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Summary

North Norfolk Cultural Tourism Feasibility Study

An analysis of how culture and tourism can
drive economic growth in North Norfolk.
September 2024



Context

This report was commissioned in response to the delivery of North Norfolk District Council's (NNDC) Corporate Plan Objectives and NNDC's Economic Strategy specifically;
Developing our Communities

- o Continuing to support cultural assets across the district to provide cultural opportunities for all
- o Working with partners to support and develop participatory and community sports and cultural events

Develop a Cultural & Creative Sector Strategy - identification of existing cultural programmes and joining up to promote cultural opportunities for our residents.

and has been funded as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

Insights

This study was commissioned by North Norfolk District Council to identify the extent to which culture and tourism are drivers for economic growth in the district. We have identified several areas of existing strength to be developed, and potential areas where economic growth could be strategically developed.

This report sets out the case in detail – **but the headline findings are:**



Tourism is a vital part of the North Norfolk economy.

North Norfolk's tourism economy is worth **£520m a year.**

Cultural Tourists spend **266% more** than other types of tourists

See p32

780 creatives are living and working in North Norfolk

There are at least **184 cultural organisations** in North Norfolk

See p13



Culture & creative industries are a key cluster in the North Norfolk economy.

The cultural sector contributed **£272m** to Norfolk and Suffolk in GVA.

See p12

North Norfolk cultural economy generates **£38.4k** GVA per head.

See p16



Investment & interventions in North Norfolk deliver results.

North Norfolk Studios open event generated up to **£915,000** in a fortnight.

See p32

North Walsham HAZ project cultural events delivered: - **50% more** footfall

See p40

67% of attendees would visit again .

79% spent money in businesses on the high street.



North Norfolk is currently failing to capitalise on its true cultural tourism **potential.**

Investment in North Norfolk cultural sector is significantly behind

North Norfolk is a Levelling Up For Culture Place

See p19

Key Recommendations

Scale and Scope

Making the cultural sector more visible would lead to a better understanding of its full size, scale and impact. It could also lead to new tourism product development, or an enhanced tourism offer, which would grow the visitor and cultural economies.

Employment

The true size and significance of the cultural and creative sectors in North Norfolk is hidden. Support and development of this sector should be a priority due to its significant economic potential.

Funding

North Norfolk is not attracting enough strategic national funding for culture despite its designation as a Priority Place, and so is limiting the economic value of the cultural sector. NNDC should play a role in maximising inward investment in the cultural sector to enable sector resilience and growth.

Cultural Tourism

North Norfolk needs to prioritise its appeal to high-spending cultural tourists and tap into regional initiatives and positioning. Cultural tourists spend **266%** more than general tourists in the local economy. Cultural tourism should be an area of strategic focus to further increase visitor spend.

Digitalisation

North Norfolk's online visitor offer is very poor. Without proper digital infrastructure, North Norfolk will be losing visitors and income to other destinations with better online offers. North Norfolk is in urgent need of digital transformation investment and support. Increasing bookable product across the calendar year will improve economic value and business resilience.

Health and Wellbeing

The Purple Pound is an important visitor market, especially in North Norfolk. Targeting this audience will increase the visitor and cultural economy in North Norfolk. Consider a programme of support for businesses to improve their accessibility information. Local residents would also benefit from any improvements. High streets and businesses will become more sustainable and resilient through increased footfall and spend

High Street Animation

The roles of high streets are changing and there is increased need for leisure activities. Cultural animation and regeneration are proven tools for high street improvement. North Norfolk has trialled this in North Walsham with some success. Residents, visitors and businesses would experience economic and social benefits from investment.

What next?

Short term Actions

The absence of a cultural partnership, and a cultural strategy, is preventing North Norfolk's cultural sector from securing inward investment and generating the greatest economic value for the area. Facilitation of an Arts and Cultural forum would provide more collaboration and resilience.

There is a clear need for digital transformation. This action should be a partnership commission across Norfolk. Commissioning a digital transformation programme would support the cultural and tourism businesses to develop their digital offer – through website upgrades, online booking systems, connected distribution models and more. It is a programme of work which is becoming increasingly urgent in order to remain competitive.

Longer term ambitions

Develop and deliver a cultural strategy, which would :

- Prioritise support for development of the cultural and creative economies.
- Employ a holistic understanding of 'culture', including both the grant-funded and commercial sectors, and including freelance practitioners.
- Responding to the particular needs of the local population should be the foundational focus of the cultural strategy – working across health and wellbeing, placemaking, skills, jobs and talent development.
- Cultural tourism will be a core theme and outcome: understanding culture as an economic driver for tourism, and developing suitable infrastructure and product for the target audiences.
- Look beyond district borders and appreciate the interrelationships with other areas of Norfolk.
- Understand what foundations need to be in place in order for the strategy to succeed: active partnerships, sector capacity, a shared willingness to change and improve, a shared appetite to increase leadership and build capability.

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