration in the Ouseburn Valley

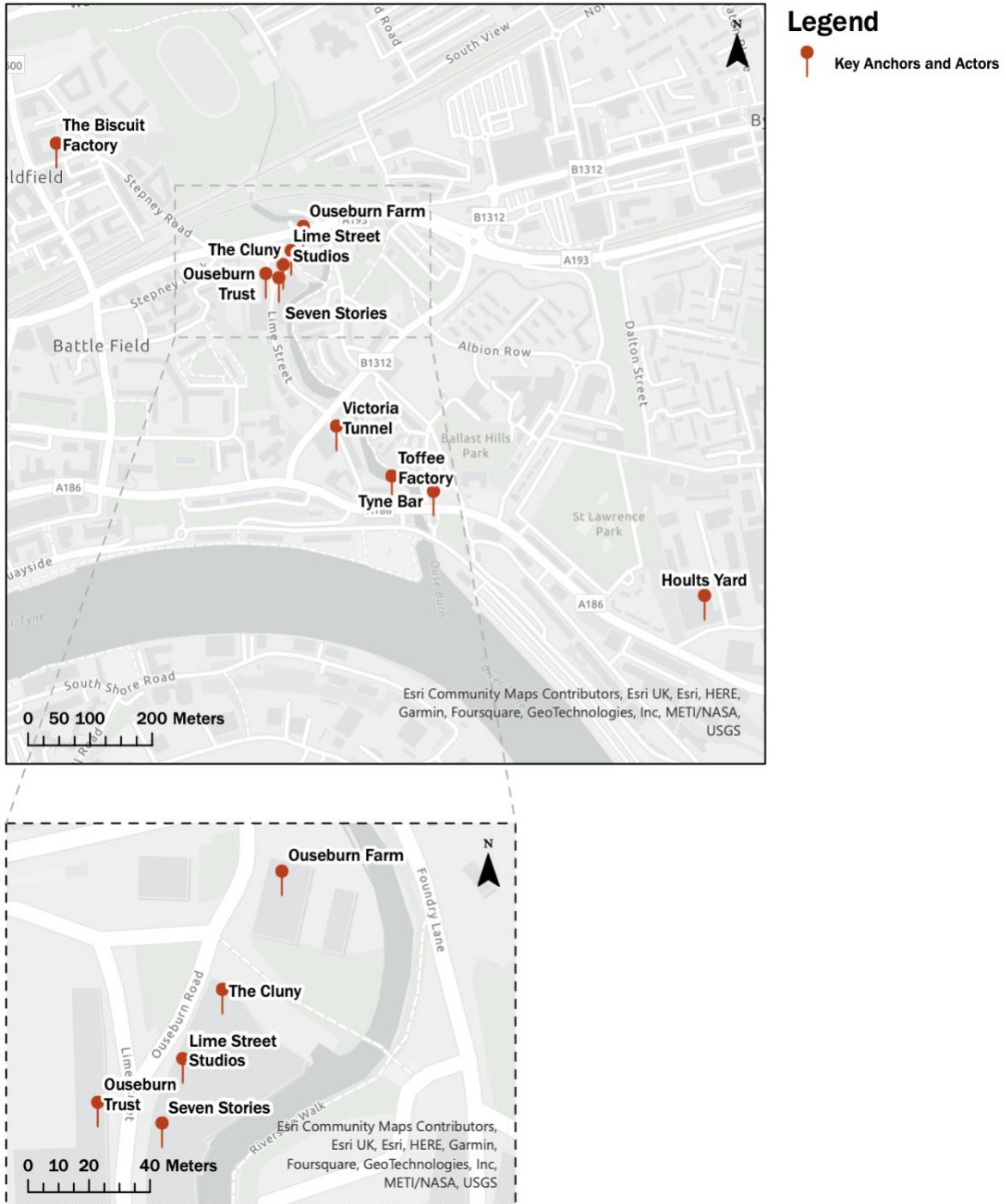


Figure 16: A Map of the Ouseburn Valley area of Newcastle, with key anchor sites and actors pinpointed

In this section, we look to answer the question: In what ways can the evolution of the Ouseburn Valley serve as a good model of cultural regeneration? First, we explore the Ouseburn Valley's transformation from an industrial center to a dynamic mixed-use neighborhood, chosen as a case study for its unique history and community efforts. We then discuss the impact of Covid-19 and the adaptations made by residents. Examining recent private funding, we reveal the complex relationships between competing stakeholders as the valley navigates progress, preservation, development, and gentrification. We conclude by drawing valuable lessons from Ouseburn's journey, discussing their implications for newer regeneration initiatives like Creative Culture Zones.

Why Ouseburn?

We chose Ouseburn as a case study for this report for several compelling reasons:

- Model of cultural regeneration: Ouseburn has been recognized in academic literature and within Newcastle as a successful example of cultural regeneration, making it an ideal case study to draw valuable insights from.
- Long history of transformation: Ouseburn has undergone nearly 40 years of change, facing multiple challenges such as the 2008 financial crisis, Brexit, and Covid. Studying the area's resilience and adaptability through these challenges can offer lessons for other regeneration projects.
- Ongoing balance of growth and community: Despite its reputation as a successful example of cultural regeneration, Ouseburn continues to grapple with finding the right balance between growth, gentrification, private investment, public funding, and maintaining a sense of community. This ongoing struggle provides an opportunity to explore how different strategies and approaches have been employed and how they might be applicable in other contexts.
- Lessons for CCZs and future regeneration projects: Ouseburn's journey offers valuable insights that can inform the design and implementation of Creative Cultural Zones (CCZs) and other regeneration initiatives. By examining the successes and challenges faced by Ouseburn, we can better understand how to foster sustainable, community-focused regeneration in other areas.

History of the Ouseburn Valley

The Ouseburn Valley, with its rich and vibrant history, has transformed from an industrial center in the late 18th century to a thriving artistic and cultural hub. As the industrial era waned, the valley faced a period of decline in the 1970s due to decreasing mining and manufacturing employment (Gonzalez and Vigar, 2008). However, the arrival of artists and creatives in the 1980s breathed new life into the area, shaping it into an alternative space that cherished its unique character and embraced its growing artistic community.



Figure 17: Ouseburn Valley Shipway in the 1900s (Courtesy of the Ouseburn Trust)

During the 1990s, Newcastle experienced an "urban renaissance," characterized by a focus on cultural industries, tourism, and an influx of young professionals (Gonzalez and Vigar, 2008). In response to the government's revitalization plans that threatened Ouseburn's heritage, the local community established the beginnings of what would later be the Ouseburn Trust in the mid-1990s to protect and promote the valley's unique identity. The group of volunteers secured a £2.5 million grant from the government and formed the Ouseburn Advisory Committee with the Newcastle City Council (González & Vigar, 2008).

The valley's artistic community, which had been growing since the 1980s, became a driving force in shaping the area's development. Working together, they ensured a balance between progress and preservation, ultimately avoiding gentrification. Several anchor institutions, such as The Cluny, Lime Street Studios, Biscuit Factory, Hoult's Yard, and the Ouseburn Trust, were also established in the valley during this period. These institutions have not only contributed to the area's growth and development but have also fostered a supportive and collaborative environment for artists and creatives. This nurturing atmosphere continues to attract talent and solidify the valley's reputation as a thriving arts and culture scene.

