
A CULTURAL MAPPING DOCUMENT

JUNE 2009

NORTHANTS CULTURE*

A Cultural Mapping Document for West Northamptonshire



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1. INTRODUCTION

This Report, written by Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy and supported by Noema Research and Planning, sets out a **Cultural Investment Plan for West Northamptonshire**. It is one of three documents, sitting alongside:

- * **Document 2 - A Cultural Action Plan for West Northamptonshire:** providing the practical short-to-medium term actions to deliver this Investment Plan.
- * **Document 3 - A Cultural Mapping Report for West Northamptonshire:** providing an overview of the existing role of culture in the sub-region, the strategic context for culture, and a district-by-district overview of cultural provision.

This project was commissioned by a partnership including Arts Council England East Midlands, Northamptonshire County Council, English Heritage, East Midlands Museums Libraries and Archives, West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC), Northampton Enterprise Ltd., Northampton Borough Council, the District Councils of South Northamptonshire and Daventry and the University of Northampton. These partners are represented on the **West Northamptonshire Cultural Steering Group**.

Based on an active and open approach where over 100 people have been consulted¹, the reports:

- * Build on West Northamptonshire's existing strengths, such as its distinctive heritage, built environment, diverse communities and location;
- * Engage positively with the subregion's challenges, such as social and mobility inequality; the physical decline of innerurban areas; the relatively untapped resources of local talent, pride and identity; and the underdeveloped capacity and reach of cultural organisations and institutions;
- * Give 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 West Northamptonshire in 15 years time.

The reports are prepared to position culture at the heart of the planning and development agenda in West Northamptonshire, an area in the heart of England undergoing significant change and set to undergo further change over the coming years. The draft East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, published in September 2006, makes provision for 62,125 dwellings in West Northamptonshire between 2001 and 2026 (18,460 of these were completed by the end of 2007, leaving a target of 43,665; 38,362 of these dwellings are within the West Northamptonshire areas of Northampton, Daventry and Towcester²).

West Northamptonshire forms a part of the Milton Keynes South Midlands (MKSM) Growth Area³, 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.

This means that the target is not just houses, but jobs and an overall outcome of sustainable, cohesive communities. A key policy of the Milton Keynes South Midlands (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. The MKSM Sub-Regional Strategy includes a figure of 37,500⁴ additional jobs in West Northamptonshire from 2001 to 2021.

1. 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.
 2. WNDC Consultation Developing Planning Obligations Strategy, May 2008.
 3. Definition of growth area: "The four growth areas announced by the Government in the Sustainable Communities Plan 2003were 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).
 4. This figure is a reference value to be used for monitoring and review and is not a target.

The deliverables for the partners driving growth are therefore not solely to develop units – i.e. numbers of houses and jobs – but to make places.

Indeed, central to planning requirements (expressed through policy documents such as PPS1 Sustainable Communities⁵ and through 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.

The role of culture⁶ as a connector of communities, a provider of confidence and purpose and as an economic driver, must be central to West Northamptonshire's growth and to the delivery of specific local agendas, such as Northampton's renaissance and the connection of rural areas to their growing urban centres. This Investment Plan, alongside the Cultural Action Plan and Cultural Mapping Report, sets out this agenda for partners.

1.1 THE FOCUS OF THIS REPORT

This report offers a means to better understand the dynamics and profile of the current cultural and creative dividend in West Northamptonshire, and provides context and intelligence that informs the wider work. It is not intended as a complete and comprehensive overview of all sector activity and the total range of cultural impacts. Indeed, much of this analysis sits within the Cultural Investment Plan for West Northamptonshire.

Rather, this report highlights the important role that culture plays in the sub region and begins to identify some of the key characteristics of the cultural offer.

It covers the three local authority districts within West Northamptonshire – the Borough of Northampton and the districts of Daventry and South Northamptonshire. It also briefly considers the cultural assets beyond these three district boundaries that are accessed by West Northamptonshire's current residents and will also have a role to play as the population of the sub region grows in the coming years with the construction of over 62,000⁷ new dwellings.

There is a diverse range of physical cultural infrastructure and cultural activity taking place in West Northamptonshire. To make an assessment of the current cultural provision and to provide a baseline to explore the potential areas for investment, the cultural infrastructure has been grouped into seven 'typologies'.



BANKSY LONDON

5. PPS1 ODPM Consultation Paper on Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities (2003).
6. The reports do not focus substantially on sport. This is because Sport England is carrying out a parallel study on sport infrastructure in West Northamptonshire. However, the links between sport and cultural infrastructure are highlighted – with sport and culture recognised for their complementary role as part of an overall leisure offer.
7. West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Issues and Options Paper, September 2007.

These are based on key areas of physical infrastructure but incorporate the activity that takes place within the physical spaces. The typologies are:

- * **Heritage:** historic houses and gardens, 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.

Within these typologies the strengths, weaknesses, partnerships and strategic connections are explored.

1.2 THE METHODOLOGY

The cultural infrastructure mapping was undertaken using a qualitative approach, combining desk-based research and interviews:

- * **Literature review:** national, regional and local strategic and policy documents and cultural and creative industries research reports and documents were reviewed to provide context for the mapping and identify key cultural assets and organisations and their role as cultural providers and drivers.
- * **Snowballing contacts:** over 60 cultural representatives were contacted and asked to provide their lists and databases of cultural infrastructure providers and services.
- * **Explorative searching:** web searching and the review of local media and promotional materials was also undertaken to identify cultural activities across West Northamptonshire.
- * **Interviews:** consultations were carried out with cultural providers, planners and local, regional and national cultural agencies to explore, in more depth, the existing plans and activities of organisations, their connections with others and their future development plans, whether inspirational or real.
- * **Workshops:** Workshops were held with the Northamptonshire Cultural Forum and the Museums Forum. Additional consultation workshops were held on the themes of 'Place-shaping and the Role of Culture' and 'Culture, Creativity, Competitiveness and Confidence', with a final 'Best Practice' workshop consisting of presentations from the Walsall Art Gallery, Idea Store, Birmingham Jewellery Quarter and the Digital Media Centre in Leicester.

2. CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE: AN OVERVIEW

This Section presents the current cultural infrastructure offer of West Northamptonshire. This is not intended as a detailed cultural audit, but as an overview of the range of cultural infrastructure in the sub region. The mapping includes not just vital cultural assets such as arts facilities and community facilities, but the broader cultural and creative infrastructure and asset base. The physical infrastructure and programmes that link the cultural ecology and wider creative economy, creative workspace and support services, the open spaces and public realm bind together and provide literal routes between the other physical assets and make a place attractive to people who live, work and visit.

The cultural assets are explored through seven infrastructure typologies, designed to group physical infrastructure and wider cultural organisational and programme activity, and developed following the desk research and consultations to reflect core arts and cultural infrastructure and broader cultural assets.

2.1 CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE TYPOLOGIES

The seven cultural infrastructure typologies have been developed to facilitate an assessment of the current cultural provision and to provide a baseline to explore the potential areas for investment. The typologies are based on key types of physical infrastructure seen as making a vital contribution to the cultural map of West Northamptonshire:

FIGURE 1: CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE TYPOLOGIES

- Type 1: Heritage**
Historic houses, gardens and suites, museums
- Type 2: Arts venues**
Galleries, theatres, live music venues, cinemas
- Type 3: Other creative spaces**
Cultural & creative workspaces
- Type 4: Community facilities**
Libraries, leisure centres, schools
- Type 5: Other community assets**
Village halls, churches, youth and community centres, cafes
- Type 6: Parks and open spaces**
Designated parks, public spaces
- Type 7: Festivals**
Events and community festival activity

Type 1: Heritage

- * Historic houses and gardens, such as: Althorp, Sulgrave Manor, 78Derngate, Coton Manor Gardens and others.
- * Heritage sites, such as: Naseby Battlefield, Towcester Mill and the many heritage buildings linked to the leather and shoe industry in Northampton.
- * Museums, such as: Northampton and Abington Park Museums and the local town and village museums.

Type 2: Arts venues

Dedicated arts venues including:

- * Art galleries
- * Theatres and performance auditoria, live music venues
- * Cinemas

Type 3: Other creative spaces

Additional arts and creative spaces, often smaller in scale and predominantly operating on a commercial basis, spaces such as:

- * Commercial galleries
- * Artists' and makers studios offering courses and workshops for other creative practitioners and members of the public
- * Creative incubation and business workspace such as that at Northampton University.

Type 4: Community Facilities

Community facilities that are cultural assets in their own right or play an important role as cultural connectors, providing cultural facilities themselves but also hosting cultural and creative activities, providing space for community creation, performance and exhibition. These facilities include libraries, sports and leisure centres and schools.

Type 5: Other Community Assets

Smaller community spaces that are used for cultural and creative activities:

- * Village halls
- * Churches
- * Youth and community centres
- * Pubs and cafes that play host to theatre and music performances
- * Exhibition spaces that also provide space for performance rehearsals and arts and creative workshops and discussions.

Type 6: Parks and Open Spaces

Designated parks and rural, suburban and urban public spaces.

Type 7: Festivals and Events

A theme that underpins all the infrastructure typologies, festivals and events provide space and programming for the sub regions festivals and events.

While the typologies are presented here as distinct groupings there is clearly some overlap. For example, the museums with art galleries form an overlap between Typology 1 and 2. However, within West Northamptonshire, the overlaps in typologies are currently quite limited.

An ideal for the future would be for more cross over (as recommended in the Investment Plan). For example, both Northampton Museum and Abingdon Museum have art galleries combining the heritage and arts venue typologies; community facilities such as libraries, leisure centres and schools, provide some spaces for exhibition, performance and rehearsal. The cross-overs of typologies are currently limited in West Northamptonshire but for 'fit for purpose' cultural infrastructure in the future, more mixed use (cross typology infrastructure) should be planned for.

2.2 THE CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

To build up a comprehensive picture of the whole cultural landscape in West Northamptonshire the typologies, although based on physical infrastructure themes, also consider the wider cultural activity, the cultural organisations providing programming to and activities in the many cultural venues and spaces (see Figure 2).

This allows the mapping to provide an overview of the whole cultural ecology with consideration of issues and options reflecting the crosscutting themes of quality, connectedness and inclusiveness.

FIGURE 2. THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Cultural Infrastructure: Heritage site, arts venues, creative spaces, community spaces – large and small, parks and open spaces.

Cultural organisations providing programming to and activities in cultural spaces and venues.

2.3 DISTRICT PROFILE OVERVIEWS

This Section presents the cultural infrastructure by typology of West Northamptonshire on a district by district basis, outlining some of the key assets under each typology, then examining the strengths and weaknesses, key partnerships and links with strategic agendas.

2.3.1 DAVENTRY DISTRICT

The district of Daventry covers an area of 666 kilometres square, bounded by Leicestershire to the north, Warwickshire to the west, the Northamptonshire districts of Kettering and Wellingborough to the east, Northampton and South Northamptonshire to the south. Daventry is the administrative headquarters and the largest town in this predominantly rural district.

Other significant settlements include Brixworth, Long Buckby and Weedon Bec. The district currently has a population of 78,200⁸. Daventry town has a population of 23,000 and this is set to grow to 40,000 by 2021.⁹ The Regional Spatial Strategy proposes 13,500 new dwellings between 2001 and 2026. 10,377 are still to be developed, 8,171 of these in Daventry town.

