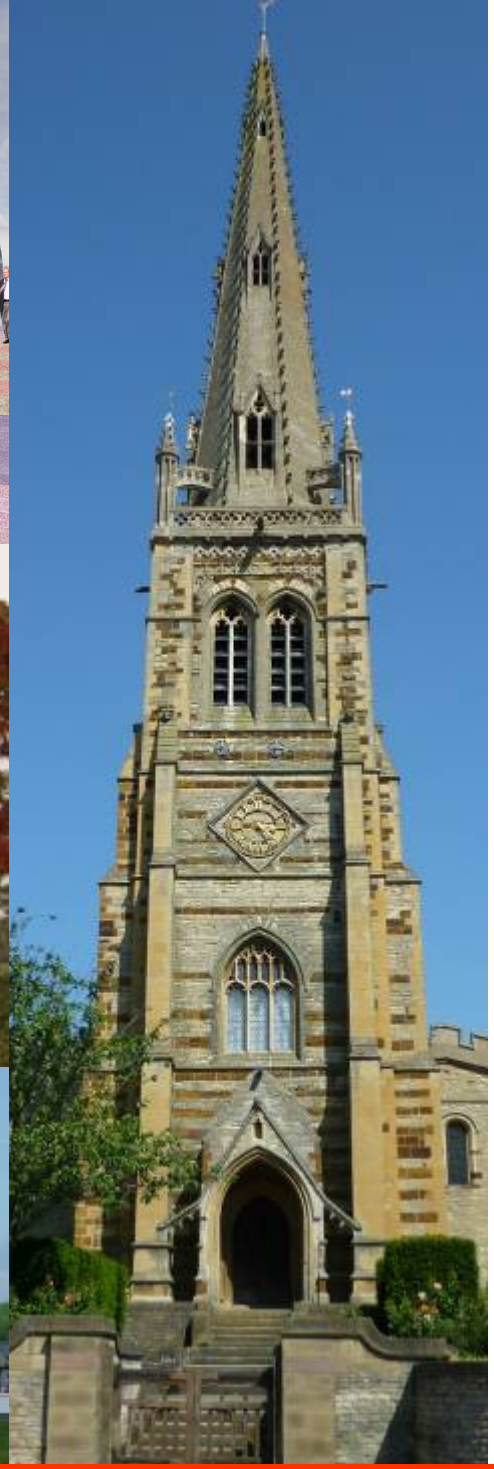








A Cultural Investment Plan for North Northamptonshire

February 2010

tom fleming / creative consultancy /


Northamptonshire
County Council


Corby
Borough Council


NorthNorthants
Development Company


North Northamptonshire
Joint Planning Unit


WNDC


ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

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1. Introduction

This Report, written by Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy, sets out a **Cultural Investment Plan for North Northamptonshire.** It outlines a set of strategic opportunities for embedding culture in the heart of planning and place-shaping in the sub region. It is one of three documents that collectively form the Cultural Investment Plan for North Northamptonshire. The additional documents include:

- **1. A Mapping Overview of the key cultural assets of North Northamptonshire**, which profiles the cultural infrastructure landscape of North Northants, contextualising the role of culture across current and forthcoming strategic agendas, identifying core assets and pointing to gaps in provision. This, and the methodology that underpins it, has provided the evidence base and the partnership consensus for the priorities outlined in this Investment Plan.

- **2. A paper with a set of direct recommendations for a standard charge for culture in North Northamptonshire.**

- **3. A Public Realm Overview and Action Plan for the County of Northamptonshire.**

This Cultural Investment Plan was commissioned by North Northamptonshire Development Company (NNDC) and Northamptonshire County Council, with an active wider partnership including Arts Council England East Midlands, East Midlands Museums Libraries and Archives, Corby Borough Council, East Northamptonshire Council, Kettering Borough Council and Wellingborough Borough Council. It builds on the 2008 work carried out by Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy and partners to develop a Cultural Investment Plan for West Northamptonshire. This result is a complementary level of strategic insight and direction for both West and North Northamptonshire.

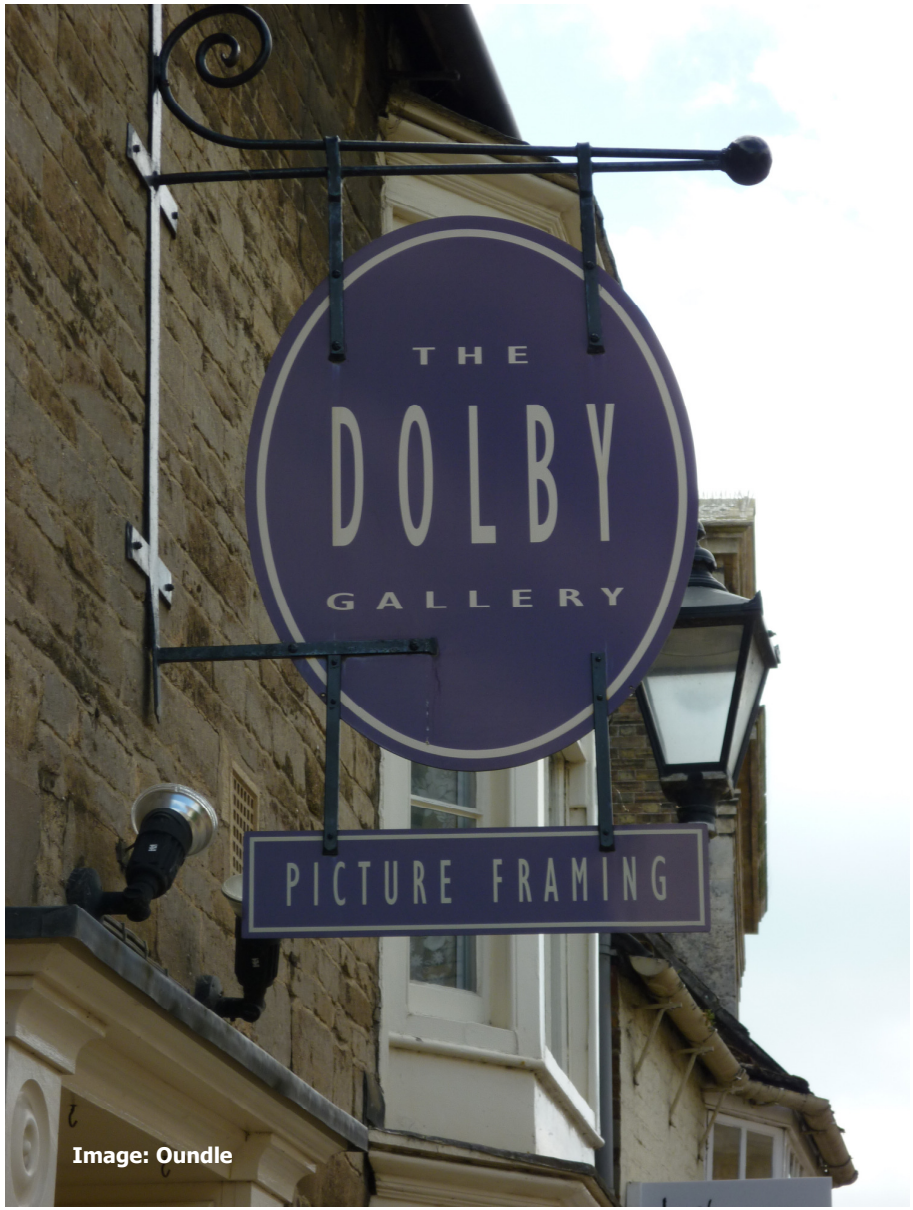


Image: Oundle

North Northamptonshire, an area in the heart of England, is undergoing significant change and set to undergo further change over the coming years. Both North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire form part of the Milton Keynes South Midlands (MKSM) Growth Area[1] , one of four areas identified by Government as best positioned to absorb required growth in housing and provide a wider sustainable offer that includes new jobs, access to transport links, and lower environmental impact.

The growth agenda here requires a focus on not just houses, but jobs and an overall outcome of sustainable, cohesive communities. A key policy of the *MKSM) Sub-Regional Strategy* (2005) (which outlines the strategy for Northamptonshire, as part of MKSM growth area) is to provide for a commensurate level of economic growth alongside the housing development.



Image: Rushden

The deliverables for NNDC, the Local Authorities and partners are therefore not solely to develop units – such as in numbers of houses and jobs – but to make places. This means developing from the distinctive assets of the sub-region to attract jobs, investment and residents. As will be shown, culture can play a key role here: to improve the quality of life and the environment, connect communities, build confidence, create jobs, and nurture aspiration and confidence.

Indeed, central to planning requirements (expressed through policy documents such as PPS1 Sustainable Communities[2] and through a series of Planning Policy Guidelines (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)), is a requirement that a more inclusive approach is undertaken in Growth areas and elsewhere. Therefore, planning and development need to encompass a broad set of parameters including health, education and culture.

In North Northamptonshire, which combines a set of very distinctive places; the opportunity exists to develop a mix of cultural assets and opportunities that play from the strengths of each town and the rural areas that surround them. This means establishing a connected fabric of cultural infrastructure, embedding culture to the mainstream of the planning and development agenda, and supporting talent to prosper and grow.

Based on an active and open approach where over 100 people have been consulted[3], this report and the mapping report that underpins it:

[1] Definition of Growth Area: *"The four growth areas announced by the Government in the Sustainable Communities Plan 2003..were identified because of their potential to take on further growth more sustainably, with less environmental impact, and to exploit major transport and economic investment."* (Yvette Cooper, 16 June 2006).

[2] PPS1 ODPM Consultation Paper on Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities (2003).

[3] This includes in-depth interviews, desk research, 3 high profile and very engaged workshops and a process of ongoing consultation with the project steering group.