Today, the Ouseburn Valley is a vibrant and unique destination where the Ouseburn Trust plays a crucial role as a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and protecting the area's heritage and culture. As a registered charity, the Trust emphasizes heritage conservation and preservation while also nurturing the cultural and creative aspects of the valley. By collaborating with local businesses, artists, and community groups, the Trust supports economic development and social cohesion, forging new partnerships with organizations that share its heritage conservation objectives.



Figure 18: Ouseburn Valley Shipway today (courtesy of the Ouseburn Trust)

Key Actors and Anchors

In the Ouseburn Valley, several key actors and anchor institutions play a crucial role in the area's development, preservation, and community engagement. Some of these include:

- **Ouseburn Trust:** A key anchor institution, the Ouseburn Trust has been central to the Valley's regeneration efforts. With its asset-based model, the Trust has significant influence over the direction of the area and works to preserve its heritage, support local businesses, and engage the community.
- **The Biscuit Factory:** The UK's largest independent contemporary art, craft, and design gallery, the Biscuit Factory is an important cultural institution in Ouseburn. It contributes to the area's creative character and supports local artists and makers.
- **Seven Stories:** The National Centre for Children's Books, Seven Stories, is a significant cultural institution in Ouseburn that attracts visitors and families to the area. Its goal is to promote literacy and a love for reading among children.
- **The Cluny:** A renowned live music venue and pub in Ouseburn, the Cluny plays an essential role in fostering the area's vibrant music scene and provides a platform for local and touring musicians.
- **Ouseburn Farm:** A community-led farm and educational resource, Ouseburn Farm offers a green space for visitors and residents to engage with nature, learn about sustainable practices, and participate in various community activities.
- **Victoria Tunnel:** A preserved 19th-century coal wagonway later used as a World War II bunker, the Victoria Tunnel offers guided tours, allowing visitors to explore Ouseburn's industrial heritage and its importance to the area's development.

- **Lime Street Studios:** Lime Street Studios is a collective of artists' studios housed in a former industrial building in the Ouseburn Valley. This creative hub provides affordable workspace for artists and makers, fostering a supportive community and encouraging collaboration. The Studio also hosts events and exhibitions, further enriching the cultural landscape of the area.
- **Toffee Factory:** The Toffee Factory is a restored and repurposed former sweets factory that now serves as a contemporary office space for creative and digital businesses in the Ouseburn Valley. The Toffee Factory provides high-quality workspace, networking opportunities, and support for these businesses, contributing to the area's reputation as a creative cluster.
- **Hoults Yard:** A former pottery factory turned into a modern business village, Hoults Yard offers office, studio, and event spaces for a diverse range of businesses, from tech startups to creative agencies.
- **Tyne Bar:** A popular riverside bar and music venue, The Tyne Bar contributes to Ouseburn's lively entertainment scene. It hosts live music events and offers a welcoming space for locals and visitors alike to socialize and enjoy the area's unique atmosphere.

COVID-19: Impacts on Ouseburn

The Ouseburn Valley has faced significant challenges due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Key stakeholders within the valley have also been navigating a landscape of reduced public funding due to government measures and the disappearance of European funding streams because of Brexit. Organizations within the Ouseburn Valley have had to adapt, restructure, and develop new approaches to maintain their viability and resilience in the face of these challenges.

The ability and need to change due to the pandemic came up time and again when speaking with locals of the area. One Newcastle resident involved in business development of the creative sector stated:

"The pandemic finally seems to have brought it home to everyone that the landscape really has shifted." (Interview, 10 March 2023)

During this challenging period, one of the primary adaptations observed was businesses becoming more self-sufficient and commercially focused. One interviewee mentioned that their business had to learn to "stand on its own two feet," and the pandemic accelerated the process of achieving financial sustainability (Interview, 10 March 2023). Another long-time business owner in the valley echoed this sentiment, sharing that they had to innovate to survive and even organized a crowdfunding campaign to stay open (Interview, 7 March 2023).



Figure 19: Mural underneath one of the bridges that passes over the Ouseburn Valley

A local artist found this to be true for many artists working in a nearby studio space as well, stating:

"The pandemic halted most paid work. Numerous artists had to adapt and transition to working online, attempting to monetize their skills and knowledge digitally without surrendering full copyright." (Email correspondence, 24 March 2023)

Despite its obvious challenges, the pandemic spurred an increase in community engagement and support. A long-time Ouseburn resident and recent Newcastle University graduate shared their experience:

"They started using WhatsApp to connect with other residents... they would just help each other out, and that really helped build a sense of community, which didn't exist pre-COVID." (Interview, 6 March 2023)

In addition to the pandemic, Brexit has resulted in lasting effects on the Ouseburn Valley due to the loss of European funding. Key stakeholders in the valley have faced the challenge of diminished public funding because of government measures and the vanishing of European funding sources, such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The ERDF was a vital funding mechanism for projects that fostered economic and social cohesion, encompassing support for small and medium-sized enterprises, innovation, research, and environmental protection. A current trustee of the Ouseburn Trust and former Regeneration Officer of the Newcastle City Council expressed their dismay over the disappearance of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF):

"...one of the things that's happened recently is [that] us getting out of Europe has closed the door to some really good grant schemes, [such as] a thing called ERDF..." (Interview, 8 March 2023)



Figure 20: Sign in front of the Ouseburn Trust on Lime Street

This loss has halted many developments, and the trustee added that the promised UK government replacement for the ERDF has yet to materialize:

"...they promised after Brexit that they would replace ERDF, but it's never happened." (Interview, 8 March 2023)

As a result, many organizations have been forced to reevaluate their funding strategies and explore alternative income streams. For the Ouseburn Trust, the asset-based model they adopted was crucial to their survival the after Brexit and through the pandemic:

"...so that asset-based model was key, not just for the crisis of the COVID pandemic, but we've weathered other storms in the past as a result of that as well." (Interview, 6 February 2023)

The Ouseburn Trust's asset-based model emphasizes leveraging local assets, community engagement, and collaboration to foster economic growth and sustainability in the Ouseburn Valley. By acquiring, managing, and developing properties, the Trust generates revenue while preserving the area's heritage and identity. These properties include historic buildings, workspaces for creative industries, and community spaces that facilitate cultural events and activities. Another crucial element of this model is the Trust's strong focus on community engagement and collaboration. The Ouseburn Trust actively involves residents, businesses, and artists in the decision-making process, ensuring that their voices are heard, and their needs are addressed. This participatory approach fosters a sense of ownership and pride in the community, which, in turn, contributes to the overall resilience of the area. This strategic approach to community development brings together local stakeholders, businesses, artists, and residents to create a vibrant, resilient environment, making the model a successful and sustainable approach to community development.

The Ouseburn Valley has confronted considerable challenges stemming from the economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit, which led to diminished public funding and the loss of European funding sources. However, through conversations with individuals on the ground, we've observed that businesses and organizations have showcased their resilience by adapting, reorganizing, and crafting new strategies to preserve their viability. By fostering stronger community support, enhancing self-sufficiency, and investigating alternative revenue streams, the key players in the Ouseburn Valley are safeguarding the ongoing growth and vibrancy of this distinctive cultural hub. The next section will explore how alternative private streams, like private development, are impacting the community and their ability to adapt to crises like the pandemic.