Currently, the creative economy is not a major force in the district. In 2005 1,160 people were employed in 350 Creative Industries in Daventry, representing just 3.5% of all employment in the

8. ONS Resident population estimates 2006.

9. www.investnorthamptonshire.co.uk May 2008.

district and 10% of all businesses. The sector has experienced growth at a faster rate than the economy as a whole.

The number of Creative Industries businesses grew by around 22% between 2001 and 2005, nearly twice the rate of growth in the district's economy as a whole, but employment in the sector grew by just 7.5% over the same period. This indicates that a high proportion of the new businesses were sole-traders. In the 2007 East Midlands Rural Creative Economy study 14% of those employed in creative sectors in the district are self-employed or sole traders. This is a higher percentage than in other rural areas of the East Midlands where the average is 8%¹⁰. Two major employers in Daventry include Cummins Engines Ltd and Ford Motors.

2.3.1.1 A CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE SNAPSHOT FOR DAVENTRY

Heritage:

- * The district has a strong heritage offer: 7 historic houses and gardens many privately owned. These include: Althorp, home of the Spencer family for over 500 years; Grade 1 listed Lamport Hall; Cottesbrooke Hall, reputed to be the inspiration for Jane Austen's 'Mansfield Park'; Coton Manor Gardens running full and half-day gardening courses; Haddonstone Gardens and Holdenby House Gardens and Falconry Centre. 18th century Kelmarsh Hall is an English Heritage Property.
- * There are also a number of important heritage sites. These include: Piddington Roman Villa, an ongoing archaeological excavation site with a small museum in a converted and deconsecrated local chapel, manned by volunteers at weekends; Burnt Walls, a Scheduled Ancient Monument with currently little to see, but included in the Daventry Masterplan as a site of important historical significance that should be maintained and promoted and; Naseby Battlefield site run by a registered charity and currently conducting a feasibility study for a visitor and interpretation centre.
- * Long Bucky Museum is run by volunteers of Long Bucky Heritage Society in the village hall. The Fire Services Museum want to expand and build a 'Fire World'. One of the main reasons they chose to locate themselves in Northamptonshire is its central location in the country and relative ease of access from most places. The lack of local authority museums in the district - the Daventry Museum closed in 2004 - is reflected in the BVPI for resident satisfaction with museums and galleries of just 19% for 2006/07. The Friends of Daventry Museum continue to receive donations to the collection which is open for a few hours two Saturdays a month.
- * Daventry is a historic market town with the only 18th-century town church in Northamptonshire - the Holy Cross. Moot Hall, built in 1769, stands on the north side of market square, but is currently unused. The lack of development across the district has left many of the villages with historic houses, churches, work and industrial buildings such as Weedon Depot group as vacant listed buildings.

Arts Venues:

- * There are no dedicated arts venues in the district performances and exhibitions take place in other spaces such as village halls, community centres and churches (see community assets below). Kelmarsh Hall has the Limeshed Gallery and a number of the other historic houses host exhibitions and concerts.
- * The district has no cinema.

10. BOP (2007) East Midlands Rural Creative Economy Study, ACE.

Other Creative Spaces:

- * Evergreen Gallery is a commercial art dealer in Daventry, but no other creative workspaces have been identified. However, plans have been agreed for the Innovation and Construction Centre (ICON) which will create a centre for knowledge workers and be the major showpiece development in Daventry.

Community Facilities:

- * Libraries: resident satisfaction with Daventry libraries was 73% in 2006/07¹¹ and library usage in Daventry District is the highest in the county. Libraries can be found in the towns and villages of Daventry, Brixworth, Long Buckby, Moulton and Woodford Halse. Redevelopment of Daventry library is proposed to accommodate the projected growth in the town's population. The redevelopment forms part of the County's plans to upgrade the libraries over the next 10 years. The current library houses PCT health trainers and a new policy is that no libraries of the future will be built in the County without another user. The vision for the new Daventry library is for a mixed use space with shifting, flexible features including meeting space, performance and exhibition space, local history and archive space. Digitalisation of the service and the learning offer will be at the heart of the new library which will also seek to engage with businesses through initiatives such as breakfast clubs.
- * Leisure Centres: the Saxon suite at the Daventry Leisure Centre was intended as a venue for music and performance but the 'poor sound-proofing' has limited the potential for event. Some comedy nights are held there.
- * Schools: no schools in the district have been identified as offering cultural spaces for wider community access. However, The Grange School and St. James Infant School are both Arts Council Artsmark schools with the former awarded Gold for their commitment and excellence in arts education.

Community Assets:

- * In the absence of arts venues and with communities spread across the district, local community centres, village halls and churches play a vital role in the cultural infrastructure of Daventry. They host performances and exhibitions and provide meeting, spaces. 17 such venues have been identified in this study (Eydon Village Hall, Harlestone Village Inst., Moulton Village Hall, Cold Ashby Memorial Hall, Nene Hall, Phoenix Youth Centre, Daventry Community Centre, Daventry Working Mens Club, Bugbrooke Sports and Community Centre, Upper Boddington Village Hall, All Hallows Church Lampport, Piddington Church, Holy Cross Church, St Peter and St Paul Church, United Reform Church Flore, St Nicholas Church, St Mary the Virgin Church), but there are likely to be more not identified in this study.
- * Fiori Musicali, Northamptonshire's principal provider and promoter of high quality professional classical music in predominantly rural venues, perform in five churches across the district.
- * Northants Touring, the rural and community theatre touring group for Northamptonshire are identified as performing in just one venue in the district recently - Harlestone Village Institute.
- * Northants Network Arts also hold workshops and exhibitions in venues including Piddington Church and Moulton Village Hall, while Love Ballet run ballet classes for all ages at Nene Hall, Upper Boddington Hall and Sky High Youth Theatre Company also use Nene Hall. There are likely to be other organisations using community spaces for cultural activities not identified through this research.
- * Local amateur groups and societies, such as the Daventry Players, Daventry Brass band, Daventry Choral Society and local historical societies use the churches and halls to meet.

11. BVPI.

- * There is a reported 'lively music scene' in the pubs and community spaces of Daventry, mainly in and around the town centre which contributes to night-time economy. Music projects are also a key way of engaging with young people. Several music projects in the district and across the county are achieving some real successes in this area. The Phoenix Youth Centre host live music night and run the Daventry Music Factory giving young people a chance to practice and develop their music skills. Performing Room, a county wide project, works with young people wanting to consider a career in the music industry. The latter is supported by Northamptonshire Community Foundation.

Northamptonshire Community Foundation

Since 2001, Northamptonshire Community Foundation has given over £2.25million to almost 700 groups. In 2007/08 they distributed £599,917 to 144 groups across the county.

Culture and creative activity is a key priority for the Foundation. They have invested more than £500,000 in projects supporting Northamptonshire arts, culture and heritage since 2001.

The Foundation is now focusing on building an independent endowment that will support the counties' Third Sector into the future through a new Friends of the Foundation scheme. Founder friends include Hewitsons, Grant Thornton, The University of Northampton, Howes Percival and Barnes Noble Edwards.

The have also set up a new dedicated Arts and Music Fund for.

Money4Youth

The national Money4Youth scheme has seen Daventry District council fund 30 youth projects since 2006. These have included the Brixworth Media Club, Braunston Youth Shelter, Crick Youth Group, Daventry District Music Sessions, Southbrook Sports Camp and Youth Cafe at Daventry's Phoenix Youth Centre, offering healthy food and internet access internet access.

Parks and Open Spaces:

- * As a predominantly rural district, Daventry has a wealth of open spaces. It has a number of designated country parks: Brixworth and Daventry Country Parks; Hunsbury Hill Park, dominated by the crown of an Iron Age hill fort and Daventry Wood. In 2006/07 Daventry residents' satisfaction in parks and open spaces was above the national average at 73%.
- * The ranger services at the borough and country park – are working to embed culture in their programming, developing activities to attract and engage visitors such as Easter craft activities and Christmas carols.
- * The Grand Union Canal cuts through Daventry providing waterside walks. Crick Marina has recently completed its extension and now has 270 berths for narrow boats. The annual Crick Boat Show is recognised as being the UK's premier inland waterways event. Organised by British Waterways and Richmond Event Management, the show attracts 1000's of visitors to the marina each year.

Festivals and Events:

- * As part of the Althorp Literary Festival Fiori Musicali are performing in the Picture Gallery at Althorp. In July 2008 the annual English Heritage Festival of History was held at Kelmarsh Hall. Other festivals in the district include Moulton Village Festival and Spratton Folk Music Festival.

2.3.1.2 DAVENTRY DISTRICT CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROFILE				
Infrastructure typology	Strengths	Weakness	Partnerships and networks	Connections with strategic agendas
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic houses and heritage sites are a major attractor of local, national and international visitors. Historic houses provide venues for cultural events Historic houses provide venues for business conferences Historic fabric of the area is an attraction for people and businesses considering location in the area. The heritage sector provides volunteering opportunities (e.g. local historic societies, Kelmarsh Gardening project) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage offer is largely seasonal, historic houses only opening in the summer Voluntary nature of local historic sector means lack of capacity for strategic development Lack of engagement between public and private sector mean not all sites benefit from the visitors brought in by some of the historic houses Underuse and misuse of some historic buildings Sites are largely dependent on car users excluding some members of the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Museum Forum – limited membership among Daventry heritage sector Daventry District Museums Consortium has been set up led by Friends of Daventry museum – includes members of Long Buckby and Brixworth historical societies Piddington Villa have developed a loan resources linked to a healthy eating centre Naseby are members of the Destination Management Partnerships for the County. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteering – meets skills development and community cohesion agendas (Northamptonshire’s museums currently offering 3000 volunteering opportunities¹²).
Arts venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of heritage and community buildings for arts activities takes arts to a wide audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No arts venues - Historic under investment in arts and cultural services Daventry district residents travel out of the county to Rugby and Milton Keynes for arts 		
Other creative spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICON – creating a new knowledge worker hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of creative workspaces 		
Community facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library usage in Daventry is the highest in the county - High level of satisfaction with libraries services – 73% of residents satisfied The Grange School Daventry is an Artsmark Gold School Leisure Centres well used for sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library facilities not fit for purpose for 21st century library - lack of digitalisation Lack of at status schools and low level achievement of Arts Council Artsmark awarded for excellence in arts education Use of leisure centre for additional cultural activity no maximised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A partnership along the lines of that of Kingston Library and the Learning and Skills Council is being explored for the proposed learning zone in the new library. Library will not be built without a co-user. Daventry library is currently shared with health workers. 16 Northamptonshire libraries are combined with health trusts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed new library fulfilling strategic aims of County Library Strategy and delivering against central and local government policy priorities – diversity, inclusion, early years and family learning, school aged children, adult learning and skills development and health

12. Northamptonshire Museums Development Report 2007.

2.3.1.2 DAVENTRY DISTRICT CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROFILE				
Infrastructure typology	Strengths	Weakness	Partnerships and networks	Connections with strategic agendas
Community assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Strong network of well used village halls across the district. Used for cultural and broader community activities. * Lively music scene in pubs and community space successfully engaging young people – Phoenix Youth Centre Performin Room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Some of the halls and community centres are not fit for purpose – limited facilities for exhibition and performance – and need investment * Halls and centres are close to local populations so can be accessed easily by those living near, often without the use of a car 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) village hall service network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Community assets meet community cohesion agendas, inclusion and other 'quality of life' agendas * Engaging young people through the arts such as Daventry Music Factory and Performin Room and achieves local and national priorities for skills development and DCMS strategic aims for unlocking and nurturing creative talent * Meeting environmental agendas reducing the need for use of cars
Parks and open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The rural nature of the district is an attraction for visitors, existing and future residents - Crick Marina, year round mooring for up to 270 narrow boats with annual boat show bringing in 1000's of visitors Grand Union Canal 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Daventry Town Centre Partnership has seen businesses come together to propose a Business Improvement District to make the town centre cleaner, safer more attractive place to do business and visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Healthy living and quality of life agendas * Tourism Strategy
Festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Festivals on a range of scales – nationally focused Althorp literary festival, English Heritage History Festival and local level such as Moulton Village Festival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lack of co-ordinated promotion of festivals and events 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Tourism

2.3.1.3 OVERVIEW OF DAVENTRY'S CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The historic under-resourcing of the cultural sector in Daventry, has resulted in considerable gaps in the cultural infrastructure. There are no dedicated arts venues in the district. The absence of exhibition and performance spaces means that alternative community spaces such as village halls, churches and community centres are widely used for theatre, music and art, by touring performances and local community and amateur groups.

