

Arts Council England and VisitEngland partnership announcement

6 February 2013

[Please note: this is a pre-written transcript and therefore may vary from the live speech]

James Berresford, Chief Executive, VisitEngland

The cultural sector – museums, art galleries, theatres and festivals - are a crucial part of England's visitor economy. Arts Council England and VisitEngland recognise the need for clear direction to deliver sector growth and improvement and we have been working together to develop a three year partnership.

Our respective strategic frameworks set out priorities over the next 10 years to be delivered through a collaborative approach: *Achieving great art for everyone* for Arts Council England and The Strategic Framework for Tourism in England 2010 – 2020 for VisitEngland.

There are strong synergies between these frameworks which have provided us with a solid foundation for our partnership:

- we want more people to visit and experience the arts and museums in England
- we want quality visitor experiences that encourage artistic excellence to thrive and to be sustainable
- we want effective leadership, sustainable solutions, innovation and a skilled workforce in our sectors
- we want to build upon the opportunity created by the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games to secure a lasting legacy for our sectors

Both sectors are facing similar funding challenges. With reductions in public sector funding at all levels there is a need to identify opportunities to achieve increased private sector support to ensure greater economic viability of events, venues and attractions.

The significant changes to the delivery and support landscape has presented challenges for both sectors but has created the need and opportunity for greater partnership working and collaboration nationally and in destinations. The launch of this partnership is an important first step to further collaboration and joint working between the two sectors.

We recognise that through partnership working and alignment of our activities at local and national level greater benefits can be realised for the economy, as well as increasing the effectiveness and impact of our funded activity.

The Partnership Statement we are launching today outlines the priority areas that we will work together on over the next three years. These are the areas that we believe will have the biggest impact on economic growth.

Priority 1: Build partnerships and collaborate at the national and local level

We will facilitate partnership working and collaboration at the national and local level to support better understanding between the cultural and tourism sectors.

Information at national and local levels will be shared between organisations and individuals, supporting cross-agency working at operational level.

This also includes encouraging destinations that have real potential to grow their economies through improving and realising the value of their cultural offer to exploit this opportunity and build capacity to act as leaders for joint working between the two sectors. This will be supported by Arts Council England and VisitEngland – but more on this from Moira.

Priority 2: Alignment of funding streams for increased impact

The funding available over the next three years to facilitate growth and development in both sectors is limited. By seeking greater alignment of appropriate funding streams greater impact can be achieved.

We will more closely align Arts Council England funding, including strategic lottery funds and VisitEngland investment in promotional activity, including Regional Growth Fund.

Priority 3: Develop skills and leadership in the sectors

There is a need to develop leadership skills and facilitate professional development of people working in our sectors. The Skills Action Plan published last year as part of the Strategic Framework for Tourism in England presents opportunities for the two sectors to work more closely together on skills and leadership development eg:

- exploring opportunities for welcome and customer service programmes to be promoted to, and utilised by the cultural and visitor economy sectors, sharing valuable learning between the two sectors
- identifying opportunities for the visitor economy to benefit from the Arts Council's Creative employment programme

Priority 4: Deliver a thriving and sustainable quality offer

Destination Managers have customer service, marketing and visitor experience knowledge and expertise that those working in the cultural sector could utilise. This could be used to improve the product offering to visitors and generate greater income at venues and in destinations.

VisitEngland's Visitor Attractions Quality Accreditation Scheme is already recognised as a key component of the Museum's Accreditation Scheme. We will explore the potential of extending the scheme to the rest of the cultural sector and ensure that the learning from the existing work with museums is shared for the wider benefit of the cultural and visitor economy sectors.

Priority 5: Maximise the legacy of 2012

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games presented a major opportunity to showcase the UK to international markets and to encourage domestic tourism. We want to build on the success of 2012, maximising the tourism potential of sporting and leisure participative and spectator events and activities that secure a long lasting legacy for the country.