Seeking Balance in Ouseburn's Regeneration: Navigating Private Development and Diverse Community Perspectives

The regeneration of the Ouseburn Valley, which has attracted both local and international attention for its unique character, has led to increased private investment in the area. Funding constraints initiated by the 2008 financial crisis and worsened by Brexit and the pandemic have resulted in a surge in residential construction. This has sparked concerns about gentrification, rising property prices, and the potential displacement of the creative communities that originally drew developers to the area. Balancing economic growth while preserving Ouseburn's distinctive identity and supporting its diverse population remains a challenge.



Figure 21: Lime Street Studio in Ouseburn, one of the oldest and largest artist hubs in North East England

Gentrification, Affordability, and Housing in the Ouseburn Valley

Gentrification in the Ouseburn Valley presents a challenge to balance the preservation of the community's distinctive character while welcoming the advantages of new investments and development. Rising property prices and changing demographics are closely tied to concerns about gentrification and affordability, as locals fear the loss of the area's spirit. The Ouseburn Trust strives to maintain a mixed-use area by cautiously working with developers and aiming to balance residential and commercial spaces. This is reflected in conversations with a trustee of the Ouseburn Trust who noted that in the past five years the balance of development has shifted over to housing (Interview, 8 March 2023).

In addition to the concerns about the shift in housing, community members in the Ouseburn Valley emphasize the need for social and affordable housing. They feel that the current housing developments in the area are exclusive and expensive, further contributing to gentrification. One resident stated:

"Housing developments are really welcomed...but [it] needs to be social housing, affordable to rent for families and disabled people. The housing in the valley is exclusive, expensive." (Email correspondence, 24 March 2023)

This perspective underlines the importance of providing accessible housing options to ensure the diverse and inclusive nature of the community, mitigating the negative impacts of gentrification.



Figure 22: The Malings Housing Development in Ouseburn

Amid these changes, community members in Ouseburn reminisce about a less commercialized era, with a trustee of the Ouseburn Trust noting:

"I mean, [there] are people around who [have] nostalgia for the days when Ouseburn was a bit more hidden." (Interview, 8 March 2023)

This sentiment highlights the tension between maintaining the area's unique charm and adapting to a transforming neighborhood. It emphasizes the need to explore the complex interplay between cultural ideology, local institutions, and community organizations in molding a neighborhood's character. As one Ouseburn community member remarks on the evolving landscape, stating that "the process of gentrification realistically probably already has begun," community involvement and awareness will be essential in navigating these challenges.

Residents of the Ouseburn Valley express concerns about the potential loss of the area's unique identity, rising property prices, and the possible displacement of creative communities. One resident voiced worries about the rising rents and its impact on the neighborhood's uniqueness, saying:

"The charm of this area is that it's different from the rest of the city...But if rents keep going up, we might lose the very people who made it so special." (Interview, 6 March 2023)

Another resident shared similar concerns, emphasizing the importance of preserving the area's distinct character to avoid conflicts between newcomers and long-time residents (Interview, 7 March 2023). Another Newcastle resident involved in developing creative industries in the area, shared a similar sentiment, expressing concern about the gentrification of Ouseburn, stating:

"What concerns me is the kind of gentrification of that area is from moving that ad hoc infrastructure and those chances for people who are 23 years old now, it's not about trying to preserve it, how it was, it's about trying to preserve that chance, that opportunity." (Interview, 10 March 2023)

As the Ouseburn Valley continues to evolve, the need to strike a balance between preserving its unique character, accommodating new developments, and maintaining affordability becomes increasingly crucial. Stakeholders in the community, including residents, businesses, artists, and local institutions, must work together to ensure that the area remains vibrant and inclusive.



The Double-Edged Sword of Development

The Malings, a new housing development in the Ouseburn Valley, serves as a prime example of the tensions that can arise between old and new, private and public investment, and housing and commercial development. A representative of Igloo Regeneration, the developer behind the project, expressed their long-term commitment to the area while acknowledging the challenges they faced during the development. These challenges were mainly due to the 2008 financial crisis and the need for extensive environmental remediation because of the valley's industrial past. Consequently, their focus on financial viability meant that Igloo couldn't afford to incorporate the mandated percentage of social housing.

In response to the tensions between existing residents and newcomers, particularly regarding noise from the music industry and the need for affordable housing, Igloo attempted to address this by marketing noise and culture as an asset to potential residents. Shortly after the first residents moved into the Malings, the nearby Tyne Bar received noise complaints and had to put a sign up outside its space, advising its patrons to "leave quietly in the evening and don't dawdle by [the residents'] homes".

One local professor criticized the Malings for not including more social housing, but the Ouseburn Trust counters this with a view shared to them by a CEO of a nearby local social housing provider: "The last thing we want [the Ouseburn Trust] to do is campaign for affordable housing. Because we have affordable housing we haven't let yet." Navigating the complexities of working with developers like Igloo Regeneration can be a double-edged sword. As one Trust member explained, "We have to first be a bit commercial... if we work with [developers], the community can gain something from it as well." They also stressed the importance of maintaining objectivity and picking battles wisely.

In light of these concerns, the Trust still believes the Malings development has been successful. One member said, "We've benefited hugely from those residents who have moved into the valley... We've probably attracted almost half of those residents as volunteers." Balancing private and public interests and managing tensions between housing and commercial development in the Ouseburn Valley remains a delicate, ongoing process.

Fostering Unity through Community Engagement

As residents, artists, and businesses grapple with balancing development needs and preserving the area's distinctive character, the community's dedication to engagement and shared responsibility plays a crucial role in fostering unity and maintaining the essence of the Ouseburn Valley.



Figure 23: Front house of the Ouseburn Farm, which contains a café and sitting area

Strong relationships between residents, artists, businesses, and local institutions have fostered a sense of solidarity and cooperation in the Ouseburn Valley. Creative approaches such as organizing regular markets have bolstered local creatives and artisans. As one resident shared:

"Lots of creative and inventive approaches to doing things such as having the regular market – it's a great way to support local creatives and there is evidence of locals being supported." (Email correspondence, 24 March 2023)

The community's resilience and willingness to seek help from one another during difficult times was also highlighted by one resident:

"There used to be sort of that stigma of not asking for help. And I think COVID showed that it was okay to ask for help. You shouldn't be struggling in silence." (Interview, 6 March 2023)

In the face of challenges posed by gentrification, key actors and anchor institutions like the Ouseburn Trust have become increasingly important in balancing the community's needs with new development. By engaging with residents and ensuring that their concerns are considered, these institutions play a significant role in fostering inclusivity and shaping the area's future.



Figure 24: The Cluny, a well-known bar and music venue in Ouseburn

However, there is room for improvement in fostering collaboration between certain institutions. Some community members have expressed limited interaction with the Ouseburn Trust, suggesting that increased engagement could lead to more effective collaboration and better outcomes for the community as a whole:

*"We don't really do work with them [Ouseburn Trust] to be honest with you. They're kind of like, up there (gestures above his head). They're involved with a lot of planning applications for the future of the valley. And we just get on here."
(Interview, 7 March 2023)*

Despite these challenges, the collective spirit of the Ouseburn Valley has been further strengthened by collaboration and support among local businesses during difficult times. One local artist believes that the connections between the businesses in the valley have grown stronger in this post-COVID era:

"There seems to be even more connection between the businesses in the valley. There is a lot of support and sharing, trying to make sure we all make it through the difficult post-pandemic economic climate." (Email correspondence, 24 March 2023)

The Ouseburn Valley's emphasis on community engagement and unity offers valuable insights into addressing gentrification and urban development challenges. The collaborative efforts of key stakeholders and anchor institutions, along with solid connections among residents, artists, businesses, and local organizations, enhance the area's resilience and adaptability. By maintaining strong relationships and working collectively, the Ouseburn Valley community can safeguard its dynamic and diverse essence while tackling the challenges and prospects arising from regeneration.