- Builds on North Northamptonshire's existing strengths, such as its distinctive and varied urban and rural areas, green infrastructure, heritage, built environment, diverse communities and location;

- Engages positively with the sub-region's challenges, such as social and mobility inequality; the relatively untapped resources of local talent, pride and identity; and the under-developed capacity and reach of cultural organisations and institutions;

- Gives aspiration, purpose and structure to the future, positioning culture and creativity as major existing assets, powerful drivers of change, and essential ingredients at the heart of a thriving, distinctive North Northamptonshire in 15 years time.

"Two million people are employed in creative jobs and the sector contributes £60 billion a year - 7.3 per cent – to the British economy. Over the past decade, the creative sector has grown at twice the rate of the economy as a whole and is well placed for continued growth as demand for creative content - particularly in English – grows..."
(Creative Britain, 2008).

1.1 The Role of Culture – A Reminder

Culture (whether this is in infrastructure, activity or process) is a key means of building confidence and endowing people with a sense of identity; and a major value-adder to multiple agendas such as in health, regeneration and education. In addition, the Creative Industries is still the fastest growing sector of a flagging national economy, and critical to competitiveness, innovation and cohesion, particularly if the economy is to recover quickly from its current downturn. Correspondingly, if partners in North Northamptonshire and those that support them at a regional and national level fail to understand culture and creativity as a key policy tool, then the overall growth mission will fail.

Culture represents both a way of seeing and a way of doing. It frames how and why we do what we do in specific places, at specific times and with specific people. It ranges from 'everyday life' to the spectacle of a festival. It provides the signature theme to a place as well as the space and opportunity to present alternative senses of place.

Culture is being increasingly understood as a process and tool that enables people to engage more fully in society; a facilitator of new opportunities; and as a transformer of how we view ourselves, our communities and our place. It is therefore, through organised and staged cultural activity that we can re-connect, re-imagine and re-invest with the place in which we live, work or are visiting.

It is here that culture becomes a tool: for broadening horizons, developing confidence, and telling new stories about ourselves and where we live. *Culture becomes a tool for carrying value.* This is often understood as *social value* (such as by feeding our identities with a narrative that connects and divides us). It is also increasingly understood as *economic value*: a prosperous society invests in cultural products and services as a commodity, hence the growth internationally in the Creative Industries – those businesses and organisations engaged in developing meaning-laden cultural content and goods.

By extension, places that provide opportunities for the production and consumption of cultural commodities, in turn become cultural commodities themselves. Indeed, places with a strong Creative Industries sector and a rich ecology of cultural infrastructure are without exception the places with the strongest economies. This is because a vibrant creative economy adds value to other sectors of the economy (such as through the influence of design on competitiveness), provides jobs, and operates as a critical attractor to an increasingly mobile population of discerning knowledge workers and cultural tourists.

The Government's 2008 **Creative Britain** report stresses the importance of embedding creativity and culture at the heart of policies in education, economic development and social cohesion. North Northamptonshire

needs to attend to this agenda – to diversify and grow its economy and unlock the potential of its population:

This means that North Northamptonshire needs to offer a strong support infrastructure for its creative businesses and cultural organisations, it needs to champion their development, and it needs to ensure that culture as a tool and offer is embedded across policy and partnership. The Cultural Investment Plan provides the basic architecture for this to be achieved.



Image: Kettering, William Knibb Centre

Definition of Culture

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) define culture as including the arts, museums and galleries, architecture and the built and historic environment and libraries.

For the purpose of this study we are taking the DCMS definition and adding parks and open spaces, as this includes the countryside - an important cultural asset in North Northamptonshire - and the wider public realm - the improvement and development of places where people want to live, work and spend leisure time.

We are broadening the definition further to include the wider 'creative sector' - the businesses, creative workspaces and creative business support programmes, that are dependent on the wider cultural infrastructure for inspiration, ideas and people.

For the Cultural Mapping report, we explore the current role of culture in North Northamptonshire through a typology of cultural infrastructure.

- **Heritage:** historic houses and gardens, historic areas, heritage sites and museums.
- **Arts venues:** galleries, theatres, live music venues and cinemas.
- **Other creative space:** creative workspace and commercial exhibition spaces.
- **Community facilities:** libraries, schools and leisure centres.
- **Community assets:** other community spaces used for cultural activity, village halls, community centres, pubs and cafes.
- **Parks and open spaces:** urban, sub urban and rural open spaces, both designated parks and public open spaces such as town squares and waterways.
- **Festivals and events:** festivals, events, fairs.

Indeed, culture is being mainstreamed as an essential policy tool across the UK and beyond and – significantly – the tools for investing effectively in culture and measuring the impact are becoming more sophisticated and successful. For example, **NI11** - the DCMS national indicator for engagement in the arts for Local Authorities - provides a means of measuring the reach and benefit of arts participation in a given area. Local Authorities that commit to developing measurement of this indicator in turn commit to the opportunity of being able to benchmark against other local authorities and introduce ambitions to increase engagement (such as for particular parts of the population).

Commitment to and measurement of a coherent landscape of intervention is key. This is also why towns and cities in the UK and elsewhere increasingly choose to use cultural activity as a tool for knitting together community and place. But in order to succeed, there is a need for more inclusive, transparent and accountable forms of delivery mechanisms. In particular, **integrated approaches to culture, planning and place-making** are what policy-makers and their partners are increasingly turning to.

1.1.2 What is Cultural Planning?

Since the development of local Cultural Strategies, the launch of the DCMS Cultural Pathfinders in England (providing evidence of the role of culture in cohesion, economic development and community building), and the development of Arts Council England's (ACE) place-making and sustainable communities agenda, cultural planning[4] has developed in the UK as a key tool. It provides a way of enabling policy-makers to think strategically about the application of the distinctive cultural resources of localities (from heritage, to Creative Industries) to a wide range of public authority responsibilities (including planning and economic development).

Indeed, the **Living Places** programme positions **culture at the heart of place-shaping.** Driven by an alliance of ACE, CABE (The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment), English Heritage, MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives), the Regional Cultural Consortiums and Sport England – and two government departments – Communities and Local Government and the DCMS – the Programme highlights how:

> ***"Culture and sport bring people together. They help people get to know each other through shared and complementary interests..."***
>
> ***"Culture and sport help develop identity and a sense of place. Well designed communities, with a distinctive character, provide places that residents can be proud of and where they can bond..."***
>
> ***"Culture and sport make places more attractive. Communities thrive in well-designed environments that incorporate accessible green space and a distinctive public realm..."***
>
> ***"Culture and sport make us healthier and happier. They encourage people to be active and do the things they enjoy. This increases personal, physical and mental wellbeing".***
>
> **(Living Places Prospectus 2008).**

[4] Defined by Bianchini and Ghilardi not just as 'the planning of culture', but a 'culturally sensitive' understanding of urban planning and policy.

Key to cultural planning is an understanding that places carry a deep cultural meaning and contain their own individual cultural ecology, heritage and way(s) of seeing which need to be understood before policy can intervene and engage them as a key tool.

There is a need to shift planning priorities towards an understanding of the dynamics of places and of how people perceive their environments. This implies greater attention to people's lived experiences, aspirations, expectations and their well-being *in addition* to infrastructure and buildings.

The argument situated at the heart of the Cultural Investment and Action Plan for North Northamptonshire is that, in order to be effective, local approaches to culture must be **joined up** to all the different aspects of agendas such as planning, quality of life and economic development.

The assumption here is that culture should not be viewed only as products to be consumed but also as processes and systems that are integral to the life of a community and for a successful economy. This requires a previously unseen level of connectedness where a fabric of cultural infrastructure – seen as both physical and non-physical - both overlays and underpins wider processes of place-making.

It will also be important for the actions set out in this Cultural Investment Plan and the accompanying Mapping report to be read alongside and cross referenced with the North Northamptonshire – Strategic Sports Facilities Framework . The sports framework provides an audit of existing sports facilities in North Northamptonshire, assessing whether the current sports facility provision is sufficient for the existing population. Areas of priority requirement for new facilities are set out reflecting the likely need against the population growth predictions to 2026. The existing and planned sports facilities form part of the complex matrix of cultural infrastructure provision and thus should be factored in to overall assessment of cultural infrastructure provision. The North Northamptonshire Cultural Investment Plan Mapping report factors in some elements of sport infrastructure referring where leisure centres are being used for wider cultural and community use under the 'community facililities' sub section.