Arts Council England Funding Analysis

ACE analysis of grants March 2004 – November 2005, found three of Northamptonshire's most rural districts – Daventry, East and South Northamptonshire - lagging behind the rest of the county in terms of grants made. Although they have 37% of county population they received just 11% of ACE Grants for the Arts made to the county (Brooks and Matarasso 2006)

There is currently limited cultural infrastructure in Daventry town centre itself with many of the district's residents travelling to Rugby and Milton Keynes for their cultural activity. By 2021 the population of Daventry town will be up to 40,000 and in order for a cohesive community to be developed people will need a place to meet and connect.

The proposals for the wider redevelopment of Daventry Town Centre include the extension of the Grand Union Canal into the north of the town, creating new open public spaces and business and leisure facilities linked to new residential development and expansion of Daventry country Park. A unique transport pilot has also been given the go ahead. From 2011 electric, driverless 'Pods' will be travelling around the town on pre-laid tracks. Passengers will call a pod to a stop, and be taken directly to where they want to go at speeds of up to 40 mph. Daventry will be the first city in the world to have a pod network and are joining the city reference group of the EU-funded CityMobil project, which is looking at new forms of transport in urban areas. Daventry wants to be a place where high technology, leading-edge companies come and invest, creating good and interesting local jobs.

“Instead of simply holding up a sign saying ‘innovative companies please come’ – you have to show them why, and that is what we have been doing.”

(DDC's economic and regeneration portfolio holder Cllr Chris Over, February 2008)¹³.



PUBLIC REALM EDINBURGH

¹³. Green Light for Pod Test Track, Daventry Express 23 February 2008.

2.3.1.4 CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN DAVENTRY

- * The Master-plan for Daventry Town Centre includes a leisure quarter with new library offering the potential for a mixed-use development. Recommendations for ‘discovery centres’ are outlined in the county libraries strategy¹⁴. The vision for the library is for a community focused building offering a range of services – Learning Zone with LSC funded courses, Health Zone through links with PCT, relaxation spaces, exhibition and performance spaces, a business centre with meeting space for hire. In addition a floor dedicated to Sense of Place – Daventry’s Past - local history information, family history and community archive with displays involving community groups; Discover Daventry - information on what’s on in the local area; Connect with Daventry – information on volunteering in the community and the library, spaces for sessions with councillors from Parish, District and County councils
- * The new Learning Quarter proposed on Ashby Road have dropped proposals to incorporate a new youth centre and community centre. The tight timescale for the £30 million bid to the Learning and Skills Council has meant a necessary focus on educational provision with the wider community facility being shelved. The 1960’s buildings housing the Phoenix Youth Centre and Daventry Community Centre are set to remain for the foreseeable future but additional funding will be sought for rebuilding.
- * The new ‘pod’ transport system, if it goes forward, will link cultural facilities and open spaces across the town centre – iHUB will be the major showpiece new development in Daventry. A knowledge worker hub for the construction industry and ‘iconic’ building
- * Waterspace: proposed extension of Grand Union Canal outlined in the Daventry Master Plan linked to the expansion of Daventry Country Park and new expansion and residential development in the north of Daventry town
- * Naseby Battle Field: new viewing platforms opened and NEL funded visitor centre feasibility under way
- * The Lift Project is identified as offering opportunities for culture along with the Stanford upon Avon Equestrian Centre¹⁵.



WORLD NAKED CYCLING TOUR BRIGHTON

14. Libraries Going Forward: A Strategy for Libraries in Northamptonshire 2008-2018

15. Arts Council and NCC (2007) Prospectus for Culture.

2.3.2 NORTHAMPTON

The Borough of Northampton covers an area of 80.76 kilometres square and has a population of 200,100¹⁶. It is the 21st largest settlement in England and is the UK's third-largest town without official city status after Reading and Dudley. Northampton is the most populous district in England not a unitary authority. The Regional Spatial Strategy sets the number of new dwellings in Northampton at a total of 40,375 by 2026. 13,350 of these had been completed by April 2007 leaving just under three quarters to be developed under WNDC over the next 18 years.

Once a major centre of shoemaking and other leather industries, Northampton's main sectors of employment now are finance and distribution with companies such as Nationwide Building Society, Barclaycard and Coca Cola Schweppes. However, the few remaining specialist shoemaking companies, such as Church's and Crocket and Jones who make shoes for Ralph Lauren, mean Northampton is still seen as an important player in global 'high-end' and designer shoe market.

In terms of the overall creative economy, Northampton, along with Nottingham, Leicester and Derby has one of the highest levels of creative industries employment in the East Midlands¹⁷. The town has also been identified as having the third largest concentration of creative industry businesses in the Milton Keynes South Midlands growth area after Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale.¹⁸

In research commissioned by the East Midlands Cultural Observatory, the majority of creative industry businesses in the East Midlands urban districts were found to be small. In 2005 around 90% employed between 1 and 10 people in 2005, with less than 2% of creative businesses in East Midland urban areas employing between 50 and 199 people and less than 0.5% employing 200 people or more.¹⁹

2.3.2.1 A CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE SNAPSHOT FOR NORTHAMPTON

Heritage:

- * Northampton's key historic house is 78 Derngate, the Charles Rennie Mackintosh designed house, which has recently undergone renovation and expansion with a new contemporary gallery space added.
- * Delapre Abbey and Gardens, the Town Hall and the historic fabric of industrial buildings that were part of former leather industry in the town, 35 buildings in total²⁰, are just some of the additional heritage assets of Northampton. In addition, the Northampton & Lamport Railway, a steam and heritage diesel operated tourist railway, is located just 5 miles from Northampton.
- * The borough has two museums: Northampton Museum and Gallery and Abingdon Park Museum and Gallery. The former has a 'world famous shoe collection' linked to the history of the town and a prestigious collection of Italian Art. Abingdon Museum, housed in the Grade 1 listed building, has a local life exhibition, a 19th century fashion gallery and displays some of the Council's Museum of Leather craft collection.

16. ONS Resident population estimates 2006.

17. BOP March 2008, East Midlands Urban and Regional Creative Industries Data Study, for East Midlands Cultural Observatory, in partnership with EM Media and EMDA,

18. New Media Partners (2007) Creative Industries Milton Keynes South Midlands, Arts Council (East Midlands, East and South East).

19. March 2008, East Midlands Urban and Regional Creative Industries Data Study, for East Midlands Cultural Observatory, in partnership with EM Media and EMDA,

20. Leather Heaven study.

Arts venues:

- * Northampton has West Northamptonshire's only arts venues. The newly redeveloped Royal and Derngate Theatre is currently the town's main cultural asset, attracting 350,000 visitors in 2007. Other performance venues in Northampton include the Playhouse Theatre, an 84 seat theatre hosting amateur dramatic performances throughout the year; the Deco a performance space for voluntary and community groups and; two community theatres at Northampton Girls' School - Spinney Hall Theatre - and Northampton Boys' School - Crisp Theatre.
- * Until the end of May 2008 Northampton had two music venues - Roadmender and Soundhaus - both run by purplehaus. Soundhaus held its final night on 23rd May featuring local bands that had performed there during the previous 9 years. A new and extended Roadmender now has three performance spaces and is now capable of holding two gigs at once. Rockin Roadmender was music event for people with disabilities.
- * A number of other small venues are used for contemporary music performance in Northampton including the Labour Club and Racehorse. Other spaces used for music performance and rehearsal include the privately run Picturedrome which is hosting the World Music Week in June 2008 and NCC Arts and Music Centre which runs instrumental classes and rehearsals for the county's numerous young people's orchestras and bands.
- * Northampton lacks a properly resourced 'quality' art gallery. The Fishmarket, 'the largest gallery outside a City in the UK', currently only opens 3 days a week. There are a number of additional gallery spaces but none of a size or standing that befits a town with the projected growth of Northampton. The new contemporary arts gallery recently opened at 78 Derngate and there are galleries at Artists' Sanctuary on Clare Street, at the University, and at Northampton and Abingdon Museums.

Other Creative Spaces:

- * Creative workspaces in Northampton are limited. 25 businesses are based at the Portfolio Innovation Centre at the University and this is set to rise to 45 in the phase of the centre's development and the Artists' Sanctuary on Clare Street houses artists in 12 studios. A small number of creative businesses are located at the Fishmarket, some both selling products, running workshops and providing exhibition space - Cerenade Ceramics hold ceramics workshops; Kismet design one-off pieces of clothing and run sewing workshops and; Wanderlust bookshop hold regular exhibitions.
- * Other visual arts and craft based creative spaces and businesses identified include the Magnolia Pottery and Craft Studios; Gallery 58, Bridge Street; the Druidston Gallery and Framers, the Ridings Arcade and; the Primrose Gallery on Clare Street that also run painting classes. Shock Collective is a group of local DJs, musicians and music producers who organised the Middle of Nowhere Music Festival held at venues throughout Northampton on May 2008. Reelscape Film is a new Northampton based film production. Threshold Studios, the media professional led social enterprise, provide support and development for emerging media talent across the east Midlands.

Community Facilities:

- * Northampton libraries include: the Central Library, Hunnsbury, Duston, St James and the new Far Cotton library co-located with the PCT to serve the Far Cotton community. Plans for the redevelopment of the central library are yet to be agreed but the vision is for a 'first class flagship library for the 21st century, co-located with one or more services or facilities - health, learning, arts, museum - with options for a satellite University connection, retail and leisure facilities including sports centre, café, shop, Tourist Information, resources for historians, job seekers and businesses are being explored.
- * Leisure centres in the borough include Lings Forum, Danes Camp and the art deco Mounts Bath.
- * Northampton Boys and Girls Schools have theatres that serve the schools and the wider community. Northants Touring are performing at Preston Hedges School, Wootton Fields (with funding for the tour cut by the Council this performance is paid for directly).