Ouseburn as Model for Cultural Regeneration?

Ouseburn presents a unique case study in cultural regeneration, with its success driven by community engagement, the presence of anchor institutions like the Ouseburn Trust, and the

preservation of heritage and green spaces. However, it also faces challenges such as gentrification, a shift from public to private funding, and an emphasis on housing over commercial development. The Ouseburn Valley exemplifies the importance of a cohesive community and continued dedication to maintaining its distinct cultural character despite the pressures of private development. In the following section, we will discuss findings from Ouseburn that can be applied within the context of new and emerging cultural regeneration strategies like the CCZs.

Findings

Following the data collection and analysis, several key findings were concluded regarding cultural regeneration strategies in the case study areas of North East England. It is important to note that some of these findings may be more relevant to certain case study areas compared to others due to unique local dynamics. The findings represent observations of the interviews and site visits that were conducted, which will not completely encapsulate the diversity of experiences of other key stakeholders in the region.

Ouseburn serves as a mixed model of success for cultural regeneration.

Ouseburn offers valuable insights for initiating regeneration projects, emphasizing the importance of community engagement, strategic partnerships, and a strong sense of place. As funding landscapes evolve, future regeneration projects should learn from Ouseburn's successes and challenges, and adopt innovative approaches that prioritize community involvement, anchor institutions, and place-based strategies within the context of the CCZs.

- Evolving funding landscape: Unlike Ouseburn's earlier phases, which benefited from government and European Union funding, contemporary regeneration projects face austerity measures, Brexit, and the impact of Covid on the creative sector. Alternative funding sources and strategies need to be explored to adapt to this changing landscape.
- Long-term regeneration planning: Ouseburn's transformation occurred over 40 years, whereas initiatives like the CCZ typically have a shorter timeframe. Regeneration projects should consider adopting longer timeframes to ensure sustainable, lasting impact.
- The role of anchor institutions: The Ouseburn Trust has played a pivotal role in guiding the area's development. Identifying and engaging with similar key institutions or actors in new regeneration projects is essential for providing continuity, direction, and support.
- Importance of community collaboration: For successful regeneration, collaboration between various stakeholders, including artists, residents, government officials, developers, and landlords, is crucial. This ensures that all parties work towards shared goals and fosters a sense of community ownership.
- Leveraging unique geography and heritage: While replicating Ouseburn's distinct geography may not be feasible, other areas can focus on preserving and enhancing their own unique features and heritage during regeneration processes.
- Managing private investment and gentrification: Ouseburn's experience with gentrification and potential loss of character should serve as a cautionary tale. Future projects should carefully balance public and private funding and strive for development that maintains an area's unique identity.

- Balancing housing and commercial development: Ouseburn's experience shows that developers may prioritize housing over commercial development, which can conflict with broader regeneration goals. Future projects should explore strategies to balance these priorities in order to support cultural and creative sectors.

The impacts of COVID-19 still have a major influence in cultural policy and practice.

Even as most public health restrictions have been lifted and many people are returning to travel, work in person, and gather indoors, there is still an overwhelming sense that the pandemic has imbued more permanent programmatic and operational adjustments in the creative sector. Many continue to see the value and necessity of hybrid events, outdoor placemaking projects, and crowdfunding campaigns. Although a devastating global event, communities were able to find a stronger sense of connection over the last few years through more collaborative activities. Discussions and networks built out to mitigate loneliness and isolation have had staying power and helped many gain a renewed sense of helping chart their futures. The onset of the pandemic also has required policymakers and government authorities to become more flexible and adaptable with the goals and outcomes with their cultural programs and policies. It put increasing focus simultaneously on longer term investment strategies and immediate support for workers who faced job loss and other economic hardships.

The Ouseburn Valley's experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic offer valuable insights into the role of community-centered activities in building resilience in the creative sector. Despite the crisis, the Valley successfully maintained a sense of connection and empowerment through various community-driven initiatives, even as public health restrictions were lifted. This approach, emphasizing local engagement and adaptability, could serve as a model for policymakers and government authorities looking to develop vibrant and resilient cultural hubs, while addressing both long-term investment strategies and immediate support for workers facing economic challenges.

Limited Funding, High Ambitions, and Long-Term Outlooks on Success

Across many of the interviews, there was a prevailing sense of optimism that cultural regeneration can be a tool for transformative improvements to the built environment and a more robust means of support for the creative sector. Yet, when discussed in relation to the current public funding landscape, there was sense of pragmatism. It was evident across all three zones that the allocation of funding for each program will not be – by itself – transformative. Many projects will be supplemented from other funding regional and national sources, such as the North Shields Cultural Centre transformation and the “Living Barracks” project in Berwick.

Considering this, several elected officials and program staff highlighted the importance of building strategic relationships, identifying established organizations as “success stories,” and making use of short-term or temporary placemaking activities. Staying committed to the value of culture as a

means of greater regeneration will be important to continue even as larger investments into the sector remain to be seen. Nick Kemp, Head of the Newcastle City Council, remarked:

“I think to me the management of the CCZ is [to] ensure that it's not led by the funding, but it's led by the principles of culture and what we're trying to achieve through it.”

The five-year pilot period of the zones has also been considered a time for experimentation and some level of risk-taking. A key attribute of what pushed the Ouseburn Valley forward in their early regeneration efforts was their ability to be bold and act. More ambitious and unique projects can spur a stronger justification for continued funding after the pilot period.

Optimism and Uncertainty with Future Devolution

The previous devolution deal that created the NTCA was able to identify culture and creativity more directly as an important area to invest in compared to previous regional governance models. Even more, it was identified as an opportunity for inclusive growth and stability within the sector. The pandemic prompted authorities to consider longer-term support and catalytic investment for the sector. As the NTCA and greater North East England look towards the new devolution deal – which will add four new local authorities into the fold – there is a mix of hopefulness, reservation, skepticism, and ambivalence towards the future. Key points that were observed include:

- Fund commitments and program infrastructure to key parts of the cultural, creative, and tourism areas of the NTCA, including the CCZ program, may look different with a wider geography now being covered.
- A combined authority that encompasses a more economically cohesive geography provides more logic behind stronger collaboration efforts between local authorities.
- Greater devolution puts a premium on ensuring that regional-based policy is locally sensitive and responsive, which has been an area of concern.

Local authorities and the NTCA have a major stake in the delivery of the CCZ program, so being able to navigate and understand the varied goals, strategies, and activities of each other is paramount.

Varied perspectives on the value and purpose of culture and creativity puts stress on trust.

The continual interest and investment into cultural regeneration efforts as a major driver for social, physical, and economic transformation has allowed for a larger and more diverse set of related stakeholders to exist. These dynamic networks of visionaries, producers, implementers, influencers, consumers, supporters, and others within the wider cultural and creative ecosystem

offer an even more varied and diverse set of perceptions, experiences, and opinions on how these efforts should be employed. Even within the creative sector, there is a diverse landscape that represents a large span of professionals – from freelancers to local music groups to national performing arts organizations. It is not a monolith by any measure. The sector varies greatly with the amount of involvement they have in government-led programs, projects, and funding schemes. Some may serve on advisory boards to local authorities, while others may have not yet heard of certain government programs such as the CCZs.