1.3 The North Northamptonshire Strategic Context

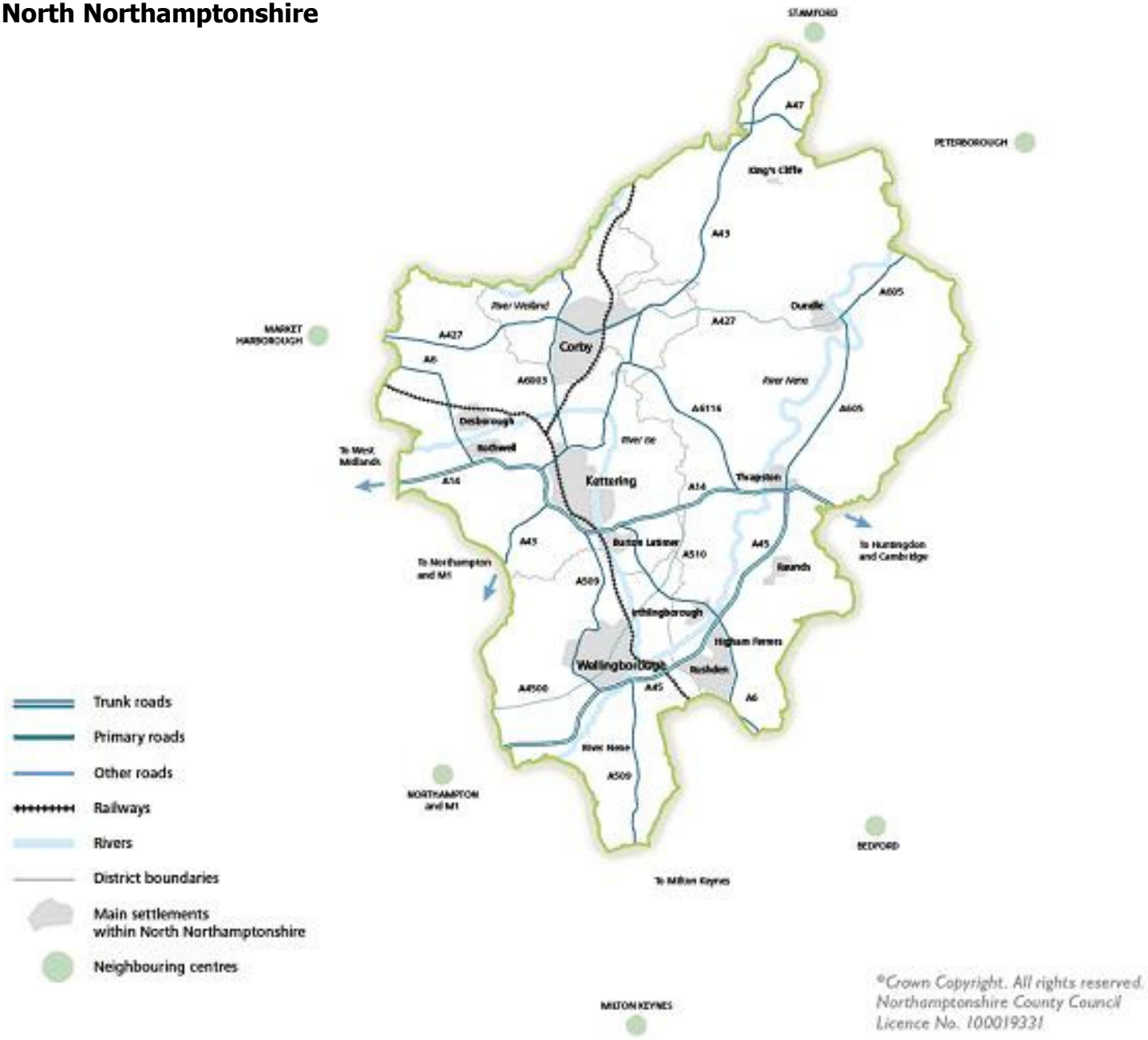
North Northamptonshire (made up of Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough) is part of the Milton Keynes South Midlands growth area (promoted by the Government through the Sustainable Communities Plan[5]) - the biggest growth area outside London.

The Regional Strategy outlines plans for North Northamptonshire to accommodate 52,100 new dwellings between 2001 and 2021 with 34,100 of those being incorporated within the growth towns – Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough. The projected growth will take the population of North Northamptonshire from an estimated 298,000 residents in 2006 to 370,000 in 2021[6]:

District/ Borough	No. of dwellings Required 2001-2021	Completions 2001-2009
Corby	16,800	2,870
East Northamptonshire	9,400	4,035
Kettering	13,100	4,539
Wellingborough	12,800	2,683
North Northamptonshire Total	**52,100**	**14,127**

[5] ODPM (2003) Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future .
[6] North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (June 2008).

Fig 1: Map of North Northamptonshire



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The Regional Strategy also sets a goal of 43,800 new jobs between 2001 and 2021. The North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (CSS), adopted in June 2008, set out the plan for delivering the housing and jobs growth along with the supporting infrastructure required to support the expanding communities. Considerable consultation has been carried out to ensure the CSS reflects the Community Strategies of the four boroughs and districts within North Northants.

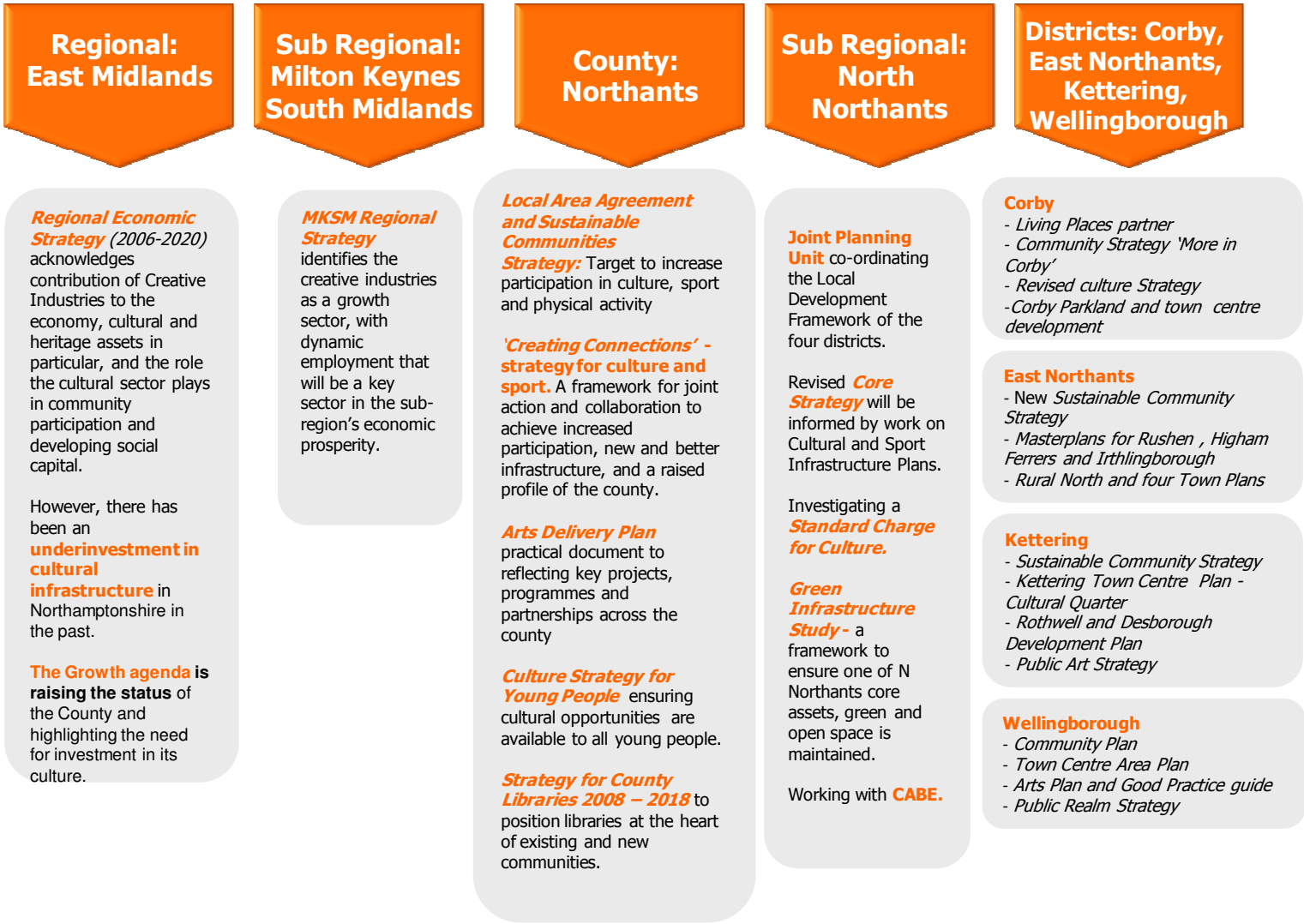
The vision set out in the CSS is for *"North Northamptonshire in 2021 to be a better place: a showpiece for modern green living within a high quality environment and a prosperous economy".* The aim is to achieve greater self-sufficiency for North Northamptonshire, delivering a network of strengthened communities around a North South Urban core (the growth towns of Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough), smaller towns in the urban core (Burton Latimer, Desborough, Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Rothwell and Rushden) and rural service centres – Oundle, Raunds and Thrapston. King's Cliffe is identified as having a strategic role to play in the rural north east.

The current CSS, adopted in June 2008, shows commitment to the important role culture plays in place making and community shaping. The evidence from this mapping report is positioned to push for a more explict focus on culture in the revised CSS, showing strenghtened committment and widening opporutnities to secure resources for cultural infrastructure provision, both captial and revenue.



Image: Rushden Hall

Fig 2: The Strategic Context for Culture in North Northamptonshire



2. Connecting the Cultural Asset base of North Northamptonshire

North Northamptonshire is a geographic entity or a strategic development proposition established to enable targeted and coordinated delivery of the Growth agenda. It is not a 'place' that is recognised as having a cultural logic or that is identifiable through a set of common characteristics, other than some shared industrial heritage and historic/political association with the County of Northamptonshire. Indeed, much of the identities of different parts of North Northamptonshire are bound up in what differentiates each place rather than what they share. Some of this can be put down to normal local rivalry, but there are clear differences between the social histories, human geographies and cultural identities of, for example, Corby, Wellingborough, Kettering, Rushden, and the smaller towns and villages that surround them.

What links the different parts of North Northamptonshire together is the shared opportunity and challenge to meet the housing and job targets of the Growth agenda and to do so **in a way that builds on their distinctiveness and improves them as liveable places.** This is why approaches to cultural development and investment must start from the existing asset base of each place – their strengths, built-up over many years of living and working in that place. It is important that local distinctiveness is not lost through the push for growth. However, when building from strengths and addressing gaps in provision, the opportunity arises for assets to be shared.