- * Several Northampton schools have been awarded Arts Council Artsmark for excellence in arts education. Awards in 2008 include; Fairfields School, Hackleton CE Primary School and Hartwell CE Primary School all awarded gold, Hopping Hill Primary School and Queen Eleanor Primary School awarded silver.

Community Assets:

- * The borough manages 20 community centres, with parish councils and other groups and associations running a network of village halls. Those identified as hosting cultural activities include Kingsthorpe and Hardington Village Halls, though it is likely that considerable cultural activity in community spaces has not been picked up through this study.
- * Masque Theatre, one of the Northampton's long established drama groups, took a production on tour of four venues in early 2008: the Double Top Club, The Racehorse Pub, Weston Favell Parish Hall and the Earls Barton Village Hall.
- * Numerous other spaces are used for community arts activity and performance. Seahouses run art activities for all ages at Delapre Abbey with an Arts for All grant. The weekly classes between March and September will result in a sculpture display in the walled garden of Delapre Abbey towards the end of summer. Northampton Festival Opera and Northampton Bach choir perform in churches and other venues throughout the year.

Parks and Open Spaces:

- * The borough of Northampton has 161 parks and open spaces. Some of the main parks are run by the local authority - Abington Park, Beckett's Park, Bradlaugh Fields, Delapre Park, Eastfield Park, Kingsthorpe Park.
- * Northampton Racecourse is Northampton's largest park, next to the University of Northampton, in the northern part of the town
- * At the heart of the town centre the market square currently an under-used civic space.

Festivals and Events:

Northampton has an increasing number of festivals taking place in venues and open spaces across the town and the suburbs and representing all art forms. In 2008 new festivals include:

- * The Middle of Nowhere Music Festival, four days of music, art, films, workshops, 1-4th May at the Fishmarket, the Forum cinema at the University, Abingdon Park and Roadmender;
- * The 3 month long Venezia Festival run by Northampton Museum and based on their collection of Italian art. The event is a public/private partnership, with Hewitsons, one of the regions largest law firms, the main sponsor. Alongside the exhibitions and activities at the Museum there is a programme of events and activities making use of venues and spaces across the town, from a food fair in the market square to music, opera and theatre in the shopping centre, churches, the museum and a Grand Masked Ball in Northampton's Guildhall.

The more established festivals and events include:

- * Northampton Music & Arts Festival now in its 10th year, is month-long series of events ranging from live music to arts exhibitions and theatre in the June. With additional funding from The Arts Council the organisers have employed an Artistic Director. This there has been better collaboration with other events such as Music Week organised by Wise and Barking the Town Show and the Northampton Carnival all sharing the bill. The full range of venues and spaces will be used from Carnival at Delapre Park
- * Northamptonshire Children and Young People's Festival is a three day celebration of the best in Arts education from Northamptonshire with performances at the Derngate.

2.3.2.2 NORTHAMPTON CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROFILE				
Infrastructure typology	Strengths	Weakness	Partnerships and networks	Connections with strategic agendas
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The heritage infrastructure and leather and shoemaking history provide a real opportunity for the town * Shoe and leather collections * Mixing the historic with the contemporary at 78 Derrigate * Ambition for Northampton Museum to become the County Museum and gain national museum status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lack of overall coordination and vision for heritage to date * Museum offer currently quite poor, only 58% satisfaction rating among residents²¹ – Reduction in visits to/usage of local authority funded or part funded museums per 1,000 residents - In 2006/07 863, down from 1,287 in 2005/06 * 30% drop in 2006/07 of school pupils visiting museums and galleries in organised school groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Northamptonshire's Renaissance Museums Officer is based at Northampton Museum (co-hosted by NCC), bringing the County Museums and heritage sites together * Public/private partnership support for Venezia Festival – partnership model to be built on for funding future events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Gaining National Museum status is a priority within the borough's Corporate Plan * Programmes such as Hidden Festivals, an oral history programme at Northampton Museum and Seahouses sculpture project at Delapre Abbey are successfully engaging communities through cultural activity and helping to reach LAA participation targets and community cohesion priorities
Arts venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The redeveloped Royal and Derrigate has given the town a major new asset at the heart of the town centre * Royal and Derrigate is a producing theatre, an important resource for the county, with a production in West End this autumn * Roadmender is an important as the only dedicated contemporary music venue in the University town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 67% satisfaction rating of local authority arts activities and venues, down from 72% in the previous year * One of key challenges is that there are a number of theatre venues in the region working in isolation and competing, to some degree, for audiences * Royal and Derrigate receives the least funding of all theatres of the East Midlands * Lack of good visual arts venue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Royal and Derrigate has good connections with national cultural organisations - Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Rambert Ballet perform at the R&D. 	

21. BVPI 2006/07.

2.3.2.2 NORTHAMPTON CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROFILE				
Infrastructure typology	Strengths	Weakness	Partnerships and networks	Connections with strategic agendas
Other creative spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Portfolio Innovation Centre run mentoring and business support for their businesses nurturing the growth and development of local businesses * The businesses at PIC offer skills development opportunities for University Students through internships * Planned expansion of Innovation Centre * Creative sector growing and businesses moving in from outside the area * PIC report that the majority of the businesses come from outside Northampton * Award winning media social enterprise Threshold Studios are based in Northampton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lack of overall plan for developing the local creative economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * PIC is linked to East Midlands Incubation network * Businesses at PIC work together – jewellery designer had website designed by one business and photographs taken PIC based photographer – demonstrating that ‘clustering’ of businesses leads to inter trading and collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Portfolio Innovation Centre and threshold addressing skills and creative businesses development priorities in DCMS strategy Creative Britain * Threshold also working to meet community cohesion and regeneration priorities
Community facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 74% satisfaction with libraries in 2006/07 Art deco Mount baths – highly regarded by architects 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Far Cotton library in Northampton: new community build library with PCT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Far Cotton example meeting priority for collocation in Library Strategy
Community assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Community centres, village halls, churches and community assets as important part of the cultural facility mix allowing for community level activity * Other venues such as Deco and Picturedrome are key assets for music and theatre performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Organisations facing challenges with securing funding resulting in some reduction of community performance (Northants touring Fiori Musical) and possibly participation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Links to social inclusion, community cohesion and important for delivering LAA target for increased participation in arts activity

2.3.2.2 NORTHAMPTON CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROFILE				
Infrastructure typology	Strengths	Weakness	Partnerships and networks	Connections with strategic agendas
Parks and open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Large number of open spaces * Master plans for development of open spaces - the Racecourse, the town centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Quality of some of open spaces is poor especially in the town centre. The market square is underused, public realm unattractive making people feel unsafe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * River Nene Regional Park connects and funds open space initiatives – the healthy living initiatives at the Racecourse; a selfguided leaflet to Delapre Abbey gardens produced by Friends of Delapre Abbey; Barnes Meadows – under RINRP levered in funding to improve the biodiversity of this local nature reserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Links to healthy living agendas
Festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Numerous festivals both artists, local authority and privately led * Securing private sponsorship for Venezia. A funding model to build on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lack of co-ordinated promotion of festivals, although some steps have been made to address this through the Town Show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Collaboration between Northampton Arts Festival and other events, the Town Show, Music Week etc, around joint promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Links to Tourism Strategy

2.3.2.3 OVERVIEW OF NORTHAMPTON'S CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

In recent years there have been some major developments in Northampton town centre and considerable investment in the cultural infrastructure - £15 million redevelopment of the Royal and Derngate Theatre, the new gallery development at 78 Derngate and first stage development of the Fishmarket. However, the developments have been piece meal and there has been a lack of an overall, coherent plan for a much needed transformation of the public realm and infrastructure of the town centre area.

Funding of arts in Northampton is below the national average with both local authorities and Arts Council providing less funding than elsewhere in the East Midlands region (Brooks and Matarasso 2006). However, The Royal and Derngate (an Arts Council England Regularly Funded Organisation) is set to receive just over £2.2 million over 3 years (2008/09 to 2010/11). Threshold, also an RFO, will receive ACE funding of £107,860 over the same period.

The Royal and Derngate, the Fishmarket and Northampton Museum and Art Gallery are important assets not only for the borough but for the county and wider region as a whole. These three, along with the Northamptonshire Records Office, were identified as being regionally significant cultural facilities by the people of North Northamptonshire (EDAW report).

Challenges with funding leaves the borough in a weak position, in terms of the cultural offer and the role culture can potentially play in place making and transformation, now and in the future. There is concern that the lack of funding will threaten the future sustainability of the cultural infrastructure offer and place additional pressures in the areas of Arts and Sports Development and ongoing support for the voluntary and community cultural sector²². But there are real opportunities to build on the cultural assets, the arts venues and the heritage – as explored in the Investment Plan.

An Audience Development Programme for Museums

Northampton Museum and Art Gallery are working with the Renaissance East Midlands and other museums and galleries in the County, on an audience development programme seeking to better understand their potential audience and how to attract them. There are clearly lessons that could be learnt by other cultural organisations in Northampton from this work.

Northampton Museum found that C2DE socially graded communities (skilled working class, working class and those on the lowest level of subsistence) in Northampton which make up 44.3% of residents and were a group not currently being targeted by the museum. They are also further exploring Northampton's Eastern European community, the largest outside London.

²². Arts Council and NCC (2007) Prospectus for Culture.

Potential audience for culture in Northampton

Over 3.8 million people live within a 60 minute drive time of Northampton. This covers a large area, reaching from Watford in the south to Leicester in the north. In the west, it reaches as far as Oxford and Birmingham, while in the east, it encompasses Peterborough.

According to ACE area profile stats 2007, of these people:

- * 18.5% (711,841 people) visited a museum in the last 12 month
- * 17.4% (667,822 people) visited a stately home in the last 12 months
- * 4.7% (179,687 people) visited an archaeological site in the last 12 months
- * 24.1% (927,293 people) attended two arts events in the last 12 months

Of the Northampton total population:

- * 18.1% (36,092 people) visited a museum in the last 12 months
- * 16% (31,872) visited a stately home
- * 4.5% (8,875) visited an archaeological site
- * 22.8% (45,400) attended two arts events (the Royal and Derngate were thought to be closed during

2.3.2.4 CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHAMPTON

- * **Leather Heaven:** NEL funded study of opportunity to develop heritage and future development of leather industry. Three key areas identified: support and development for current industry; developing specialist leather knowledge community with international links; developing leather visitor attractions – town centre’s leather heritage linked to development of Northampton Museum and Art Gallery and University and creation of craft studios/specialist retail and sector development²³. The Leather Heaven proposal currently being researched, combines support and development of the existing leather industry with a heritage and visitor attraction, linked to Northampton University art, design, footwear and leather departments.
- * Northampton Museum applying for National Museum status is a key priority in the Borough Corporate Plan. The Leather Museum is a separate institution but managed by Northampton museum. They would need to be brought into any National Museum proposition – to give critical mass, depth and breadth. If National Museum status was gained it would be preferable to move into the proposed St John’s cultural quarter, with a new iconic building. There needs to be some rationalisation and focus of the Museum proposal for Northampton Abington Park Museum is also being considered for redevelopment with applications for funding a feasibility study already made. To get National Museum status, there will need to be a great deal of feasibility work and partnership development. But the opportunity is there and with the right partners, location, mix of offer the museum could be the real ‘jewel in the crown’ of a transformed Northampton, the anchor for the cultural quarter, and a direct driver of CI and cultural tourism. They would like the V&A or other to be a lead partner.