Within this context, research found that different people have varying perceptions on policy and program interventions in the sector. Interviewees within the sector have expressed different levels of dissatisfaction with the government’s roles in cultural policy and planning. Interventions from the government must be sensitive to existing dynamics between creative practitioners, intermediaries, and policy makers. The implementation of strategies must recognize that creative practitioners often experience some form of precarity—finding work, unpaid work, paid in exposure, housing insecurity and displacement. Some creative practitioners have a perception that “community engagement” strategies that end up being employed are only so useful depending on the level of participation allowed by those engagement strategies. Historical and current interventions have overlooked the preexisting barriers and disparities within the sector that do not present themselves when looking at aggregated or top-level evaluations.

The success of the CCZ program will rely on strong trust and communication between local and regional authorities and the creative sector. Economic uncertainty and evolving political agendas have made the relationship between the two strained. There is an acknowledgment that trust needs to be built for the program to be successful and to create adequate buy-in from the creative sector.

Heritage and Pride in Place are Assets to Build Up

The selection of Newcastle’s Clayton Street corridor, North Shields, and Berwick-upon-Tweed represents the diversity of culture and activity in the North East England. As a region, there are numerous sites and areas that harken to their past, which include references to local industries, influential figures, and key historical events. Renovated venues, staged performances, and several formal and informal placemaking activities that were observed were situated in the particular histories of place and people that remain an integral part of the wider identity of each area.

Successful cultural regeneration engages with pre-existing collective senses of local identity. This must be supplemented with the understanding that such identities are malleable and often contested, even within a small geographic area (Bailey et. al., 2007). Yet, local context and local identity must be balanced with an ambition of future-making on the part of creatives and policymakers, as outlined by strategic documents and plans. Just as large-scale deindustrialization in the North East England forced the region to reconsider and invest in new forms of economy, current major events and processes are opportunities for identity-making, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Affordability and Access to “Place” Remain an Issue

A major focus on many regeneration efforts in Ouseburn was rooted in the ability to create affordable spaces for artists to do their work collaboratively, and the current CCZ program scheme is explicit in its goal of providing more affordable workspace to creative practitioners. Considerations of rent covenants, cooperative styles of ownership, and longer-term affordable leases are potential ways to ensure access to decent workspace is accessible to all. But this desire is easier said than done. Policymakers are cognizant that the process of achieving long-term affordable spaces for cultural and creative use will take considerable time, which may go beyond the five-year piloting timeline of the CCZs.

Each of the three zones is replete with heritage-listed buildings. Although a cultural asset, this historic built environment poses a challenge for CCZ program stakeholders in which some current landlords have a sense of apathy towards transforming their spaces into collaborative workspaces or studios due to a lack of financial incentive. As some spaces lie vacant or underutilized with interior and exterior issues, program staff are keenly aware of this challenge. Newcastle’s CCZ program w has appointed a Property Champion, Broadoaks Asset Management, which will work with artists and property owners to secure affordability and acquire real estate on behalf of the council who do not have the funds to purchase these buildings. This structure can lend to a wider process of patient capital, which would allow property owners to receive dividends as the area’s value increases after a certain amount of time, so there may be incentive to participate. How this relationship will work is still unclear and being explored, and a tension remains that investment for areas of culture and creativity end up going to landowners.

Recommendations

The findings informed a set of recommendations that are categorized by key stakeholder groups in cultural regeneration: policymakers and government officials, creative practitioners and partners, and researchers and evaluators. It is important to note that these recommendations may include activities already being done in certain **capacities** and that recommended interventions should reflect the local context.

Recommendations for Policymakers

Robust and frequent collaboration between local and regional stakeholders:

The impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and the ongoing political push towards greater devolution have put the cultural sector at a crossroads in which more actors are involved and interested in cultural regeneration interventions, and a key premise for the existence of combined authorities is to foster greater opportunities in the diverse communities it represents. Existing advisory groups that convene should consider the challenges of transitioning to the new devolved authority and how it will impact governance.

Frequent conversation and interactions between authorities can help share best practices to better equip each area with potential challenges associated with certain work streams. The different levels of maturity that each zone and other regeneration strategies are at can serve as an opportunity to anticipate areas for potential success. These conversations and interactions should be reflected in the formal governance structure of the regional authority.

Local authorities and the combined authority should continue to seek out artist intermediaries and community leaders who have strong connections with the sector in order to develop grant schemes that reflect each area's local dynamics, such as additional support for grant-writing or adjustments for eligibility requirements.

Ensure that place-based strategies are people-centered:

The success of the creative sector relies on the economic well-being of those in the sector and the engagement of wider audiences and participants. Artists and creatives contribute to the quality of life in cities, but many are professionals in vulnerable economic positions. Greater means of direct support to artists should be explored for its feasibility and effectiveness in mitigating the long-term impacts from crisis-level shocks to the sector.

A people-centered approach to regeneration must include the local community and their needs. When considering the transformation of spaces under cultural regeneration strategies like the CCZ, consider the wider community uses of facilities that can create a more dynamic synergy between creative practitioners and the wider local population. Facilities open to wider use should be explored within a wider investigation of tax and financially based value capture mechanisms that put resources back into the surrounding area. This is especially true for larger capital projects that can varied long-term impacts on cost-of-living.

A wider discussion on anti-gentrification tools should be coupled with any culturally-based growth strategy. Such strategies need to include considerations for those who live there and those who may wish to move there to pursue a creative career. Rent covenants, cooperative housing, land trusts, and a continued supply of affordable rental housing are current and ongoing desires of many in the sector, and they should be more deeply considered.

“However wonderful new buildings and facilities, it’s the creative energy of people and communities, plus good leadership, that give a place soul.”

Nick Jones in artWORK newspaper, Winter 2022/23

Develop community engagement strategies that go beyond consultation:

Cultural development deserves to be re-examined more critically to better balance the wider urban economic objectives with the needs of creative practitioners. First-hand accounts and lived experiences are invaluable when designing and implementing good policies that will affect people. As local authorities continue to work out new grant schemes within the CCZ and as Ouseburn looks to further opportunities to creative practitioners, it will be important that the story of culture and creativity in the North be co-written between policymakers, creative practitioners, and the greater community. This requires considering what lies beyond advisory or consulting roles for creative practitioners who are often giving their unpaid time to provide government officials valuable insight. Greater decision-making powers and compensation for unpaid work are strong first steps in creating a sense of collective ownership on the success of programs. Authorities should consider more community-facing activities such as design charettes and visioning sessions, which can allow for more accessible discussions on future-making and community development.

Raise awareness and communicate success: Throughout interviews with members of the creative sector, it was clear that there are varying levels of knowledge about the CCZ program. This can be attributed to the relatively recent nature of their implementation, but it will be important to consider marketing and outreach strategies across digital and physical platforms to ensure potential program recipients are aware. Current efforts on “developing a brand” for the CCZ is good start to building understanding in the creative sector that new opportunities and resources are available to them, but these efforts should also consider bringing about broader interest by the local community. Consistency in messaging and “one-stop shops” that contain all available resources can help interested individuals and organizations more efficiently receive and process important program developments. Social media campaigns, widely accessible published materials, and more visual presence of the program within the zones can help bolster its profile.

Success begets success. As individuals and organizations begin to be granted resources and carry out their plans for various cultural activities, authorities should make a point to highlight them in a manner to further promote the potential for investment opportunities from governments.