We will identify those events that have real traction from the cultural Olympiad and that have long term sustainable growth potential, supporting them to grow.

We will share key lessons and learning emerging from the Cultural Olympiad to inform the development of future events.

We will collaborate on major events where there is a cultural and visitor economy opportunity, such as the Cultural Olympiad and London 2012 (eg the Rugby World Cup 2015).

I am looking forward to working closely with the Arts Council over the next three years and would like to introduce Moira Sinclair, Executive Director at Arts Council England to say a few words.

Moira Sinclair, Executive Director, Arts Council England

Good morning.

John Maynard Keynes (an economist, let's not forget) highlighted in his speech on founding the Arts Council in 1945, the importance of the arts in bringing a unique sense of place in a rapidly globalising world – 'Let every part of Merry England be merry in its own way' he said.

Arts and culture are, by their very nature, specific and special – reacting to people, places and traditions. I don't need to tell you, the industry experts, that audiences are always looking for the unique experience, something different that they can't get anywhere else, it's why the live events that bring people together are so popular.

More recently, the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games once again showed, on a global scale, that arts and culture are what we do best – we are real world-beaters. This along with our heritage, are our greatest assets – they are Brand Britain.

We fund great art at the Arts Council. We believe that the mediocre, the playing to the lowest denominator, won't do. It's patronising to audiences and undermining of the great talent this country produces. And we know, and embrace, the fact that the arts are powerful and have a ripple effect that enrich lives in many different ways, including creating places where people want to live, work and visit. It makes sense then that we're working with VisitEngland to support visitor economies with arts and culture providing a mutual cornerstone on which we can all build.

Arts and culture driving visitor economies is nothing new. Past results make for compelling reading. In the West Midlands, Cultural Olympiad activity added £32.8 million to the regional economy, bringing 165,000 visitors from outside the region specifically to see the work. The impact of Liverpool's European Capital of Culture year has been well publicised, but it's worth noting again that it brought an economic impact of £753 million, 4.1 million visitors and is now the UK's sixth most popular destination – and one of the fastest growing tourist destinations in Europe. North West rivals, Manchester sees millions of pounds generated for its economy from the Manchester International Festival alone. While down on the Kentish coast, in Margate where Turner captured some of his famous seascapes, the Turner Contemporary Gallery is making waves since opening in 2011 – seeing almost half a million visits in its first year (three times higher than expected), 35 new businesses opening and local shops seeing their takings double.

This is a partnership then that makes sense. And we're also working in an environment where there is increasing pressure on public funds. Being able to align our visions where we can and work smartly will also help us achieve our respective 10 year strategies. Although the current funding climate is difficult, we're not thinking short term. This is a partnership motivated by the long-term health of our sectors. There is much to be gained – and it's through collaboration and consortium that we think there could be most benefit.

We know art and how to create memorable artistic experiences, and your expertise in audiences, places, marketing and promotion is something from which the arts could learn much.

So, today, I am thrilled to announce that we will be mark this new partnership with a new £3 million Arts Council fund to support destinations that have potential to grow their economies through the arts and culture. The programme will officially launch in July, so more detailed information will be available then. But I need you to get thinking now. Where is there potential to really grow the cultural visitor economy? What might a great local and national campaign look like? Who have you always wanted to work more closely with? What event or series of events could be the catalyst for change and what could help in terms of investment to get there?

As a national body, we know this will work much better if it's owned and managed locally. We want to create more 'living' case studies about the benefits of public investment in arts and tourism, and we also want local communities to understand the valuable cultural assets that lie on their doorsteps – becoming their champions to incoming tourists.

Like you, we want visitors to see England's many wonderful facets, each one unique and merry in its own way. In Danny Boyle's wonderful opening ceremony, he quoted our most famous playwright.

'Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices,
That, if then I had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again; and then, in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open and show riches
Ready to drop upon me that, when I waked,
I cried to dream again.'

With much to offer each other, I look forward to seeing just what this partnership can deliver.

Thank you.