²³. Dr Mark Wilkinson, Professor Mike Redwood, Terry Hanby (2008) Developing the Leather Industry in Northampton, NEL (as yet unpublished).

- * Arts Centre Concept - a mixed use arts venue at the University. Part of University Masterplan is to build on the current successful cinema screenings (run in connection with the forum Cinema), and provide a gallery, exhibition and performance space within a huge atrium covering the court yard similar to Peninsular arts in Plymouth.
- * Continued development of the Fishmarket as a mixed use venue for visual culture in the town centre.
- * Improved public realm in town centre making the place feel safer and more attractive. Need to bring in people, moving CC offices to town centre will help to do this. Opportunity for events in the market square.
- * 36 Guildhall Road, Northampton, may now be brought back into use as The Chrysalis Centre with a mixture of move-on Creative Industries workspace and activity space, shops, and gallery.
- * Raise profile of the Royal and Derngate theatres developing audiences and exploit opportunities of the new performing and exhibition spaces.
- * Public realm improvement opportunities across town centre developments provide a real opportunity to improve quality and commission new art works that work to reposition the identity and increase the confidence of the town.

2.3.5 SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

The district of South Northamptonshire covers an area of 634 kilometres square. The district is mainly rural and fairly sparsely populated with a total population of just over 88,800²⁴ people. The largest town in the district is Brackley, with a population of nearly 13,500²⁵, followed by Towcester where recent estimates put the population at nearly 10,000.²⁶ Other significant places include Middleton Cheney. The Regional Spatial Strategy set housing growth targets for South Northamptonshire at 8,250 by 2026. After April 2007, 6,263 still needed to be built, just over half of these (3,166) the responsibility of WNDC in Towcester.

The current creative economy in South Northamptonshire is not particularly significant, but it is growing. Just 11% of the stock of all (VATregistered) businesses in the district, were creative industries business in 2005 and the sector represented just 5% of all employment in the district. However, creative industries employment has grown by over 50% between 2001 and 2005 – much higher than overall employment growth in the district's economy as a whole, but the number of businesses grew by just 14% over the same period suggesting an expansion in the employment by larger companies. 9% of creative industries workers in South Northamptonshire are sole traders or self-employed²⁷. Creative industries businesses are concentrated around the towns of Brackley and Towcester.

The district has two major sporting venues, Towcester Race Course and Silverstone Race Track that bring thousands of people to the area each year and create considerable employment. However, with the announcement that the British Grand Prix is to move (at least temporarily) to Donington Park in Derbyshire, there is a real need to raise the cultural offer of the area and celebrate its strengths and the opportunities it presents – in the face of this bad news.

24. ONS 2006 estimate.

25. 2001 Census.

26. www.towcester-partnership.org May 2008.

27. BOP 2007 East Midlands Rural Creative Industries Study, ACE EM.

2.3.3.1 A CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE SNAPSHOT FOR SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Heritage:

- * Three historic houses have been identified – privately run Sulgrave Manor which has a programme of events between April and October and an education programme which sees 11,000 school children visit; the National Trust’s Cannons Ashby and; Castle Ashby – now an event venue.
- * Brackley and Towcester are both historic market towns and the Towcester Mill is a heritage site in its right. Stoke Park Pavilions is another important historic site - two surviving 17th century pavilions and a colonnade by Inigo Jones, surviving from one of the first Palladian houses in Britain – open for events.
- * Towcester Museum currently has a bid in with the HLF for an £880,000 project to build a ‘museum of the people’. They will find out in September if they have been successful. Much of the work on the bid and the consultations have been driven by local groups including Friends of Towcester Museum, Towcester Museum Group, Towcester and District Historic Society. Another important museum in South Northamptonshire is the Stoke Bruerne Canal Museum. Run by the Waterways Trust, is it housed in a historic mill and that has undergone recent development and has plans for further expansion

Arts Venues:

- * There are no arts venues in South Northamptonshire. Activity is centred around community facilities and community assets (see below)

Other Creative Spaces:

- * Clark Gallery: a commercial art gallery in Towcester and The Portrait Gallery – a studio/gallery showing the work of resident artists Rob Chilcott. No other commercial or creative businesses workspaces identified.
- * Max Mara has bought one of the old/stately homes outside Towcester and has plans to locate there a design centre (in house purpose) by using the stables to house designer’s space.
- * The Silverstone Innovation Centre is a key ‘creative’ workspace in the run by Oxford Innovation.

Community Facilities:

- * Libraries - Brackley, Middleton Cheney, Roade, Towcester and Deanshanger with the latter two scheduled for development.
- * Leisure facilities used as performance spaces - Brackley Football Club used by Northants Touring, Brackley Leisure Centre used by possibilities youth band.
- * Schools - Chenderit School, a visual arts status school in Banbury, just within the South Northamptonshire border, has a purpose built exhibition space, the Michael Heseltine Gallery opened in 2003. Exhibitions by contemporary artists, craftspeople, and photographers are open to the public during school terms. Private individuals, artists or art societies can book the gallery space for their own exhibitions during school holidays. Talks by the exhibiting artists held for students and wider community.
- * Schools are also used by amateur dramatics groups in the district. The Brackley Players perform at Southfield Schools in Brackley and the Hardington Players perform at Champion School, Bugbrooke.

Community Assets:

- * In the absence of arts venues in the district, a network of village halls and community centres are used for theatre and music performances and rehearsals and exhibitions. Village Halls and community centres identified through this study include; Charlton Memorial Hall, Farthinghoe Village Hall, Lois Weedon Village Hall, King's Sutton Memorial Hall, Middleton Cheney Village Hall, Paulerspury Village Hall, Wappenham Village Hall, Blakesley and Woodend Village Hall, Croughton Village Hall and Towcester Community Centre.
- * Local amateur groups identified as using the spaces include Weston and Weedon Drama Group, Lynden Players, Paulerspury Players, Towcester and District Arts Society. With funding from South Northamptonshire Council, touring companies Northants Touring and Fiori Musicali perform across the district in village halls as well as in Stoke Pavilions and local churches – St Mary Magdalene Church, St Mary the Virgin Church, Hinton in the Hedges Church, St Lawrence Church. Northants Touring also performed in Helmdon Reading Room.
- * Pubs and cafes are also an important part of the community assets. The Vision Cafe in Towcester has been used as venues for the Possibilities under 18 band tour.

Parks and Open Spaces:

- * South Northamptonshire is a rural district so there are swathes of open countryside. The Grand Union Canal and the River Tove are waterways in the district. The Forestry Commission woods, Whittle Wood, Bucknell Wood, Hazelborough Wood and Royal Salcey Forest are all found in South Northamptonshire. The latter, a remnant of the medieval royal hunting forest, has seen recent investment in 'tree top' walks.

Festivals and Events:

- * Festivals in South Northamptonshire include the annual Brackley Music Festival taking place in the first two weeks in July; the weekend Midsummer Music Festival at various venues in Towcester; the Chacombe Music Festival the first weekend in July and the annual King's Sutton Literary Festival.



CARNIVAL LUTON

Grange Park – an Arts Strategy for a New Community

Grange Park is a new residential (1,500 homes), retail and community development next to the M1 motorway in South Northamptonshire. First conceived in the early 1990's, it wasn't until 1998 that the plans for the earlier development phases of the village were finalised. The Section 106 planning agreement dated 8th May 1998 represented the agreement between all interested parties including the various owners of the land which is now the village of Grange Park. The establishment of the Grange Park Foundation was a critical element of the section 106 agreement. The Foundation was a formal partnership between business, the landowner, South Northamptonshire Council and existing local communities and it included the full range of house builders and commercial developers: ProLogis, Henry Davidson, Bellway West Midlands, Bellway Northern Home Counties, Westbury Homes, Bryant Homes West Midlands, Henry Boot Homes, McClean Homes, Kings Oak, and Wimpey.

The foundation was officially wound up at the end of March 2003, but its achievements were recognised in an award from the East Midlands Branch of the Royal Town Planning Institute for Racial Equality/Social Inclusion. In 2002 Grange Park Parish Council was established.

The main aim of the Foundation was to ensure that the development did not become a series of disconnected housing estates so a public art commissioning project was set up to create a sense of place and character for this new community. The commission brought artists in to work closely with other design professionals and the community from a very early stage of the development. There have been two main elements to the project. The first was an incremental programme of commissions engaging artists from a range of disciplines in the creation of artworks for the pathways and pedestrian routes through the 80-plus hectare site. In year one, an artist will be appointed to create a highly visual master plan for artistic opportunities on the site through a programme of community participatory activities. The artist will make a series of site specific commissions, which make reference to the history of the site, respond to the rural or built environment and consider the function of the space. The master plan will generate opportunities for other artists to contribute to what may become a trail through the development.

The second part of the project is concerned with the district centre, where there is a joint responsibility for developers to create facilities and amenities for residents. Zoe Chamberlain was appointed to the district centre design team to contribute to and communicate decisions about this pivotal area of the development. Working with the different stakeholders in the project it was agreed that a focal point feature for Grange Park should be created. Following consideration of how people might use the site by day and by night; the contrast of its rural, yet urban, location and characteristics and; the new human community set to populate the place, as well as the plants and animal colonies, Zoe developed ideas with the design team and decided on a final sculpture consisting of two clusters of illuminated reed forms inhabiting the two focal areas of the District Centre.

The concepts developed through the art project have influenced design proposals for other functional aspects of the scheme. In particular the architect has designed a signage framework inspired by the 'reed forms' for recommended use by the shop tenants and the Developer. An opportunity to include a bespoke railing by artist Iris Bertz designed was also created. The inclusion of the railings in the District Centre has secured their use elsewhere, creating a design continuity that reinforces the District Centre at the heart of the development.