Work with direct stakeholders to develop more accurate inventories of local creative communities and assets: Although there are current outreach and engagement activities towards the creative sector, along with programmatic efforts to identify creative practitioners and organizations within the CCZ, more work can be done to better inform the practice. Partnerships with both the creative sector and community-engaged researchers can help collect and analyze more accurate accounts of what cultural and creative areas are invested in, overlooked, or otherwise neglected in order to better direct outreach and support.

Recommendations for the Creative Sector

Leverage the collaborative spirit that the COVID-19 pandemic response required: The cultural and creative sectors are not monoliths. Some groups and organizations were able to weather the pandemic, while others were forced into greater economic vulnerability. Although some recent policy interventions aimed to alleviate struggles, many in sectors found support amongst each other. These networks shared knowledge and were sources of mutual aid. Both formal and informal in nature, organizations should seek to continue these networks to further collaboration, resource-sharing, and policy advocacy.

As the CCZ grows to become more established, anchor organizations in the zone can act as a stronger “cultural champion” for the sector and foster conversations that may otherwise not happen, such as discussions on time management and securing better contracts. They can act as more effective intermediaries and advocates in program design and implementation. Creative practitioners can also be in greater collaboration within a government’s community engagement scheme, leading to more engaging exercises that bring in new or marginalized voices.

Situate sector activities and goals in the broader inclusive economy narrative in the region: Since the creation of the NTCA, there has been growing literature and reports on the value of creating and ensuring an inclusive economy. This focus became even more relevant with the onset of the pandemic. As local authorities, universities, and economic development authorities consider what constitutes inclusivity, creative practitioners and organizations should ensure that their work does not reproduce existing socio-economic disparities. Freelancers and recent graduates are particularly vulnerable members that should receive more directed focus for any creative or cultural organization’s activities. These organizations should be more reflective in what their role in the surrounding community is and actively seek out ways that mitigate the longer-term challenges of displacement.

Recommendations for Further Research and Evaluation

Embed more resilience and equity-related measures into evaluating success of regeneration: Cross-sector and interdisciplinary research and practice is required to fully evaluate the continued disruptions caused by the pandemic, and it is precisely those very networks and coalitions that get formed that can help deliver long-term solutions in the sector.

The early stage of the CCZ program and the continued regeneration of Ouseburn should serve as a basis for continued research and inquiry which seek to answer the following:

- What COVID-era efforts will remain and be integrated into the broader set of regeneration strategies in these areas? How will continued lifestyle and cultural consumption changes impact the theoretical underpinnings of cultural development and regeneration?
- How will new devolved powers in North East England view and approach culture, creativity, and related sectors on a regional basis? What long-term impacts will the renewed Levelling Up strategy have on the sector?
- How will continued regeneration efforts and generational changes affect how local heritage and pride is perceived and experienced in post-industrial regions?

Conclusion

Culture and creativity have become an essential characteristic of regeneration efforts in post-industrial places. Despite a pandemic, continued financial uncertainty, and evolving political landscapes, governments have continued to lean into the promise of cultural regeneration. As we consider ourselves entering a new post-COVID era, it will be vital to cut through platitudes and lofty vision statements and ask critical questions about strategic management, the continued precarity of the sector, and the ultimate goals of a more culturally rich city. Frequent crisis shocks and stressors have also invited more stakeholders into the fold of cultural regeneration. These regeneration strategies are not just tools employed by economic development and government agencies. They have become a wide-ranging suite of activities – both in a top-down and bottom-up sense – that have relied on new networks and partnerships. As these networks and partnerships continue to be key to success for cultural districts, it is important to realize that they can often be exclusive and not representative of the sector. The combination of strong institutional support and robust community involvement can address and resolve the challenges that are common to policy interventions in the sector and create a more open and inclusive space for collaboration.

As the continued impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic are still being sorted and analyzed, it has been abundantly clear that greater *resilience* in cultural regeneration efforts and creative sector activities is paramount. Yet, a call for greater resiliency requires addressing and investigating the deeper, more foundational issues of the current cultural regeneration framework. Continuing to operate on the margins and “doing more with less” is not enough. Instead, reimagining and creating a more resilient cultural and creative landscape must be a cross-sector, collaborative endeavor – one that invites creative practitioners, policymakers, program managers, urban planners, community development organizations, and economic development agencies to think and work more collaboratively and ambitiously on all levels. Still, the endeavor must balance the tensions that may arise when formalizing and operationalizing culture and creativity in the greater economic development of the region,

Newcastle, Ouseburn Valley, North Shields, and Berwick share similar and different desires for their community. Despite these similarities and differences in approaches, each should be guided by a commitment to collective well-being and accountability in creating more equitable and inclusive cultural and creative spaces. Many artists and creative sector workers indicated how valuable skills development, more accessible workspace and studios, and the ability to better connect with audiences and consumers would be to their professional lives. Conversely, many policymakers and program staff acknowledged the intrinsic value of art and culture to greater society and the power it can bring to disadvantaged communities. By considering these perspectives collectively - and aiming to create better urban environments for everyone - regeneration strategies can become bolder, more dynamic, and responsive to needs. These strategies can support recent graduates entering the sector, bolster more community participation, contribute to realizing long-term regional economic development goals, and - if executed effectively - lead to a brighter and more just North East of England.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Methodology

This study explored the definition of success and resilience within the scope of cultural regeneration policies. It examined the way regional devolution pushes stakeholders' efforts and analyzed the interplay between top-down and bottom-up strategies in cultural development. It investigated ways to ensure accessibility of projects, programs, and activities for all. The study also considered historical inequalities and possible measures to counteract gentrification and unaffordability.

The research also analyzed the employment, perceptions, and experiences related to cultural regeneration policies during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. It specifically focused on the NTCA CCZ program in Newcastle, North Shields, and Berwick, as well as the ongoing cultural regeneration strategies in the Ouseburn Valley. To gather data, the study employed primary research methods like semi-structured interviews and site visits, complemented by secondary source content analysis.

The data collection for this study involved three primary methods:

1. **Semi-structured interviews:** Stakeholders (including artists, studio owners, city council members, members of regional and national authorities, university professors, employees and trustees of the Ouseburn Trust, local business owners, and reporters) were interviewed using a semi-structured format. The interviewees were selected through targeted outreach to individuals with a vested interest in cultural regeneration efforts or who have experienced cultural regeneration in the past.
 - a. **List of interviewees:** The team interviewed 52 people. The interviews fell into six broad categories:
 - i. City/County Councils and Local Authorities (10 interviews)
 - ii. Universities (9 interviews)
 - iii. Regional Development and Partnerships (7 interviews)
 - iv. Art, Culture, and Heritage Organizations (13 interviews)
 - v. Creative and Cultural Businesses and Spaces (11 interviews)
 - vi. Researchers and Consultants (2 interviews)
2. **Content Analysis:** The team collected documents from primary and secondary sources such as newspaper articles, academic reports and planning documents centered on North East England.
3. **Site visits:** The team conducted site visits and observed the cultural corridors of Newcastle, including Ouseburn and Clayton Street corridor, North Shields, and Berwick to develop a descriptive understanding of the area. There were 37 site visits throughout the March 4th – March 11th period.