In addition, for the different parts of North Northamptonshire to attract investment and residents, then it will be important to promote a unified 'offer' across North Northamptonshire, connecting the different qualities of each place as an overall 'package'. This is for four reasons:



Image: Rushden Museum

- Incoming businesses and residents are less interested in the differences between the towns and villages than existing residents.

- Indeed, they are interested in what the wider sub-region has to offer, in the overall fabric of opportunities rather than its discrete parts.

- Parts of the sub-region are under-enjoyed by local residents – such as the green infrastructure or the museums. This presents an opportunity to attract existing and incoming residents to what is already available (and improving this offer) rather than creating new infrastructure when it is already available 'next door'.

- The development of like-for-like cultural infrastructure in different parts of North Northamptonshire would mean missing an opportunity to build facilities or services of sufficient scale to bring about step-change in the cultural offer and profile of the overall sub-region. A fragmented, under-connected cultural offer would not build the attractiveness of the sub-region or bridge gaps in existing provision.

Therefore, the Growth Agenda provides an opportunity to better connect what we already have, build from our asset base, and then introduce a coordinated, complementary landscape of cultural development that lifts North Northamptonshire as a series of connected, interdependent places that share a fantastic cultural offer.

However, as evidenced in the Mapping Overview of the key cultural assets in North Northamptonshire, a significant amount of coordination, targeted sector development and some dedicated new investment, are required for North Northamptonshire to even attend to its existing deficit in cultural infrastructure and services. To embrace growth as an opportunity for cultural development and thus as a chance to embed culture to the heart of place-shaping, will require considerable step-change, commitment and long-term partnership.

This section of the Investment Plan re-introduces the **SWOT analysis of current cultural provision** – based upon evidence generated in the Mapping Overview of the sub-region. It then introduces a set of **principles and themes** for effective cultural planning and investment in North Northamptonshire. These are introduced to shape the logic for a set of four **investment priority areas**, which in turn shape the overall **Investment Plan table**, which is presented in Section 3.

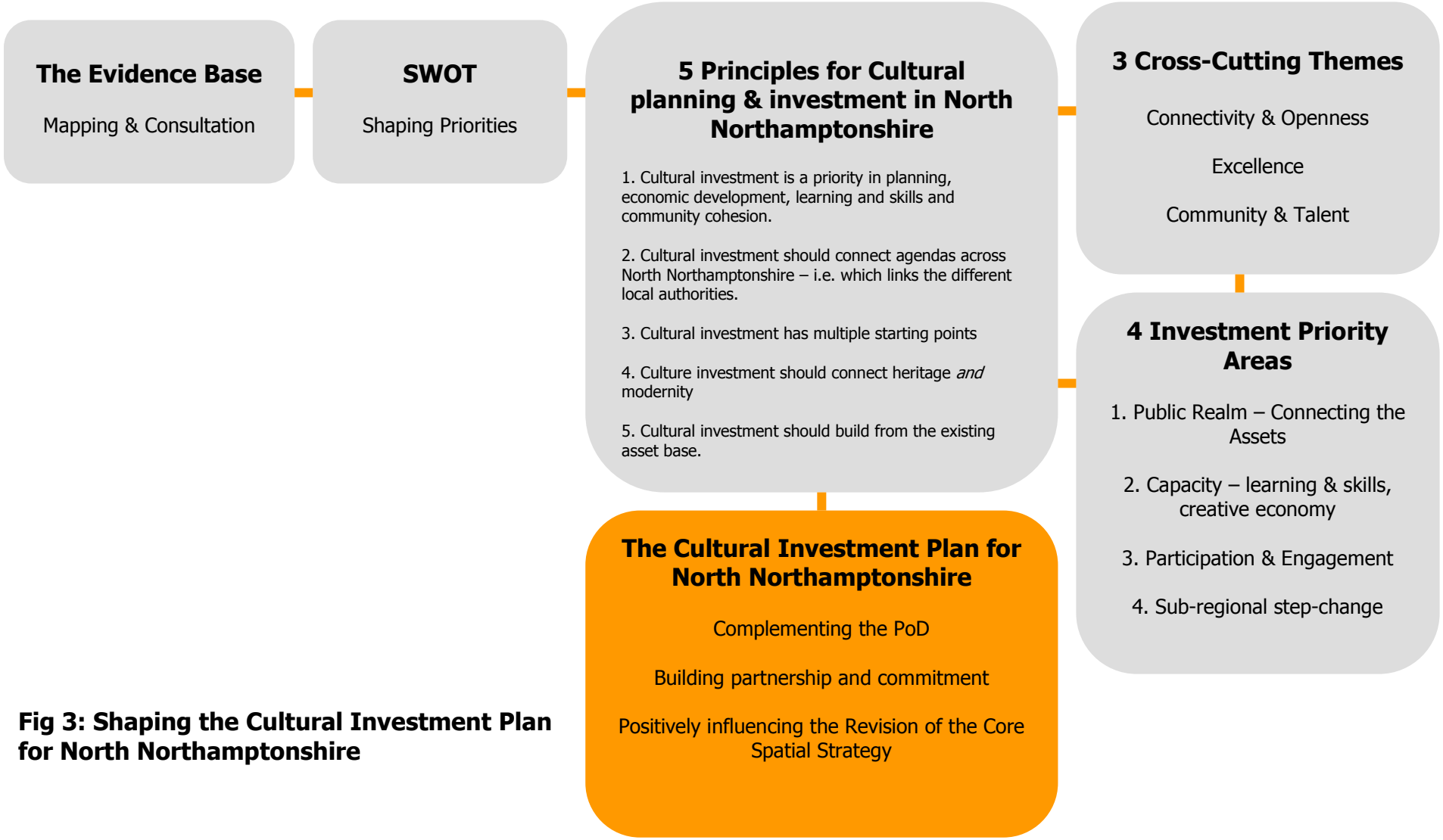


Fig 3: Shaping the Cultural Investment Plan for North Northamptonshire

2.1 A SWOT Assessment of the North Northamptonshire Cultural Offer

The following provides a SWOT assessment of the current cultural infrastructure landscape and wider cultural ecology for North Northamptonshire. It is based on analysis from the **Mapping Overview of the key cultural assets of North Northamptonshire:**

Main Strengths:

- Distinctive places with strong cultural identities that mix rural and urban to provide a collective offer through which cultural infrastructure can be developed and connected
- A small collection of arts and cultural venues with sub-regional (The Castle and increasingly the Lighthouse) and national reputations (Fermynwoods)
- A small though increasingly confident organisation base – such as Threshold Studios and Big About Music
- Councils recognising the importance of design in the built environment in policies and plans
- Strong and committed amateur sector across the sub region
- Very strong heritage offer in public and private sector; and strong local interest in heritage, many local groups
- History of leather and shoe making – number of individual shoe-makers still remaining, extensive knowledge through local museums and historical societies
- Nationally recognised parks, forests and gardens – green infrastructure as a cultural asset
- Emergent creative industries facilities – e.g. Chesham House

Main Weaknesses:

- Culture is not mainstreamed and embedded across different local authorities and between departments as a core tool for successful and sustainable growth
- Culture is not recognised and fully understood as a core ingredient for effective place-making
- The full diversity of the cultural asset base – the buildings, organisations and people – is far from delivering its potential
- Lack of galleries/exhibition space, music venue, rehearsal space and storage space (particularly for amateur groups)
- Lack of adequate cultural and community facilities – fit for purpose community and village halls - particularly outside the main towns
- Underdeveloped professional development opportunities for cultural partners, with few opportunities for peer learning and
- Poor life-long learning offer – few classes for adult population
- Limited progression offer for those in the amateur sector
- Under engagement of residents – 48% not visited museum, 20% not visited a theatre
- Poor local transport infrastructure
- Under developed connections within the cultural sector in North Northants and beyond
- Weak promotion of what is on offer – the asset base is not effectively promoted
- Lack of start-up and expansion business units for new creative businesses

Main Opportunities:

- Town centre developments and public realm improvements
- New facilities such as Corby Cube – offering genuine step change in what is possible
- New Tresham Institute campuses and the wider embedding of arts, culture and creativity into learning and skills agendas
- A festivals programme that can be better connected and programmed as a unified offer
- Scale and intensity of investment coming into North Northants highest in the country
- Good national and international connections — close to five airports and motorway arteries
- A drive for leather and shoe industry promotion and development - bring in businesses, local museums and historical societies and local artists to engage communities – economic, social and cultural opportunities
- Seed funding for rural businesses in the form of North Northamptonshire Rural Action Partnership Leader programme £1.5 million over 4 years
- Bid submitted for New Higher Education centres in Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough – led by NNDC with University of Northampton, Tresham, NCC, NEL
- An integrated approach to sport and green cultural infrastructure.

Main Threats:

- The failure of local authorities, NNDC and regional partners to commit in a coordinated and complementary way to the role of culture as a development and place-shaping tool. This requires a robust and consistent approach when working with developers, and an innovative approach that levers investment for culture through budgets in economic development, health, learning and skills etc.
- The continued inter-local authority competition, which blocks coordination of a collective offer
- Ongoing recession – which reduces economic vibrancy and weakens leverage potential from developers
- A fragmented approach to audience development, programming and promotion – so that the profile and influence of the cultural sector is undermined
- The neglect of community facilities, which are so critical for talent and audience development
- A disconnect between cultural development, creative industries support, and agendas in tourism and inward investment. NEL have a major role to play here
- The non-enforcement of design codes and the failure to influence partners in highways departments of the opportunity to reposition the public realm as a cultural resource

2.2 Five Principles for Culture at the Heart of Place-making North Northamptonshire

In North Northamptonshire, there are five principles that underpin the role of culture in the sub-region's transformation over the next ten to fifteen years. With the ongoing economic downturn and subsequent growth, it will be all the more important to approach cultural investment in a committed, principled and coordinated manner. The following principles underpin this Investment Plan:

1. Cultural investment is a priority in planning, economic development, learning and skills and community cohesion. Through a standard charge mechanism and based on a dedicated and joined-up approach to cultural planning, opportunities to invest in cultural infrastructure will be pursued with vigour across each of these policy areas. This will require a robust cultural planning partnership to oversee investment and ensure a cross-cutting cultural element in the Programme of Development (PoD). This will also require long-term commitment driven through established partnerships.