2.3.3.2 SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROFILE				
Infrastructure typology	Strengths	Weakness	Partnerships and networks	Connections with strategic agendas
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Sulgrave Manor and Cannons Ashby draw national and international visitors * Stoke Bruerne: the 'national canal museum' is a big tourism draw. * Potential investment in Towcester Museum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lack of connection between different heritage assets within the district and beyond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Stoke Bruerne - partners 2 other museums (to give it its national status), British waterways is the key stakeholder * Stoke Bruerne are members of Northamptonshire Museum Forum * As the ancestral home of George Washington, Sulgrave retains connections to the US American History, Literature and Institutions. * Sulgrave hosted the Big Draw in 2007; the annual national event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Stoke Bruerne contributing to skills development through schools projects and craft courses, including narrowboat decoration and fender-making, throughout the year.
Arts venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Aspirations for an arts venue in Towcester Town Centre – could be part of library/community centre redevelopment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * No arts venues in the district 		
Other creative spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Max Mara are reported to have bought an old stately home for their design centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lack of creative workspace 		
Community facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Proposed development of Towcester and Deanshanger libraries 			
Community assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * A well used network of village halls * Some hosting quite high profile events King's Sutton Literary Festival in March 2008 with – writers workshops and author talks including John Mortimer, barrister and writer of Rumpole of the Bailey. * Good use of other spaces, churches, pubs, cafes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Some halls may not be suitable for the full range of cultural activities that existing and expanded communities may require 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * King's Sutton Millennium Memorial Hall, built in 2000 with a grant from the Millennium commission, is also the base for a weekly doctor's surgery as there is no hospital or GP in the village itself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Links to social inclusion, community cohesion and important for delivering LAA target for increased participation in arts activity

2.3.3.2 SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROFILE				
Infrastructure typology	Strengths	Weakness	Partnerships and networks	Connections with strategic agendas
Parks and open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The woods and forests and the Grand Union Canal are attractions for visitors and locals alike * Grange Park – artists involved working with new Parish Council, developers, landscape architects and architects on the design of the new residential, retail and community development contributing to dynamic and high quality public open spaces and the planning of the community itself (see example) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Woods and forests linked to national network and investment through the Forestry Commission and locally through the River Nene Parks network * Grand Union Canal linked through National Waterways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Links to healthy living agendas
Festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Brackley Music Festival an opportunity for all age groups to perform and enjoy all types of music 			

2.3.3.3 A CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE SNAPSHOT FOR SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

An historic under-resourcing of the cultural sector, outside of Leisure Centre provision, has led to poor cultural infrastructure that scarcely meets the needs of existing residents. There are no arts venues, resulting in the South Northamptonshire residents having to leave the district for anything other than small scale local performances and exhibitions that take place in community spaces – village halls, community centres, churches, pubs and cafes.

The lack of established venues and the dispersed nature of the population of South Northamptonshire, in villages and rural areas has resulted in a thriving, if somewhat under resourced, community asset base. Not all community assets are able to host the full range of activities and require investment to make them fit for purpose.

There are some good examples of new community centres combining community space with local service provision, such as the King's Sutton Memorial Hall, built in 2000 which combines a GP surgery with two halls and two additional rooms for hire for community events and meetings.

The major event of the year is the King's Sutton Literary Festival with its programme of talks by visiting authors and associated workshops. In Towcester, there is a proposal for a bypass for the town. The current library and community centre barely meet the needs of the existing community. There are proposals for a new library and £880,000 bid into the Heritage Lottery Fund for development of the Towcester Museum.

Brackley, the next biggest town in South Northamptonshire is also set to grow, with additional sites for expansion being considering elsewhere in the district.

2.3.3.4 CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

- * Moat House Lane and the wider Towcester High Street area – the site of major mixed-use development schemes led by WNDC. This includes a boutique hotel, new community facilities, outdoor performance space (on Kings Mount), a micro brewery, and scope for a mix of cultural production and consumption space.
- * Development of Towcester Museum (as a 'Museum of the People') – an application currently with the Heritage Lottery Fund, decision due September 2008.
- * Plans for development of library linking with non-cultural partners such as health, social care, the police and the fire & rescue service. This will include the development of new public space and possibly some facilities for performance space.
- * Community centre development plans. Potential exists for linking with library and/or museum
- * Salcey Forest recently won design award for new tree top walk ways which are attracting new visitors to the area.
- * Stoke Bruerne Museum, through British Waterways, has aspirations for further development with project proposals for an event and public art project as part of the transformation of a concrete M1 bridge that creates an unattractive 'eyesore' along the Grand Union Canal corridor.

- * Build on the work at Grange Park involving artists in the design and development of new community In addition, the following possibilities are outlined in the Prospectus for Culture²⁸:
- * Potential new a Secondary school and Primary school development with opportunities for sports and arts facilities
- * Towcester Racecourse has expressed a wish to expand.

2.4 CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE BEYOND THE WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE BOUNDARY

The cultural infrastructure in the areas immediately surrounding the three West Northamptonshire districts and beyond play an important role for the current residents and will continue to do so in the future.

As already noted, residents of West Northamptonshire travel west to Rugby and Oxford for theatre and arts venues. London is less than two hours away from most parts of the sub-region so most people are within easy reach of many of the countries primary cultural attractions.

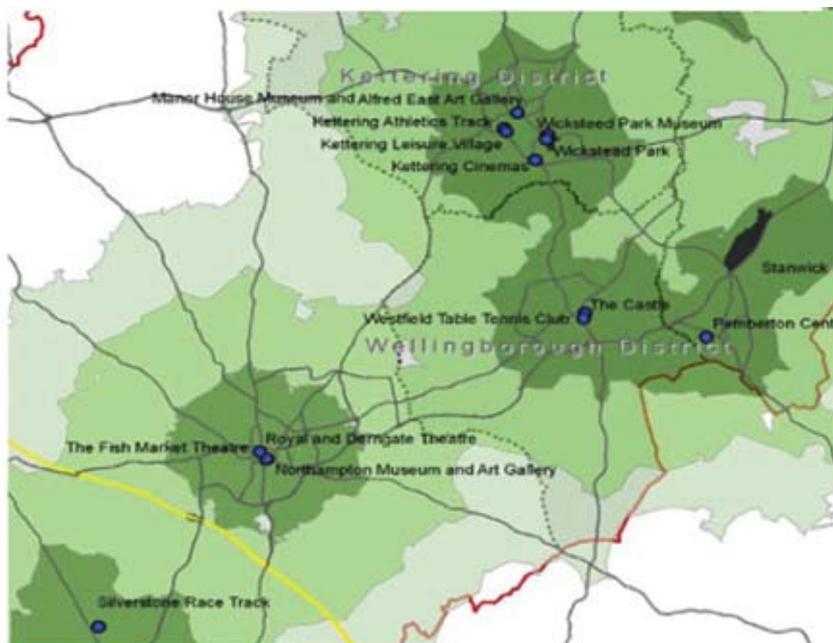
The map below, taken from the North Northamptonshire Cultural Investment Report, shows accessibility to cultural facilities, based on 5, 10 and 15km travel distances. The map highlights facilities outside of West Northamptonshire, those in Wellingborough in particular, are within fairly easy access, 15km away or less, for Northampton residents.

Fermynwoods, one of the primary art galleries in the County (based in Kettering), attracts audiences from within a two hour driving radius. It has links to other parks and spaces through the River Nene Network and the Museums Forum. The Castle in Wellingborough, a combined cinema, theatre and arts centre, is another important cultural facility for Northamptonshire. It has an Excellence in Education programme and a strong profile for community theatre. Better connections between arts cultural facilities are needed to share expertise in programming, intelligence around audience development and to limit duplication and competition.



SUPERLAMBANANA LIVERPOOL

²⁸. Arts Council and NCC (2007) Prospectus for Culture.



Map: 5, 10 and 15km travel distances to cultural facilities in and around Northampton



Data Source: Corby, East Northants, Kettering & Wellingborough District Councils / EDAW/ Sport England
Map Source: © OS Crown copyright. All rights reserved (LA100019331) 2007.

2.5 SUMMARY OF THE CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE OFFER IN WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

2.5.1 HERITAGE

“Museums are central to networks of knowledge, engaging with people locally, nationally and internationally. They support learning and skills, community identity and cohesion and the economy and open up worlds of creativity and new experience for all²⁹”.

There is a real strength in the heritage offer across West Northamptonshire from the large visitor numbers brought in by the stately homes to the community connections that the local interest in history brings about through the historical societies and campaigns to safeguard the area’s heritage. The historic nature of many of West Northamptonshire’s towns and villages are the reason that may people choose to live in the area and will act as an attractor for future residents and businesses considering locating in the area.

“Built heritage is great from heritage houses to smaller sites, there are lots of listed buildings. That’s why there are lots of artists living there”

An interviewee.

Delivering strategic priorities

There are some good examples of innovative programming that are helping certain parts of the heritage sector, both private and public, to fulfil its role as skills developer and working with local populations on community identity and cohesion. These participative activities are also contributing the LAA target of increasing participation in arts and cultural activity:

- * Over 11,000 school children visit Sulgrave Manor each year, choosing from a wide range of options, covering the Tudor and Stuart periods and complementing National Curriculum courses for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. The structured learning is led by a costumed member of the Manor’s Education Team and based around the rooms of the Manor itself.
- * Stoke Bruerne Canal Museum has specialist staff who can assist teachers and students with waterway projects. The museum also has its own dedicated schools and activity room and runs a number of waterways craft courses, including narrowboat decoration and fender-making, throughout the year.
- * Northampton Museum has been running an oral history programme - Hidden festivities – that has contributed ideas to the redevelopment of the galleries.
- * Archives are leading on Black History, linked closely to the inclusivity and cohesion agenda
- * Cultural tourism - attracting visitors and potential spend to the area - is another key strength of the heritage sector. The proposal for a new visitor centre at Naseby Battlefield could further increase visitor numbers.

²⁹. Estelle Morris, 2003.

Challenges

Museums and other heritage organisations have the potential to play far stronger educational and skills development role and connect with a range of other agendas including active communities and social cohesion.

- * The main challenge for the heritage sector in West Northamptonshire is its lack of connections, both within the county and beyond. The under-connection between the museums and heritage sites is due in part to lack of museum service at a County level.
- * However, since the establishment of Renaissance East Midlands and the introduction of the Museum Development Officer for the county and establishment of the Museum Forum, this is starting to be addressed. The challenge here is to bring together all 53 museums in the county, only three of which are run by local authorities and many of which are run by voluntary groups, to work together to share intelligence and ideas.
- * More also needs to be done to bring in the private sector owned historic houses that attract large numbers of visitors that come into the county and leave again after visiting just one historic site. NEL will have a strategic partnership and brokerage role here.
- * Heritage and archives which are currently separate from museums also need to be connected in. Archives have been recently focusing on Black history and are supporting research into this section of the local community.

The Rothwell Arts and Heritage Centre

The Rothwell Arts and Heritage Centre was founded by the Rothwell Market towns Initiative in 2004, sponsored by the Countryside Agency. The Arts and Heritage Centre is run by volunteers and has attracted funding from a variety of sources to purchase the site, develop the present building and provide additional facilities. The final of the renovation converting outbuildings into a useable office and three artist workspaces, has just been completed. The ground floor of the main building displays the heritage collection, mainly items donated by local residents which reflect the town's agricultural, industrial, social and cultural past including the past boot and shoe trade in the town and ironstone quarrying.

The first floor houses a gallery which exhibits the work of the county's artists and crafts people and hosts painting and craft classes. A recent Heritage Lottery grant is supporting the centre to research and present the impact of World War II evacuation on Rothwell's community. The end results will include a piece of theatre, a heritage exhibition, a schools loan resource and a float in Rothwell Carnival.