Interviews and Site Visits

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Love It If We Beat Them, Live Theatre | 20 Bev Fox, Boho Arts |
| 2 Mel Burgess, Culture Bridge North East | 21 Emma Coffield, Newcastle University |
| 3 Jonathan Loach, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums | 22 Julia Heslop, Newcastle University |
| 4 Whitley Bay Walking Tour | 23 Loes Veldpaus, Newcastle University |
| 5 Julie Nicholson, Digital Voice | 24 Nick Sheffield, Generator |
| 6 Ken Patterson, Ellen Hair, Side Cafe Orkestra | 25 Lowri Bond, igloo Regeneration |
| 7 North East Tyneside Cultural Freelancers, Wor Culture | 26 Hugh Stolliday, Ouseburn Trust |
| 8 James Loewther, The Malings | 27 Vix Leaney, Newcastle CCZ |
| 9 David and Morag Eaton, Foldyards | 28 Carol Bell, Creative UK |
| 10 Shelley Johnson, NewcastleGateshead | 29 Richard Baker, North East Local Enterprise Partnership |
| 11 James Annesley, Newcastle University | 30 Louise Kempton, Newcastle University |
| 12 Jo Cundall, Community Foundation Tyne & Wear | 31 Matthew Jarratt, North East Cultural Partnership |
| 13 Ken, Stu, Fi, Storytellers Street Band | 32 Mike Coombes, Newcastle University |
| 14 Loujane Alasi, Newcastle Creates | 33 Rachel Pattinson, Newcastle University |
| 15 Julian Ive, The Cluny | 34 Andrea Oliver, Berwick CCZ |
| 16 Lisa Tolan, Toffee Factory | 35 Steve Bishop, North Shields CCZ |
| 17 Danny Oswell, Newcastle University | 36 Cheryl Gavin, Steven Pritchard, Ronan, Helix Arts |
| 18 Hannah Bryan, Ouseburn Trust | 37 Harriet Ghost, Micky McGregor, Blowin' A Hooley Theatre |
| 19 Dale Bolland, Ouseburn Trust | |

After data collection, the researchers used a thematic analysis method to identify recurring patterns in stakeholders' responses. These patterns included aspects such as success, resiliency, devolution, partnership, support, COVID-19, culture, heritage, pride, engagement, displacement, gentrification, equity, and governance. The researchers then compared their findings with existing literature to determine whether the observations and interviews aligned with or contradicted the current body of knowledge on cultural regeneration.

The findings were compiled into this report, with the goal of answering the main research question: "How are current and emerging cultural regeneration strategies being employed, perceived, and experienced during and after the COVID-19 pandemic?"

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Introduction

We are a team of graduate student researchers from the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public & International Affairs. We are evaluating emerging cultural regeneration strategies and how they are being employed, experienced, and perceived by key stakeholders in North East England. We are specifically looking into the cultural and creativity zones in Newcastle, North Shields, and Berwick, along with the cultural regeneration of the Ouseburn Valley.

We are thankful that you are taking the time out of your busy schedule to talk with us. Before we begin, are you ok with us recording this interview?

Common

1. What has the push for greater devolution in the region affected your work?
2. How do you see traditionally top-down planning approaches (such as developing large anchor sites) interacting with smaller, creative place-making strategies (i.e. bottom-up strategies) that are driven by grassroots organizations?
3. What lessons about cultural development have you learned during the COVID-19 pandemic?
4. What does success look like for you? How would you measure it? How is this definition different from older models/strategies?
5. How does heritage and the collective identity of X factor into your work?
6. What considerations are being made to ensure the project/program/activity is accessible by all, is mindful of historic inequities, mitigates against gentrification/unaffordability?

Culture & Creative Zones

1. What makes the CCZ model different/better than other funding models you have seen?
2. What does success with the CCZ look like for you? What would you like to see in 5 years?
3. How has the COVID-19 pandemic influenced how you do cultural development and how specifically in impacted the CCZ rollout?
4. How are you balancing increased devolution in the Northeast with:
 - a. Maintaining collaboration with partners
 - b. Remaining sensitive to the local context and the direct needs of nearby stakeholders
 - c. What has been the general impact of the new devolution plan on your work?
5. Do you see the CCZ more as a vehicle to spur economic development via arts and culture or a vehicle to spur arts and culture via economic development/support for artists?
6. Who do you see as potential applicants for funds?
7. What are your plans on building awareness and engaging the community about the program? What sort of physical and digital infrastructure will be in place to communicate?
8. How do heritage and the collective identity of the area lay into the program? Are there a lot of historic structures that you want to elevate, or is it more of a "blank" canvas?
9. What principles/variables are prioritized when you consider funding different projects for the CCZ? Is there consideration for things that were not necessarily outlined in the prospectus, such as local context, financial viability, anti-displacement measures?
10. How do the various work projects in each of the CCZs interact with the local community and work as anti-displacement tools?

Artists/Developers/Gallery Owners

1. How do you define success regarding new arts and culture funding models from X?
2. The culture sector contracted dramatically between 2015 to 2021, especially in the North East. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your work?
3. How can artists work to advocate for and create knowledge networks for better access to grants, funds, financial incentives?
4. Do you feel that cultural policy (CCZ/trust/etc (depends on artist)) was built for you and your success?

Ouseburn Valley/Trust

1. How do you define and measure success regarding the valley's regeneration? Has the meaning of success changed throughout the years? As a result of the pandemic?
2. How would you define resiliency for the valley? What have you learned about Ouseburn Valley's resiliency over the past 3 years? What is the connection between residents and local culture institutions now?
 - a. (For folks that have been around for a while) Compare the response towards the pandemic and financial crisis of 2008. How did that time period compare to the pandemic?
3. What is the Ouseburn Trust's current relationship to the artist and creative industry populations of the area?
 - a. Has that relationship changed over the years?
 - b. How was the relationship during the pandemic?
4. Heritage- the connection between the past and the personal. How important is this for the Valley as it changes and grows?
5. "Ouseburnness"- there is obviously a sense of pride and belonging to be part of the area but that can sometimes lead to gatekeeping- as in determining what and who 'fits' in the area. Do you see this as a challenge moving forward?
6. Has the growth of owner-occupied housing led to significant changes in the area? Do you believe this will challenge the mantra of "anything goes" in Ouseburn?
7. How has the area changed in the last few years? Is there any kind of social or class tension between the people who have lived here their whole lives and those moving into the "hip" and "cool" areas?
8. What do you see as Ouseburn's role in Newcastle's future development? Have you been asked to assist or for advice on the new CCZs?
9. Recently, housing developers have looked towards the Ouseburn Valley for investment. How is the Trust dealing with this? How do residents feel about this new development?
 - a. Is it inevitable that successful cultural regeneration will attract outside interests looking to capitalize on the success of the area?
10. What is your vision for (the Ouseburn Trust and) the Ouseburn Valley moving forward?

Ouseburn artists

1. How has the neighborhood character changed over time (since you've moved here)?
2. How involved to you feel in the direction of the valley? Is there coordination between artists with a common vision?

3. Do you have to balance the freedom and independence of being creative with the need to commercialize your art? Do you feel the need to become economically savvy in order to live and thrive in the Ouseburn valley?
4. How would you define success when it comes to cultural regeneration of the valley? Do you think your perception of success is the same as the Ouseburn Trust's?
5. What relationship do you have, if any, with the Ouseburn Trust?
 - a. Has this relationship changed over time? How was it during COVID-19? Was there support from them and within the network?
6. (Value outside of economics) Does being part of a focused cultural area affect your pride for where you live? Do you think anything has been lost as the valley has become more regulated and commercialized? How much value do you place on pride and heritage of a space?
7. What are your thoughts on new housing developments coming to the valley? Do you think it's inevitable that Ouseburn's successful regeneration would lead to more outside investment?