2. Cultural investment should connect agendas across North Northamptonshire – i.e. which links the different local authorities. This will require consensus on the location of capital projects to ensure complementarity rather than competition. It will also require a coordinated approach to design codes, organisational/professional development, cultural programming (e.g. festivals), and cultural promotion/branding. This means that investment propositions need to be tested for their impact at a sub-regional level, as well as for the way they build on the distinctiveness of their context.

3. Cultural investment has multiple starting points: an effective mix of approaches is required, linking the social and economic role of culture. There will need to be interventions running parallel, surrounding and connecting to major infrastructure development – in, for example, learning and skills, organisational development, public realm, showcasing, networking, workspace, and inward investment.

4. Cultural investment should connect heritage *and* modernity: North Northamptonshire will be an area where contemporary cultural infrastructure is recognised for its links to the past. It *will also be an area where the cultural sector leads processes of conservation and renovation of the heritage environment.* For example, the rich mix of buildings and memories is the starting point for the area's cultural renaissance and it must be treated with tenderness and respect.

5. Cultural investment should build from the existing asset base. As evidenced in the Mapping overview of Key Cultural Assets in North Northamptonshire, this asset base is under-developed and under-connected. However, with smart investment and the adoption of the above principles, it can provide a strong base for cultural development. From the green infrastructure of East Northants to the community infrastructure of the main towns, there is much to build from.

2.3 Three Cross-cutting Themes for Cultural Investment in North Northamptonshire

The following are the three cross-cutting themes of the Cultural Investment in North Northamptonshire. Each needs to be connected, effectively coordinated, and supported by a series of interventions and development programmes:

A. Connectivity & Openness

The cultural infrastructure and wider cultural offer in North Northamptonshire will have **connectivity and openness at its heart**: it will connect communities, bring together different activities and art forms, broker new types of partnership, and be joined together through a high quality and navigable public realm. It will also ensure **greater integration & coordination of facilities** – for efficiency and to encourage innovation.

This means that cultural infrastructure will be multi-purpose: it will have a digital as well as physical footprint; it will make connections across the sub-region, region and beyond; it will connect urban and rural communities; and it will adopt a culture of openness to residents, visitors and workers.

This also means that the asset base of each local authority will be connected – in provision, audience development, marketing, professional development and programming.

B. Excellence

The cultural infrastructure and wider cultural offer in North Northamptonshire will be underpinned by a commitment to excellence – in management, programming, design and experience. For example, cultural infrastructure in North Northamptonshire will combine excellence in its programming, partnership work and learning and skills offer.

It will be a place recognised as a pioneer in excellent cultural infrastructure. For example, the libraries will create new fluencies for increasing numbers of people, utilising digital and analogue services to satisfy need and stimulate a new role beyond books. Community assets such as village halls and churches, will be supported to offer a wider role as local 'spikes' of creative activity where excellence is demanded alongside a wider set of social concerns.

C. Community & Talent

The cultural talent base of North Northamptonshire will be made visible to all residents and visitors. *People will feel that they have a voice that will be heard and a role that will be valued: they will be active and excited that they are part of North Northamptonshire and its distinctive communities.*

North Northamptonshire will be recognised as a centre of excellence in culture-led community engagement and have an outstanding creative education programme. The creative industries will play a strong role, building on the talent base and connecting with traditional industries in leather and footwear.

North Northamptonshire will pioneer its cultural offer for young people, focusing on entitlement, skills development, and an approach where young talent is centre stage in programming and how the sub-region is promoted.

2.4 Four Investment Priority Areas

This Investment Plan uses the above principles and cross-cutting themes to inform four investment priority areas. These are designed to coherently connect investment to major development opportunities across the sub-region, and to ensure the diversity of need and opportunity is accounted for. They are also designed to ensure better **coordination and integration** of facilities. **Section 3** provides details of specific investment priorities against each of the following Investment Priority Areas.



Image: Wellingborough Museum

2.4.1 Public Realm – Connecting the Assets

North Northamptonshire will have a public realm that is open, accessible, legible and of the highest quality. The spaces between buildings – in the town centres, through main arteries, along waterways, and at 'gateway points' such as stations – will be safe, distinctive, connected and generous. They will be animated and full, enabling of creative expression (such as through performance spaces and public art), retaining their qualities into the night and across the seasons. They will be sensitive to the cultural heritage, while enabling of a new sense of place.

The approach will vary in each location, but a set of themes and character traits will be introduced across North Northamptonshire to connect its assets and promote a collective sense of place. The **Public Realm Overview and Action Plan for Northamptonshire** will shape this agenda. There are four priorities here:

- To dramatically **improve the public realm of the town centres**, opening up their existing qualities, and providing an enabling environment for a rich mix of uses.

- To dramatically **improve the public realm at transport interchanges, junctions and along key arterial routes**, establishing a no compromise approach to quality along highways and at key arrival and dwell locations.

- To dramatically **improve the open spaces and green infrastructure of North Northamptonshire as an asset to be enjoyed.** This can be achieved as much through effective cultural programming and promotion, as through investment in the physical qualities of the landscape.

- To establish a **coordinated set of design codes, signage and public art** that links public realm investments across North Northamptonshire, nurturing a common sense of place that is sensitive to distinctiveness yet lifts the overall offer.

2.4.2 Capacity – learning & skills, creative economy

North Northamptonshire is well-positioned to benefit from a coordinated approach to learning and skills development with a strong cultural element. The forthcoming Cultural Strategy for Young People in Northamptonshire identifies significant good practice where arts and cultural organisations are delivering an increasingly joined-up offer to young people (in and outside of school and college), with organisations such as Big About Music, Threshold Studios, the museums, libraries and Fermynwoods leading the way. With the schools and Tresham College sharpening their approach to culture-led learning (as a way of developing cultural entitlement, improving performance and for dedicated cultural and creative learning); plus with greater connectivity between culture-led learning and a creative industries skills development; the opportunity exists to establish North Northamptonshire as a test bed for culture-led learning. Here it can be a leader in embedding culture into the mainstream learning and skills landscape, linking cultural entitlement to creative skills development, and supporting arts and cultural organisations to be the provider of cultural fluencies which in turn build confidence and capacity across communities.

However, there is much to be done to maximise the role of existing assets and genuinely build the capacity and expertise for our cultural and learning and skills sectors to work together effectively and productively. Key factors for consideration here include:

- Culture and creativity is unevenly prioritised across the learning and skills landscape of North Northamptonshire. Provision is often dependent upon an effective relationship being developed between arts and cultural organisations/practitioners, local authorities and schools, so shared goals can be identified and a strategic approach to joint working agreed.

- Local arts and cultural organisations in most cases do not have the capacity or expertise to develop a strong 'core business' offer in learning and skills. Indeed, there are substantial skills gaps within the local arts and cultural sector, which limits the range and flexibility of the offer – whether this is in learning and skills or a wider role in planning, development and place-shaping.

- Creative Industries skills development lacks coordination. Tresham College has improved its offer here, but career path development in the creative industries is poorly signposted across the sub-region, professional development opportunities are scarce[7], and major historic



Image: Higham Ferrers Historic Trail

[7]

assets such as a leather and footwear industry, are not effectively promoted as providers of jobs and other types of economic and cultural value in the future. In addition, links between the development of a strong creative production sector, a visitor economy and inward investment, are under-developed.

2.4.3 Participation & Engagement

The cultural assets of North Northamptonshire are largely under-enjoyed. Although there are exceptions – such as with certain libraries, community facilities, some festivals and museums - participation for many local communities is under-developed. In part this is due to limits on their capacity and reach, or because their potential to improve has not been realised. It is also due to historic limited mobility between the different parts of the sub-region, with lower than expected travel to facilities outside of each district. Finally, is due to a set of supply and demand factors where the under-provision of certain facilities (such as theatre) have led to low levels of participation in that art form; and because where facilities do exist, engagement and audience development have not managed to bring levels of participation seen elsewhere. The challenges here are complex, but they include:

- The historic absence of certain types of cultural infrastructure – such as a cinema in Corby, or an urban-based contemporary arts centre

- Low levels of mobility in some parts of the sub-region – such as through public transport, and a reluctance to travel between different towns. Here the work of organisations such as Northants Touring Arts is so important – bringing product and experience to otherwise isolated venues and developing audiences through this offer

- **Historically under-developed cultural and arts learning provision**, which in turn means reduced demand / entitlement (see above).

There is a need in North Northamptonshire to open-up existing cultural infrastructure, to develop cultural experiences through a more engaged, open-source approach. Cultural venues and organisations in North Northamptonshire need to find new ways of engaging their 'public' as participants and collaborators. This means co-commissioning and co-curating, connecting the knowledge, content and tastes of different communities through the different spaces of the institution – the physical, digital and programmes beyond buildings 'in the community'. Festivals will play an increasingly important role here, as will a more flexible programming of cultural experience across the streets, open spaces and in the spaces and places where people already travel and dwell.