CASE STUDY 1 - STOKE BRUERNE: LINKING HERITAGE, ART AND OPEN SPACE

Type	Heritage
Area	Four miles east of Towcester
Location	On the Grand Union Canal

Description

- * Blisworth Tunnel - the second longest navigable canal tunnel in Britain
- * The Canal Museum - housed in an old corn mill beside the canal. Exhibits include: old working narrowboats, canalia, such as signs and mileposts, a set of boat scales for weighing boat cargoes housed in a disused lock
- * Mellow stone cottages, originally provided for mill workers - A graceful double-arched bridge and a flight of seven locks
- * The Boat Inn - a traditional canal hostelry which has been owned by the Woodward family for over one hundred years

Size and scale

Surrounding area: the Boat Inn, the School, the Village Hall, the Navigation, the Bruernes Lock, the Canal Museum, St Mary's Church, the Chapel Tea Room

Audiences

Local, regional and some national tourism

Connections and partnerships

International

No evident direct international links

National

British Waterways is a key stakeholder linking Stoke Bruerne to two other canal museums to give National Museum status

Regional

Member of Northamptonshire Museums Forum, supported through Renaissance East Midlands

Local

The canal's attractive heritage brings together locals from all backgrounds with varying interests to the same place

Plans for the future

- * Plans to build up on Stoke Bruerne as a 'Get Away Destination' making use of both tourism and the local economy
- * Ideas for redevelopment of waterways infrastructure – bridges and tunnels – involving innovative public art programme

Relevance to Cultural Investment Plan

Perceptual criteria

Seen as a valuable asset locally; it has been branded a 'Get Away Destination' to cater primarily for local needs, but also tourists.

- * **Leisure:** relaxation
- * **Business:** lunch breaks
- * **Nature:** wildlife
- * **Health:** exercise

Contribution to key strategic themes

- * Contributes to skills agenda through schools programme and craft courses
- * A tourist attraction
- * Quality of life

Other key heritage assets

- * Historic houses and gardens
- * Historic infrastructure of the towns and villages themselves
- * Museums – from local to the aspirations of Northampton Museum to gain National Museum status
- * Other heritage sites with development plans - Naseby Battlefield, Piddington Villa, Fire Service Museum



BUSKING IN CAMBRIDGE

2.5.2 ARTS VENUES

West Northamptonshire has a lack of dedicated arts venues with none outside Northampton apart from the Michael Heseltine Gallery at Chenderit School in South Northamptonshire. Residents of Daventry and South Northamptonshire largely travel outside the county to venues in Rugby and Milton Keynes. The proximity of the sub-region to London means it takes less than two hours to get to some of UK's most prominent arts venues from West Northamptonshire.

Delivering Strategic Priorities

- * There is a clear need to create more dedicated arts venues in West Northamptonshire.
- * The Royal and Derngate is the only venue approaching the size and quality than and area with the population the size of West Northamptonshire should expect. There is a lack of visual arts and media venues of a quality and scale befitting a region of this size.

Challenges

- * There is a lack of connection between existing venues in the county and joined-up thinking around audience development, programming or promotion.
- * Apart from the Fishmarket, the venues are still mostly single use, so not maximising the audiences and exposure of their audiences to new experiences. (The proposed new university gallery will take this further creating mixed art form venue).

Music

Music is a real strength across West Northamptonshire. Despite the small number of dedicated music venues, performances by professional and amateur musicians of all ages, are taking place in all types of spaces.

Music is seen as a key tool for engaging young people and contributing to skills development. The high level of participation in musical activity is a vital contributor to meeting the new LAA target for increased participation in arts and cultural activity.

There are a range of organisations and programmes operating across West Northamptonshire and the county nurturing the classical and contemporary music talent of young people. NCC youth music programme run county level groups for school age children including three symphony orchestras, two string orchestras, three brass bands, three concert bands, five choirs, three jazz bands, two percussion ensembles, three guitar ensembles, string quartets, and a number of wind ensembles. Rehearsals are held at music centres across the county with the main centre at the Arts and Music service offices in Northampton. The group perform at festivals and events across the county including the summer festival of music and Northamptonshire Children and Young People's festival at the Derngate.

Performin Room and Daventry Music Factory are two programmes dedicated to developing the skills of young people who want to pursue a career in the music industry.

There are numerous choirs, orchestra and bands involving hundreds of West Northamptonshire adults and young people in rehearsals and performances each week.

CASE STUDY 2 - ROYAL AND DERNGATE THEATRE

Type	Performing arts venue
Area	Northampton
Location	Cultural quarter

Description

Venue

The Royal and Derngate is the main arts venue Northampton. Recently the subject of a £15 million redevelopment project, the theatre offers two auditoria – the 1880s Royal Theatre and the 1980s Derngate - and a creativity centre, the Underground, home to the Youth Theatre and a space for workshops, pre-show music and performances. The Underground stage is overlooked by the new cafe bar, open to the public from 10.00am Monday to Saturday.

Royal & Derngate offers a diverse programme for all age groups combining drama, dance, stand-up comedy, classical music, children's shows and opera on its stages. Big name touring shows are hosted alongside a programme of acclaimed in-house productions. The theatre also runs Creative Projects that give people the chance to get involved in performing, writing or 'behind the scenes' activities.

The programme

A mix to attract a range of audiences. They are a producing theatre with production capable of 12 week national tours. They are also a receiving theatre with productions ranging from classical concerts by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, to jazz and contemporary; traditional theatre and musicals, contemporary and physical theatre; ballet and contemporary dance; comedy and light entertainment. 75% of income comes from theatre sales, also an ACE RFO.

Audiences

Every year more than 350,000 visit Royal & Derngate. In 2006/07 nearly 15,000 young people, from 20 schools took part in 865 workshops. 124 volunteers, worked alongside 66 full-time, 72 part-time staff and 232 freelance artists were contracted.

Connections and partnerships

National

Part of National Theatre's new writers programme New Connections
Relationships with Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Rambert Ballet who perform fairly regularly
Produce touring show – one currently in West End

Regional

Underdeveloped regional partnerships

Local

Local involvement through Creative Projects and youth theatre and workshops

Plans for the future

- * Develop private sector sponsorship
- * Continue to further develop contemporary programming – dance and theatre
- * Potential arts cinema offer developed
- * Potential hub role in County-wide ticketing service

Relevance to Cultural Investment Plan

Perceptual criteria

Its position at the heart of the proposed cultural quarter places the recently redeveloped Royal and Derngate and the centre of regeneration of the town centre. The facilities and high quality programming provide the potential for the theatre to expand its reach beyond the mainly local audience and become a cultural attraction in its right.

Links with growth, regeneration and renewal programmes.

Relevance and contribution to key strategic themes

From the existing RSS to local masterplans

Other key arts venue assets

- * There is a distinct absence of arts venues in West Northamptonshire
- * The Royal and Derngate is the only venue of the quality and scale that could be expected for a region of this size
- * The Fishmarket have real aspirations to become a mixed us arts venue



STREET FESTIVAL REIGATE

2.5.3 OTHER CREATIVE SPACES

The creative economy in West Northamptonshire is small but growing. Creative sector employment represents just 5% of total employment in South Northamptonshire and 3.5% in the district of Daventry. In South Northamptonshire, employment in the creative industries grew by 50% between 2001 and 2005 and by a more modest 7.5% in Daventry³⁰. In the two districts a total of 2,360 people were employed in 800 creative sector businesses in 2005. There are no comparable figures for Northampton, which is identified as having the third largest concentration of creative industry businesses in the Milton Keynes South Midlands growth area – 560 CI businesses - after Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale. South Northamptonshire and Daventry are 7th and 12th respectively out of 13 local authority areas.³¹

Large and small creative businesses are moving into the area. Most of the businesses PIC are from outside Northampton and Max Mara have just bought a stately home near Towcester for their design centre.

Few concentrations of creative activity have been identified through this study reflecting the findings of earlier studies of relatively low levels of creative activity. It was not within the remit of this study to identify individual creative industry businesses but the study has sought to identify connections between creative workspaces and creative organisations and the wider cultural and creative sector.

The 25 businesses based at the Portfolio Innovation Centre at Northampton University and Innovation Centre itself are major contributors to the creative and cultural infrastructure of the town. The 100 plus staff at the University, most of whom are creative practitioners also play a vital role in the local cultural and creative economy through their informal contacts, roles on boards, exhibiting and curating. Individual artists and creative practitioners and commercial gallery owners all form part of the creative economy.

Other contributors to region's creative sector: the Silverstone Innovation centre, run by Oxford Innovation, focusing on hi-tech/motorsport industries; Threshold studios work to raise skills and aspirations in the region's young people by providing opportunities for them to work in various aspects of the film sector.

Delivering Strategic Priorities

- * Delivering against the UK Creative Britain³² priorities:
- * PIC helping creative businesses to grow through business incubation and mentoring.
- * Threshold - creating and nurturing talent through work with young people - last year they offered 80 places for training to young people while they were working on a project (professional capacity). The product was premiered in Leicester and some of the young people went on to further training, or to a job. This work also meeting participation targets in the LAA and inclusion agendas through work on estates.

Challenges

- * Lack of creative culture and creative vision
- * Existing businesses isolated and unconnected into support structures.

³⁰. BOP 2007 EM rural Creative Industries Study.

³¹. New Media Partners (2007) Creative Industries Milton Keynes South Midlands, Arts Council (East Midlands, East and South East).

³². The Government's 2008 national report on the role and future priorities of the Creative Economy.

CASE STUDY 3 - FISHMARKET - A HUB FOR CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Type	Creative spaces
Area	Northampton
Location	Heart of the Town Centre

Description

The Fishmarket Gallery and arts centre is the flagship project of the Northampton Arts Collective. Used to be part of the market but the Fishmarket closed down in 2006. The Fishmarket is home to several independent retail outlets, artists' studios and a café bar alongside two independent gallery spaces.

Size and scale

Largest gallery space outside a city in the UK Spaces:

- * Main gallery
- * Gallery 2
- * The Goby
- * The café, bar and garden
- * The plinth
- * The workshop

Audiences

The Fishmarket offers visitors a truly unique cultural experience to its audience.

Connections and partnerships

International

A number of the Fishmarket's events has an international theme, and have established links with international creative communities.

National

The Fishmarket Art Gallery achieves national recognition by being the largest gallery space outside a city in the UK.

It is also sponsored by Arts Council England

Regional

Several regional sponsors such as East Midlands Development Agency.

Local

The Fishmarket's artists' passion and determination has seen a landmark development in the town's cultural offering.

Set up by Northampton Arts Collective.

Plans for the future

The Fishmarket has many ambitious plans for future developments:
Major refurbishment works due to be completed in 2009:

- * To revitalise the courtyard at the rear of the building, a space that had been neglected for many years.
- * To reinvent the café and bar and solve the problem of heating the space, but with a sophisticated flourish.
- * To develop a new concept design for the gallery reception and foyer, making a feature of this bright and airy space with its newly created shop unit and seating area.

Relevance to Cultural Investment Plan

Perceptual criteria

The Fishmarket is perceived as a real opportunity for Northampton, surrounded by lots of positive energy and ambition.

Contribution to key strategic themes

A strong visual culture offer in a major town is a key requirement. If Northampton is to be taken seriously as an emergent city, then it needs a 'cutting edge' facility around which organisations can grow and prosper, with Fishmarket providing the potential to fulfil that role.

Related examples

Portfolio Innovation Centre

2.5.4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities such as libraries, leisure centre and schools are cultural assets in their own right but also provide additional space for cultural activity both production (workshops, classes, rehearsals) and consumption (theatre, music and dance performance and art and craft exhibition).

Libraries are well used and residents are largely satisfied with library provision (73% satisfaction in Daventry, 74% in Northampton). But there is an acknowledged need to create new libraries to fit the 21st century and the expanding population of West Northamptonshire.

Leisure centres are being used for cultural for activities aside from sport, but there potential for expansion of this role, particularly as new leisure are built.

Delivering Strategic Priorities

The aim is for libraries to be strong in diversity and a place to stop, relax and interact.