Appendix 3: List of Interviewees

City/County Councils and Local Authorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vix Leany, Newcastle CCZ• Cllr. Alex Hay, Newcastle City Council• Cllr. Richard Wearmouth, Northumberland County Council• Fay Hodgson, North Tyneside Council• Steve Bishop, et.al., North Tyneside Council• Wendy Scott and Tony Brown, Northumberland County Council• Tony Brown, Northumbria County Council• Nick Kemp, Newcastle City Council• Margaret Jukes, business support NCC• Andrea Oliver, Northumbria CCZ
Universities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rachel Pattinson, Newcastle University• Mike Coombes, Newcastle University/CURDS• Louise Kempton, Newcastle University/CURDS• Danny Oswell, Newcastle University• Emma Coffield, Newcastle University• Julia Helsop, Newcastle University• Loes Veldapaus, Newcastle University• James Annesley, Newcastle University• Jane Robinson, Newcastle University
Regional Development and Partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Richard Baker, NELEP• Matthew Jarratt, NECP/C4C• Carol Bell, CreativeUK• Andrew Rothwell, City of Newcastle Tourism & Culture• Maria Antoniou, Creative & Culture Zones

Art, Culture, and Heritage Organizations

- Micky & Harriet Ghost, Blowinahooley
- Mel Burgess, Culture Bridge North East
- Christine, Exchange Theater
- Ben Lowry, Independent Artist/Shop owner
- Common Room Folks, Commonroom
- Cheryl Gavin (other Helix Arts), Helix Arts
- Chris Barnard, Ouseburn Trust
- Hannah Bryan, Ouseburn Trust
- Dale Bolland, Ouseburn Trust
- Theresa Easton, Printmaker, artist
- Julie Nicholson, Digital Voice for Communities
- Jonathan Loach, Tyne & Wear Archives
- Members of Storytellers Street Band

Creative and Cultural Businesses and Spaces

- Loujane Alasi, Success4All
- Lisa Tolan, Toffee Factory
- Nick Sheffield, The Generator
- Julian Ive, The Cluny
- Bev Fox, Boho Arts
- Lowri Bond, Igloo Regeneration
- Hugh Stolliday, Ouseburn Farm
- James Lowether, Maltings
- Dave Watson & Morag Eaton, Foldyards
- Shelley Johnson, Newcastle Gateshead Initiative
- Jo Cundall, Community Foundation Tyne & Wear

Researchers and Consultants

- Oli Mould, Royal Holloway
- Erik Bichard, Real Worth
- Chris Murphy, GENECON

Appendix 4: Abbreviations

CCZ: Cultural and Creative Zone

CP: Creative Practitioner

DCMS: Department for Digital,
Culture, Media and Sport

ERDF: European Regional
Development Fund

LEP: Local Enterprise Partnership

NEMCA: North East Mayoral
Combined Authority

NE: North East

NEMCA: North East Mayoral
Combined Authority

NECP: North East Culture
Partnership

NELEP: North East Local Enterprise
Partnership

NPO: National Portfolio Organization

NTCA: North of Tyne Combined
Regional Authority

OAC: Ouseburn Advisory Committee

RIBA: Royal Institute of British
Architects

Appendix 5: Ouseburn Trust Timeline

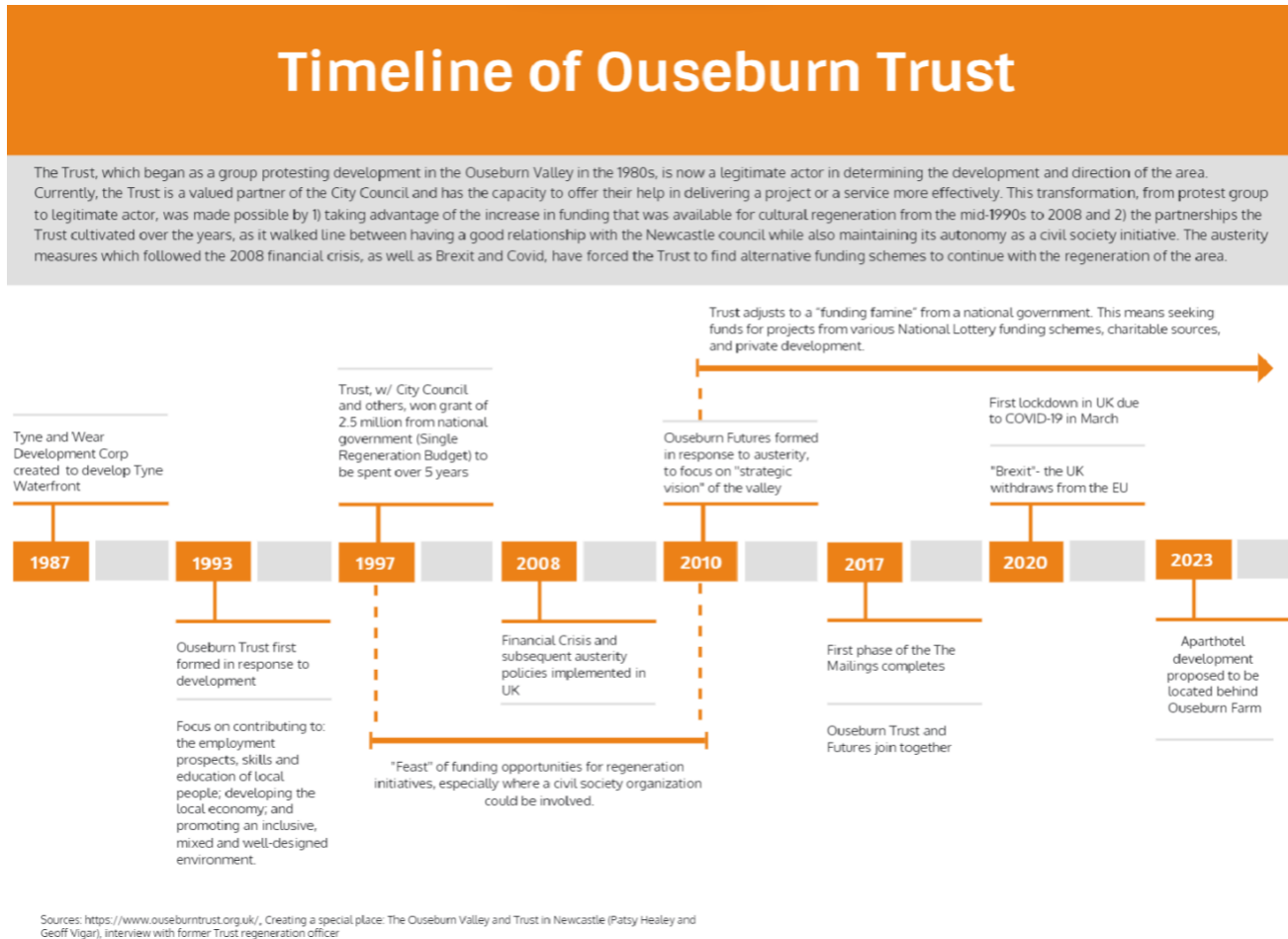


Figure 25: A 36-year timeline of the Ouseburn Trust