2.4.4 Sub-regional step-change

North Northamptonshire lacks high profile, regionally significant cultural infrastructure. There are exceptions here – such as through parts of the heritage offer, some of the green infrastructure (e.g. River Nene Regional Park), and the potential (if not fully/yet realised) assets such as Adrenalin Alley and The Corby Cube. If the sub-region is to become known for its cultural offer (and thus embed culture to the heart of place-shaping), then it needs to build the capacity and profile of existing assets to establish a legible 'offer' that ties together all the assets and locations to project the sub-region as a distinctively 'cultural place'. Moreover, it needs to bridge gaps in provision to establish a unified and coordinated cultural landscape. Here, there are three additional elements that require consideration:

- **Opportunities to coordinate programming, ticketing and promotion across the sub-region's cultural infrastructure should be pursued.** This is to establish a stronger narrative to local people and visitors, build loyalty, and nurture a cultural sense of place.

- **Opportunities to build the festival offer should be considered.** This is to connect different parts of the asset base and develop audience overlap/mobility (e.g. between Oundle and Corby). It is also to galvanise processes of organisational and professional development, diversify programming, and build the capacity and reach of existing festivals.

- **Opportunities to take risks should not be overlooked.** To build local confidence and to generate outside interest will require partners to enable the novel, unexpected and 'unplanned' to take place. A strong involvement with young people will guarantee that new, often surprising ideas will emerge. The challenge for partners is to recognise some of them as real opportunities to provide step change in the cultural landscape of North Northamptonshire and to then pursue them with commitment. It is only by doing some things differently that North Northamptonshire will become better known. It is clear that partners in Corby have recognised this for some time; the challenge now is to work together across the sub-region. The investments below each have their own risk profile. However, it is the ones that provide sub-regional step change (see Section 4 below) that present the greatest risk but also the greatest potential reward. The challenge for partners is to have the convidence and conviction to take these risks.



Image: Rushden Library

3. A Cultural Investment Plan for North Northamptonshire

This Section outlines the main investment priorities for North Northamptonshire over the next five years (2009-14), with some further opportunities introduced for the longer term (2014 to 2024). Based upon the mapping and consultation process, and aligned with the Cultural Strategy for Northamptonshire, it is shaped by **four strategic priority areas for culture-led investment.** These are underpinned by the **three cross- cutting themes** and **five principles** for positioning culture at the heart of planning and place-making in North Northamptonshire:

The Investment Plan is designed to focus thinking on a set of achievable and actionable ways forward for culture in North Northamptonshire. It is not intended to cover every area of potential cultural investment, but to provide a route to delivery for a succession of clearly defined, eminently deliverable interventions that mix aspiration with more pragmatic concerns.

A key next step will be to **connect this Investment Plan to the one developed in West Northamptonshire** – especially with regard to County and sub-regional assets and agendas.

Also of importance is developing a narrative that locks together these largely public sector concerns with those of the private sector – with particular regard to building effective investment partnership with developers. Implicit throughout is the significance of culture to place-shaping, which in turn creates a profitable 'bottom line' for the private sector. However, this agenda is not always clearly evoked by public sector partners. **The need to establish a narrative for culture that works for public and private partners at the same time will be decisive for the future of many of the opportunities cited in this report.**



3.1 Public Realm – Connecting the Assets

Proposed Investment	Capital Cost & Funders or Partners	Shortfall	Revenue Cost & Funders or Partners	Shortfall	Link to Growth Agenda	Intervention Opportunity Years 1- 5	Further Intervention(s)	Anticipated Overall Outcome(s) (0-5 years)	Long-term Outcome(s) (10-15 years)
1. North Northants Gateway Design Initiative	£8 million: £2 million per local authority area. Potential funders: Local authorities, S106, ACE, Lottery.	£8 million.	£200,000 – design competition; management. Potential funders: ACE, CABE, local authorities, Lottery.	£200,000	A set of high profile high quality public realm projects located at Gateway sites across North Northants – e.g. outside train stations & major interchanges. This is a major plank of the Public Realm Overview & Action Plan for the County and complements existing public realm strategies/plans, providing coordination and a high profile narrative for North Northants.	**Year 1: Feasibility and business plan:** to run a design competition that tells the story of North Northants through a set of coordinated, high profile public realm interventions. **Year 2: Gateway Design competition for up to 8 Gateway sites across the sub-region**. This will include public art commissions but will focus on transformative public realm. **Year 3-5: Implementation & advocacy/promotion.**	- Identify further 'secondary gateway sites' for improvement. - Evaluate impact and promote as an example of North Northants taking the lead.	- High quality signature public realm projects across North Northants that bring step change in how the area is viewed and understood, build confidence and have a positive medium-to-long-term impact across Growth agenda outcomes. - Opportunity for participatory, engaged development process, connecting with local people to re-imagine what it means to live and work in North Northants.	*A nationally recognised location / destination, framed by distinctive and prominent gateway experiences.*
2. Town Centre Public Realm Commission	£5 million Potential funders:	£3 million (approx).	£200,000 – commission developmen t &	£200,000	A set of high quality town centre public realm projects that have	**Year 1: Establish a North Northants Design Commission** (with local	- Extend the programme to smaller towns and village	- High quality signature public realm projects across North	*Nationally recognised town centre*

	Local authorities, S106, ACE, Lottery.		promotion. Potential funders: ACE, CABE, local authorities, HLF.		a transformative impact on their image, link together existing assets, and provide a platform for cultural programming – a stage for arts and cultural activity. This is a major plank of the Public Realm Overview & Action Plan for the County and complements existing public realm strategies/plans, providing coordination and a high profile narrative for North Northants.	representatives and a nationally recognised figurehead) to negotiate, adopt and apply design code and quality control for town centre projects in tune with the character of place. This should be based on an 'urban workshop' model, problem-solving, identifying alternative opportunities, challenging existing plans to be more innovative. **Year 2-3: Coordinate town centre public realm projects** under one commission-driven programme. **Year 3-4:** Implementation, advocacy, promotion, including inward investment / tourism campaign.	/neighbourhood centres. - Establish a festivals programme that links the towns – see Table 3 below. - Evaluate impact and promote as an example of North Northants taking the lead.	Northants that bring step change in how the area is viewed and understood, build confidence and have a positive medium-to-long-term impact across Growth agenda outcomes. - Opportunity for participatory, engaged development process, connecting with local people to re-imagine what it means to live and work in North Northants. - Platform for cultural development – e.g. festivals and events, development of a mixed offer that improves the day and night time economy.	*destinations – renowned for their distinctive, high quality look and feel, plus the enabling environment they provide for creative and cultural activity.*
3. North Northants Greenways Art Programme	£1 million	£800,000 million (approx). Potential funders: NNDC,	£150,000 – development, promotion, education.	£150,000 Potential funders: local authorities, ACE, CABE,	(PPG17) Opening-up, connecting and improving the current green infrastructure, This would focus on an art trail through	**Year 1:** Feasibility & fund-raising. **Year 2:** Design and public art commission. **Year 3-5:**	Further Interventions: - Extend the programme and connect to Gateway and town centre	- A visible platform for contemporary art in a green context. - A means of programming art	*Open, accessible green spaces that connect the urban areas of East Northants and provide*

		developers, ACE, local authorities, Lottery.		Lottery, sponsorship, DCSF.	East Northants as a green asset for the sub-region. The second stage would be to develop green arteries into each of the main urban centres of the sub-region (i.e. connecting East Northants to Wellingborough, Kettering and Corby). This establishes a set of multi-purpose routes that operates as a 'healthy living asset' encouraging cycling, walking etc.), and a 'cultural asset' – with a series of art and design commissions.	Implementation, advocacy, promotion – including inward investment / tourism.	improvements (see above). - Develop a temporary art programme – an annual commission. - Establish an effective learning and skills programme - Evaluate impact and promote as an example of North Northants taking the lead.	along the 'desire lines' of different communities. - A stronger cultural offer for East Northants – to extend the profile and reach of its under-enjoyed assets. - An opportunity to develop an arts and environment specialism for East Northants – building on the Arts and Environment festival.	*green access points to the urban areas across North Northants: a green grid for the sub-region with art and creativity a key feature.*

3.2 Capacity – Learning & Skills, Creative Economy

Proposed Investment	Capital Cost & Funder	Shortfall	Revenue Cost & Funder	Shortfall	Link to Growth Agenda	Intervention Opportunity Years 1- 5	Further Intervention(s)	Anticipated Outcome(s) (0-5 years)	Long-term Outcome(s) (10-15 years)
1. A 'Creative Space Programme' to develop and consolidate a mix of workspace opportunities across the creative economy, provide temporary space in under-used sites (e.g. town centre retail), and promote the area as a welcoming environment for small creative businesses (not least those that can grow out of existing sectors – e.g. leather and footwear). This should focus on commercial creative businesses as well as artists' studios.	N/A until after specific feasibility work. Potential funders: EMDA, ACEEM, local authorities, NNDC, and integrated into private developments.		£200,000 Potential funders: EMDA, ACEEM, NNDC, Local authorities.	£200,000	A strong creative industries sector is key to the creation of new jobs and the attraction of a wide set of knowledge industries. It is also a means of introducing energy and distinctiveness to town centre locations, especially in buildings otherwise neglected by others (e.g. retail, old industrial spaces etc.). North Northants currently has a small and struggling sector, despite strong history in leather and footwear. With appropriate infrastructure,	**Year 1:** Establish a **published audit of development opportunities across North Northamptonshire**, including details of those in public sector ownership. This should provide detail on market assets and directly seek to attract inward investment. Also undertake a revised **feasibility study and business plan for Corby Manor House and other proposed sites (e.g. in Wellingborough town centre)**. This needs to explore how it connects to existing assets in the town and sub-regionally. **Year 2:** An **Asset Transfer**	- An **ongoing review** of the effectiveness of a broad range of accessible, fit-for-purpose creative workspace facilities, concentrated in town centres that sit at the heart of a wider network of creative businesses (including home-workers) across the sub-region. - Establish a set of small creative and knowledge business spaces as part of mixed-use development schemes in Wellingborough, Corby, Kettering and Rushden town **centres**, plus in at least one key heritage site/development. **- Re-fit of the workspace offer to**	A mix of creative workspace and activity space facilities across the sub-region, with a concentration in town centre locations.	*A creative cluster of regional significance, providing the hygiene factors for creative firms to stick and grow and the cultural brand and experience that creative businesses search for in their locational decision-making.*