Extended schools and out of hours programme position schools to be cultural infrastructure providers with a number of arts status schools already playing this role.

Challenges

Need to create new, fit-for-purpose libraries to match the 21st century and meet the region's expanding population's needs.

CASE STUDY 4: NEW NORTHAMPTON LIBRARY – CONNECTING TO THE WORLD

Type	Cultural facilities - Library
Area	Northampton Town Centre
Location	Town Centre – exact location to be decided

Description

The economic magnet of libraries in city centres is well proven. It acts as a multiplier for trade and activity and can act as a contributor to inclusive regeneration. The current inadequate facilities attract 1,600 each Saturday. One would expect a new library to double the footfall and also vitalise cultural, learning and entertainment activity.

Mixed use

Using technologies to deliver 'Northampton University without walls' - A city centre locus for video conference engagement, pioneering new ways of accessing education and advancement.

Support for businesses: a breakfast meeting place; work with Creative Northants on skilled support for creative industries and micro businesses,

Audiences

All socio-economic groups use the library – particularly 35-44 year olds. [evidenced in a recent report on library use in relation to 2001 Census]. Young people find the library a “cool” place to meet, strongly using it for independent study, and exploration. The lunchtime trade is substantial with opportunity to develop a parent zone geared at helping parents and carers in a busy working family life.

Connections and partnerships

International

looking at flagship libraries with a view to creating an iconic building and a real sense of civic pride and identity. Examples include Chicago, Helsinki and Rotterdam.

National

Through Museums Libraries and Archives Partnership and links to innovative libraries such as Norwich, Worcester City Library, Peterborough Central Library, Coventry Central Library

Regional

MLA SE

Local

Co- located or fused services can include health facilities, other cultural provision including museum and art spaces, learning facilities which could include a satellite University connection and town centre space; retail and leisure including sports centre, café, shop, Tourist Information, resources for historians, job seekers and businesses. In particular creative industries businesses linking to Creative Northants, to provide support and advice services.

Relevance to Cultural Investment Plan

Perceptual criteria

A safer city centre is supported by the large number and constant busyness of a library of this calibre. This makes the city experience both safe as well as enjoyable and exhilarating.

Contribution to key strategic themes

The library can directly support the retail success of the city through Sunday opening and early morning /late nights for commuters, supporting the kind of mixed use city centre models the Library Forward report aspires to.

The aspiration of the library will be catalyst to celebrate, highlight and unify Northampton's cultural aspiration. It must be one of a network of venues for live performance.

Related examples

- * Daventry library
- * Towcester library
- * Other community halls



PECHAM LIBRARY

2.5.5 COMMUNITY ASSETS

“The government is helping to support community activity, but buildings also matter. Village halls are vitally important – local services, playgroups, women’s institutes, etc. won’t survive – let alone thrive - without a roof over their head”³³

Community assets – village halls, community centre, churches, cafes and pubs - are well used for cultural activity, particularly in Daventry and South Northamptonshire, where the population is more dispersed and there are poor arts and cultural facility infrastructure.

There are some good examples of community halls being put to multiple uses. Long Buckby village hall houses the local museum and King’s Sutton memorial hall built in 2000 operates weekly GP surgery sessions. There are also examples of churches playing key roles as community assets and many throughout West Northamptonshire hosting concerts and also exhibitions and performances.

Delivering Strategic Priorities

- * Community assets are vital in meeting strategic ‘quality of life’ agendas in many communities.
- * As communities become more diverse community assets and important centres for cross cultural activity serving community cohesion and social inclusion agendas
- * They can also be centres for skills development with workshops, classes and provide volunteering opportunities – the majority of village halls are volunteer run.

Challenges

- * Not all community assets are fit for purpose and as communities expand the needs of the whole community need to be considered
- * Ensuring community assets are local mixed use spaces of the future combining facilities and services to attract different members of the community – meeting spaces, performance spaces, local service providers e.g. health and advice services.



LEICESTER COMEDY FESTIVAL

33. Margaret Beckett, Rural Revival Conference, Local Government Association, February 2003

CASE STUDY 5 - NORTHAMPTON RACECOURSE: A CULTURAL SPACE OF THE FUTURE

Type	Parks and open spaces
Area	Northampton
Location	North of Northampton town centre. Forms the Kingsley Conservation Area, and is surrounded by Victorian housing and the heritage connections of St Andrew's Priory buildings.

Description

This open space of just over 118 acres is one of the most significant urban green space within Northampton. The Racecourse has a long history and a variety of uses ranging from a site for public executions in the 18th century and as a racecourse, as its name suggests, until early 20th century. In recent years the park has been somewhat neglected although it has been used to host the famous Northampton Balloon festival and it staged one of the Eurovision song contest rounds in 1974.

Size and scale

Sports facilities: 1 Junior Football Pitch, 16 Senior Football Pitches, 1 Rugby Union Pitch, 2 Changing Rooms, 3 Bowling Greens, 9 Grass Cricket Pitches, 6 Hard Tennis Courts, 6 Grass Tennis Courts, 1 Putting Green

Ornamental features include: Seating and Pavilion, Restaurant

Audiences

Sports audiences: Tennis, Bowls, Football, Cross-country, School sports days, Sport coaching, Sport tournaments, Leisure & Events, Picnics, Barbeques, Health walks, Sponsored walks, Fairs, Children play area, Balloon festival.

In recent research on use of the park 2,357 walkers were observed; 635 people Dog walking; 560 Cyclists; 284 runners

Connections and partnerships

National

Several national links, mainly through its events programme such as the Northampton Balloon Festival which attracts visitors from all over the UK

Regional

Part of the River Nene Park Network

Local

Friends of Northampton Racecourse (FONR), was set up by local residents and to ensure the facilities of The Racecourse are maintained, enhanced, conserved and improved for the benefit of all users. The group were instrumental in setting up the Healthy Living Hub in the park

Plans for the future

- * A master plan for the park was published in May 2008 following 3.5 years of public consultation. The plan for the park includes creative play facilities for children and young people.
- * 20 Capital Proposals have been identified to tackle accessibility, public realm, cultural/sports facilities. In addition, 9 Revenue and Policy proposals have been developed which involve longer term projects.
- * 'The Healthy Living Hub' will form the centre piece of the Racecourse, - a place where people can eat at a healthy food café, hire bicycles, including adapted bicycles for disabled users. 'Healthy action stations' around the edge of the Racecourse will provide outdoor gym equipment, and new welcome boards will provide information for the local community.

Relevance to Cultural Investment Plan

Contribution to key strategic themes

- * The Racecourse development potential for leveraging in S106 funding
- * Healthy living agenda
- * Quality of life

Other parks and open space examples

- * 161 other parks and open spaces in Northampton
- * River Nene network parks - town parks, meadows, riverside walks woods and forests including Salcey Forest with new tree top walkways
- * Grand Union Canal - waterways
- * Town centre open spaces
- * Countryside



MAZE COUNTY DOWN, NORTHERN IRELAND

2.5.7 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Festivals and events are a such a major part of the cultural life of West Northamptonshire. They are also an under-developed resource. Recent high profile events such as the Venezia Festival evidence the appetite and aspiration of local people to get involved, get noticed, and have a good time in the public realm.

There is a wide range of festivals and events across the sub-region, with many small-scale, community-driven events plus a smaller number of larger ones staged for a more regional or national audience. At a local community level, events held in village halls, churches and the open air, provide a significant 'community moments', offering a reason for local people to come together – often regardless of the quality of the event.

The larger events are either privately-run, such as those staged at historic houses and gardens or sporting arenas; or publicly-driven, such as the Northampton Balloon Festival. Here, quality and a wider set of strategic issues – such as the role festivals and events play in cultural and organisational development, and their economic impact – come into play.

It is clear in West Northamptonshire that festivals and events are such important ways to develop communities and to support arts and cultural development. However, it is equally clear that the potential of this offer is under-explored. This is a very significant issue, especially with the opportunity presented by the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games for west Northamptonshire to showcase its cultural offer. The following are the key strategic issues and challenges:

The above point to the need for effective coordination, leadership, and a more innovative and imaginative application of festivals and events in cultural life. The potential for a festival and events team and for long-term big opportunities (such as a European Capital of Culture bid), are introduced in the Investment Plan.

Delivering Strategic Priorities

- * Festivals and events can also be utilised more effectively as tools of institutional development. For example, the museums sector would benefit from a coordinated festivals offer that also provided development support to their role as cultural institutions.
- * There is a need to focus on quality and the distinctiveness of the offer – particularly with the larger civic and strategic events.
- * Festivals and events can be used more effectively as commissioning and development tools that support arts and cultural organisations to grow, diversify and become more sustainable. This is currently not approached in a strategic and coordinated way.
- * Festivals and events can more effectively connect heritage to contemporary creative products and services – from the simple staging of a contemporary festival in a heritage environment to the co-curation of historic and contemporary identities.
- * Festivals and events are under-connected to strategic agendas in tourism and inward investment – although NEL are responding to this.

Challenges

- * The festivals and events offer is under-connected, with little coordination in programming, audience development, resource sharing, co-promotion, and expertise transfer.
- * The increasing diversity of the local population is not currently evidenced in the festivals and events offer: there is a need to engage more effectively and enable local people in all their diversity to express themselves.

CASE STUDY 6 - VENEZIA – A SUMMER FESTIVAL CELEBRATING VENICE AND THE VENETO

Type	Festivals
Area	Northampton
Location	Venues all over Northampton

Description

Venezia! - A three month festival of exhibitions, music, drama, film, food, wine and crafts inspired by Northampton's collection of Baroque and Rococo Venetian art. Northampton Museum, home to the collection led on the development of the festival, which was two years in the planning. The festival developed a public/private partnership funding model for the events.

Size and scale

“the biggest cultural event Northampton has ever seen”

Cllr Tony Woods

Audiences

Venezia!'s large range of multidisciplinary cultural events attract a wide audience with varied interests. Unique festival for the region so it attracts audiences from outside Northamptonshire.

Connections and partnerships

International

Strong, obvious link to Italy. Has the support of His Excellency Giancarlo Aragona - Italian Ambassador to the UK.

National

The festival has formed strong national links through its sponsorships – also valuable on a regional level.

Regional

Hewitsons, on the region's largest law firms was the main sponsor for the event.

Local

Venues and cultural organisations across Northampton were involved in the festival. The Museum held talks and workshops alongside the exhibitions; the University hosted theatre and music; Fiori Musicali and the Bach Choir performed in local churches; a baroque fantasy was performed at the Royal and Derngate and; Northampton Guildhall hosted a gala concert.

Plans for the future

Building on the strong partnership approach to funding and delivering future festivals.

Relevance to Cultural Investment Plan

Perceptual criteria

Venezia! is seen as a community building programme – one that will create a sense of place and belonging for Northampton.

Contribution to key strategic themes

- * Levering in private sector funding for cultural activity
- * Strong partnership and cross cultural connections in delivery

Other West Northamptonshire Festivals and events

Northampton Balloon Festival-English Heritage History Festival at Kelmarsh Hall-Althorp Literary Festival, King's Sutton Literary Festival-Northampton Town Show and Carnival- Music Festivals- Middle of Nowhere, Brackley Music Festival.



ST. MARTIN'S IN THE FIELD