					increased creative learning and skills, and a big 'welcome' through support and promotion, it could grow a strong sector.	**Programme** to establish an attractive property portfolio for incoming non-profit cultural organisations such as artist and design studio groups. **Year 3:** Introduce a set of **bespoke development briefs** for specific sites to be intensively promoted to leading developers and workspace providers with creative brands (e.g. Urban Splash, ACME, Igloo, Space Studios, and Urban Space Management). **Year 4-5:** Any new capital developments established – e.g. new build creative workspace within other developments or refurbishment of industrial buildings.	**improve digital connectivity** and ensure fitness of purpose; and establish a mix of flexible creative spaces for hot-desking and networking, perhaps through the libraries offer.		
2. Fermynwoods Arts & Education resource Centre	£150,000 Also, RNRP has received a revised EoI submission for a £100K learning studio for Sudborough	£150,000 ACEEM, Access to Nature (Lottery),	£55,000	£55,000	Fermynwoods is a leading visual arts Organisation and a major asset to the sub-region. It is also a pioneer of arts education projects for harder to reach young people. In	**Year 1:** Action the organisational development work currently being undertaken. **Year 2-3:** Develop the Arts and Education Resource Centre and link it to	- Position Fermynwoods as a lead partner for arts and cultural learning, with programmes that stretch across the sub-region and even	Fermynwoods has the potential to be a regional flagship for visual culture and a leader in embedded, participatory arts (see Table 4 below).	*A hub for arts education where new innovative practice is piloted and from where leadership for arts education across the*

	Green Cottages.				addition, this project links agendas in culture to those in environmental sustainability and education. However, its role is limited at its current site, and the organisation struggles to develop a programme that fits its potential – as an arts organisation that can lead the brand for North Northants as a 'cultural place', and as something that is inspiring to local young people.	wider developments in creative learning (see below).	regionally.	With a stronger education programme, it provides a means to connect agendas in tourism, inward investment and learning and skills / social cohesion. This is a missing link for the current arts sector in North Northants.	*County is driven.*
3. Creative Value – a programme that links creative businesses to the heritage and tourism sectors, plus the wider economy.	N/A		£80,000 Potential to fund through Creative Northants programme; plus NEL and local authorities.	£80,000	The creative and cultural assets of the sub-region do not currently contribute as they can to agendas in economic development, tourism, and heritage. Creative businesses are not just providers of	**Year 1:** Scope a **professional development initiative** to broker opportunities for new contemporary product ranges for heritage assets; and profile local creative companies as part of the cultural tourism offer. **Year 2:** Working in	Introduce a **creativity and innovation programme to projects such as Chesham House**, brokering links between design firms, artists, technologists and scientists as the 'inception programme' to a longer-term knowledge economy	Creative businesses working closely with businesses across the economy, driving innovation and competitiveness as a true knowledge economy.	*A coordinated creative economy offer for the sub-region, with approaches to cultural tourism, inward investment and creative industries support seamless.*

					jobs, but can add commercial value to other firms – such as through high quality design at the heart of the tourism and heritage offer. In addition, existing creative firms would benefit from greater contact with others – for example, leather and footwear firms connected to contemporary artists, designers and other types of practitioner – to raise profile and improve innovation.	partnership with NEL, develop a **'Made in North Northamptonshire'** initiative profiling high quality goods and services, with shoes/leather at the heart of the brand, but extending across the creative economy into food, leisure and tourism.	strategy for the sub-region.		
4. A creative learning programme that mainstreams creativity in education and develops work-related learning opportunities.	N/A		Cost to be identified through the Northamptonshire Cultural Strategy for Young People – currently underway.		To build capacity in the creative economy and to embed arts and cultural learning as a key specialism for North Northants requires coordination. It also requires a brokered/staged intervention that brings partners together and focuses on how the capacity of	**Year 1:** Through the Cultural Strategy for Young People – scope a professional development programme for creative practitioners and organisations, with a wider aim of building skills, capacity and greater regional-level support.	- Introduce a set of mentoring and **work-related learning pilots** for creative firms to work with young people as a way of increasing entrepreneurialism and creativity at an early age.	A dynamic exchange environment for creative professionals and organisations seeking to deliver arts, cultural and creative learning across the sub-region.	*National leadership in creative learning, where creativity is embedded as a core approach to attainment, personal development and cohesion.*

					organisations and practitioners can become a real resource for local schools, Tresham College and local people.				
5. Deene Park Community Media Centre (Deene, between Corby and Stamford)	£1,700,000 EMDA, NEL, ACEEM, Lottery, developer(s), EM Media.	£1,700,000	Feasibility needed here but aim to be revenue neutral in 3 years.		There is a need to build digital literacy and provide opportunities for local people to access and engage with new media and technology. This is a proven model and has strong strategic links with Fermynwoods and Threshold Studios (with mutual cross-benefit), plus regional links with PBQ network of Nottingham Broadway, Leicester Phoenix and Derby Quad. This gives it access to nationally significant expertise and programming. It also introduces opportunities that link tourism to the creative industries.	**Year 1-2:** Complete feasibility and business model. **Year 1-3:** Develop facility alongside off-site education and cultural programme.	- Develop the facility as a creative and media hub that connects to others across the County – e.g. to emergent provision in The Cube, potential screen media offer at Royal & Derngate in Northampton etc. - Lead on cross-art-form programming, digital literacy and open source programming for the sub-region.	An open, connected digital media facility for the sub-region that combines digital literacy, high quality programming, tourism and creative business development	*A sustainable, flexible media centre model, working increasingly beyond the building with different communities.*
6. Kettering Discovery Centre	£80,000 NCC		£20,000 NCC		Development of a prototype 'Discovery Centre'	**Year 1:** Implement. **Year 2:** Identify		A new model for opening-up the library offer and	*A network of discovery centre*

					based at Kettering Library. To exploit the unique & distinctive offer of libraries; making connections that directly impact on community cohesion. This provides a new platform for creative learning.	options for roll-out of the model across North Northants and review impact to inform Corby Cube. **Year 3:** Introduce dedicated arts and creative learning programmes – linking to Tresham College and Chesham House, plus other partners.		connecting different strategic agendas – from front-line service information to place-building, community development and creative networking.	*facilities across the County; or at least a range of mixed-use, multi-platform hubs that increase confidence, connectivity and participation.*
7. Corby My Place	£5,050,000 IAGF, EMT, CBC, NEL, ERDF, DCSF, Growth	£1,868000	To be defined through feasibility work and bid development.		This provides a specific opportunity for a 'multi-hub site of excellence' for young people learning and skills and cultural provision. It will be based upon co-located facilities and services provision. It will potentially link Big About Music, Adrenaline Alley and Manor House to provide a safe and accessible place for young people provision – with a strong emphasis on culture and creativity.	**Year 1:** Feasibility and partnership/bid development **Year 2-3:** Potential implementation.		Potential a multi-use provider of opportunity and development for young people – with sub-regional impact.	*A regionally significant centre for young people provision – connecting different assets to drive excellence in culture, creativity and innovation where young talent is the key resource.*

3.3 Participation & Engagement

Proposed Investment	Capital Cost & Funder	Shortfall	Revenue Cost & Funder	Shortfall	Link to Growth Agenda	Intervention Opportunity Years 1- 5	Further Intervention(s)	Anticipated Outcome(s) (0-5 years)	Long-term Outcome(s) (10-15 years)
1. Libraries Improvement & Investment Programme (see the POD for further prioritisation that relates directly to the Growth Agenda). Burton Latimer – replacement Danesholme – replacement Desborough – replacement Earls Barton – extension Finedon – replacement Irchester – enhancement Irthlingborough – refurbish Kettering East – new Kettering library – new Raunds – extension Rothwell – extension Rushden – refurbish Thrapston – replacement Wellingborough – replacement Corby – new	£13,341,000 NCC DCSF Local authorities	£10,846,000 NCC DCSF Local authorities	To be defined		Comprehensive library improvement programme to establish a set of fit-for-purpose libraries capable of meeting the needs of the new population plus of offering the mix of services required for a library to operate as the connector of communities, provider of fluencies, partner of people. Key proposed developments are listed to the left. This should include mobile library services – although not listed/costed here.	**Year 1:** Comprehensive assessment on a case-by-case basis of feasibility, need, and opportunities for new models of provision – e.g. co-location. **Year 2-5:** Implementation	- This needs to be embedded as a County-wide agenda, that embraces local opportunities toward a connected overall offer	A fit-for-purpose libraries offer where the role of libraries is transformed to be the enabler and connecter of multiple agendas.	*The best libraries in the region and leaders nationally.*

Wollaston - refurbish									
2. Community Hall Improvement Programme (See the POD for further detail and prioritisation that links directly to the Growth Agenda).	To be defined.		To be defined.		Comprehensive community hall improvement programme to establish a set of fit-for-purpose centres capable of operating across multiple agendas – e.g. as a space for arts and creativity, meeting point, business centre, crèche etc. This needs to be assessed as a coordinated offer rather than on a case-by-case basis. It also needs to be connected with the above Libraries Improvement Strategy – to coordinate the offer and share efficiencies.	**Year 1:** Comprehensive assessment on a case-by-case basis of feasibility, need, and opportunities for new models of provision – e.g. co-location. **Year 2-5:** Implementation		A fit-for-purpose community offer that connects with and adds value to specialist infrastructure provision. And provides a platform for cultural development (e.g. performance, exhibition, discussion).	*A network of community facilities that connect local people to opportunities in culture, creativity and wellbeing.*
3. Audience Development Coordination Programme – inc. Culture North Northants website.			£100,000 Potential funders: ACEEM, Local Authorities, NEL, private business.	£100,000	Establishing a coordinated cultural offer and promoting this offer locally, regionally and nationally to provide a strong collective offer that adds value to	**Year 1:** Audience development strategy for North Northants – building on targeted work in Corby. This would see cultural organisations, strategic bodies	- Develop a coordinated festival offer for North Northants – joint promotion, professional development, and inter-linked programmes.	North Northamptonshire is recognised for the way that is strategic approach to data and audience relationship management has really paid of,	*Some of the highest attendance / participation in arts and culture nationally; plus the highest satisfaction levels in the*

					tourism, inward investment and liveability This will be to develop a more integrated approach to audience relationships, understanding the possibility to cross-market and cross-sell for mutual benefit.	and funders, sharing more detailed and informed data on audiences in a time of growth and expansion. **Year 2:** A Cultural Calendar website and promotion for North Northants. **Year 3-5:** Joint ticketing and marketing; coordinated programming.		with audiences closely connected to institutions large and small across the area**.**	*region.*
4. Manor House Museum & Alfred East Art Gallery, Kettering	£2,175,000 Funding: £72,000 allocated by Kettering Borough Council and £5,000 by Friends of Kettering Art Gallery and Museum. HLF, ACEEM, EMDA present further options.	Feasibility required here.	To be defined.		Redevelopment of existing museum and gallery facilities to address building upgrade, access and DDA compliancy. This will position a new-look, open, accessible cultural infrastructure offer at the heart of the town centre.	**Year 1:** feasibility and business plan. **Year 2-5:** implementation.	- Potential partnership with larger regional museums to diversify the programme. - Greater focus on flexible programming – e.g. late openings or exhibitions in public spaces across the sub-region.	A strong cultural facility at the heart of Kettering – building on the civic ambition from which it originated to become a real attraction at the heart of a revitalised town centre offer.	*A high quality museum centre that anchors the redevelopment of the town centre.*
5. Rothwell	£250,000		£20,000	£12,000	Driven by the	**Year 1:**	- Increase the use of	A mixed-use	

Heritage Centre	Funded by the Maud Elkington Trust and KBC.			Fund-raising, S106.	Market Town Initiative using heritage to regenerate community space. Centre is currently being redeveloped and made sound. This includes developing let unit space for business to bring in revenue funding for the centre.	Implementation.	the centre for community activity.	heritage centre with a business and community offer – leading the diversification of the town centre.	*An established heritage centre with scope for further development.*
6. Desborough & Burton Latimer Heritage Centres	£300,000	£300,000			Similar model to above – and through the Market Town Initiative.	**Year 1:** Refined business plans and fund-raising. **Years 2-5:** Implementation.		Mixed-use heritage centres with a business and community offer – leading the diversification of the town centres.	*Established heritage centres with scope for further development.*

3.4 Sub-regional Step Change

Proposed Investment	Capital Cost & Funder	Shortfall	Revenue Cost & Funder	Shortfall	Link to Growth Agenda	Intervention Opportunity Years 1- 5	Further Intervention(s)	Anticipated Outcome(s) (0-5 years)	Long-term Outcome(s) (10-15 years)
1. Corby Cube	£30m Growth ACE EM CBC	£3m	ACE EM approx £200,000 per yr.		Part of Parkland Gateway project which lies between the existing shopping centre and Hazel Wood. It will provide the location for a wide range of new civic, cultural and leisure facilities in the new town centre, as well as an opportunity to live in the heart of Corby. The £60m first phase of this project epitomises the scale and boldness of the proposed changes to the face of Corby and will be vital to encouraging further investment and raising the profile of Corby.	**Year 1:** Completion.	- Introduce greater co-curation models with local communities. - Attract producing cultural companies to be based on-site. - Attract national leaders in young people provision / development – as medium-term tenants and to drive professional development in this area.	An exemplar project for co-location; a leading model for open, enabling cultural infrastructure. A leading centre for young people that transforms engagement across Corby and takes a lead for the sub-region.	*A regional leader in open infrastructure – programming with local communities to become one of the best-loved cultural institutions in the UK.*
2. Arts & Heritage Development Programme			£150,000 ACEEM, NNDC, EH, Local Authorities, MLA, DCSF, EMDA.	£150,000	The opportunity exists for North Northants to be a showpiece of England's finest heritage – from the industrial heritage of the leather and footwear industries to Chester House; the modernist	**Year 1:** Business plan and strategy for an integrated strategy for the use of historic buildings (e.g. churches and industrial buildings) for contemporary cultural tourism and wider community uses. This is a	- Develop feasibility for dedicated Sense of Place galleries. - Join with partners in the County, NEL and West Northants to establish a unified	A coherent, integrated heritage offer, where it is profiled and operates as a	*The most contemporary heritage offer in the UK.*

					architecture of Corby to stately homes. This could be at the heart of the brand and a key opportunity to increase competitiveness and performance across the economy.	way of securing their future and providing a distinctive and inspiring context for cultural activity. **Year 2-3:** Selection of historic houses to host workspace and showcase areas for creative businesses. Establish a brokerage model for heritage organisations to work with arts organisations (as with Creative Partnerships in Leicestershire). This can include an approach to contemporary collecting (e.g. as 'found art' projects). **Year 2-5:** Establish the North Northants heritage brand – linking it to the contemporary assets of the transforming sub-region.	offer/brand.	contemporary creative resource.	
3. Fermynwoods Contemporary Art Gallery	£5m Potential funders: ACEEM, Lottery, EMDA, developer contributions, local authorities	£5m	£400,000 Potential funders: ACEEM (likely £70,000 per yr), local authorities, trusts and foundations, DCSF.	£400,000	A world class visual arts centre that builds on a track record of excellent programming and a dedicated approach to learning and skills meets the RNRP priority of flagship cultural venue to meet increased needs resulting from growth agenda. It is also an Arts Council England East Midlands regional strategic priority and	**Year 1:** Complete feasibility, including identification of appropriate site – e.g. continued rural location or Corby. **Year 2:** Develop business plan and begin next phase programme and outreach. **Year 3-5:** Implementation.	- Develop a programme of art in open spaces, curating the offer across the sub-region e.g. Actions 1-3 of Table 1. - Grow the education team to deliver a wide range of services – e.g. dedicated	International standard regional flagship: a contemporary visual arts project, delivering across key regional strategies including culture, tourism,	*The most significant non-city-based visual arts centre in the UK.*

					critical to establishing a stronger cultural institutional base in Northants. It will also have a wider strategic added value – e.g. inward investment and cultural tourism.		offer for young people at risk - Host a series of international residencies that bring artists to the sub-region; and manage a development programme for these artists to engage with local communities - Develop a digital programme of commissions and to build engagement with local and regional audiences.	growth, environment and health. The needs-driven integrated education and outreach projects will also position it as a key means of developing aspiration and embedding arts learning across the sub-region.	
4. Adrenaline Alley (also see Corby MyPlace proposition : 3.2 item 7).	£7.5 m Potential funders: Growth funding, developer contributions, Lottery.				An ambitious project to capitalise on the success of the current indoor skate park by building a new world class facility in Corby to generate local, national and international visits. The Alley currently attracts over 30,000 visitors pa with more than half coming from outside the region. A new facility is expected to increase this to over 80,000 visits pa.	**Year 1:** Review current status / management. **Year 2:** Develop full feasibility study and business plan. This should focus on establishing a centre (Britain's first) for urban culture and arts to complement the sports/activities focus. **Year 3:** Implementation.	- Develop partnership with the University of Northampton (or another) to explore options for an urban art/fashion approach. - Develop partnership with Big About Music and Threshold Studios to scope complementary activity.	A new centre for contemporary urban sports that also operates as a centre for contemporary urban art – pioneering programming and outreach in graffiti, parkour and urban	*An internationally recognised centre for urban culture and arts; home for the largest urban arts and sports festival in Europe.*

					"We are seeking to create the urban sports equivalent of Lords, Twickenham, Wembley or Wimbledon, and to capture the mega share of the benefits of one of the fastest growing sports and leisure pursuits in North Northamptonshire". The impact will be to establish an attraction of genuine regional and national profile that creates jobs, attracts visitors, and repositions the sub-region as a place of contemporary culture and leisure.			dance, and fashion.	
5. Chester House Farm & Roman Town (In the eastern part of the Borough of Wellingborough to the north of Irchester).	To be defined.		To be defined.		This is a project that RNRP sees as a potential flagship scheme due to its location, history and wide appeal. Supported by English Heritage as one the most significant heritage sites in the county/region with over 2000 years of continuous on-site inhabitation iron age through Roman to present day it provides a high profile cultural attraction.	**Year 1-2:** Feasibility for establishment of a full heritage destination offer. **Year 2-3:** Begin cultural programme to build audiences – e.g. architectural dig, filming, staging of cultural events. **Year 2-4:** Business plan and funding – to include a mix of uses, such as visitor centre, education workshop, artists' studios etc. **Year 5**: Implementation.		Unique sub regional centre of archaeological and cultural excellence, able to significantly raise the profile of Northamptonshire, encouraging inward investment and tourism. It should be linked to Action 1 above.	*A fully opened heritage centre, plus a mixed-use site that offers space for arts and cultural production and consumption, attracting visitors from across the UK and internationally.*



Image: Sudborough Green Cottages – Currently being refurbished for Fermynwoods.



Image: River Nene at Thrapston



Image: Chester House