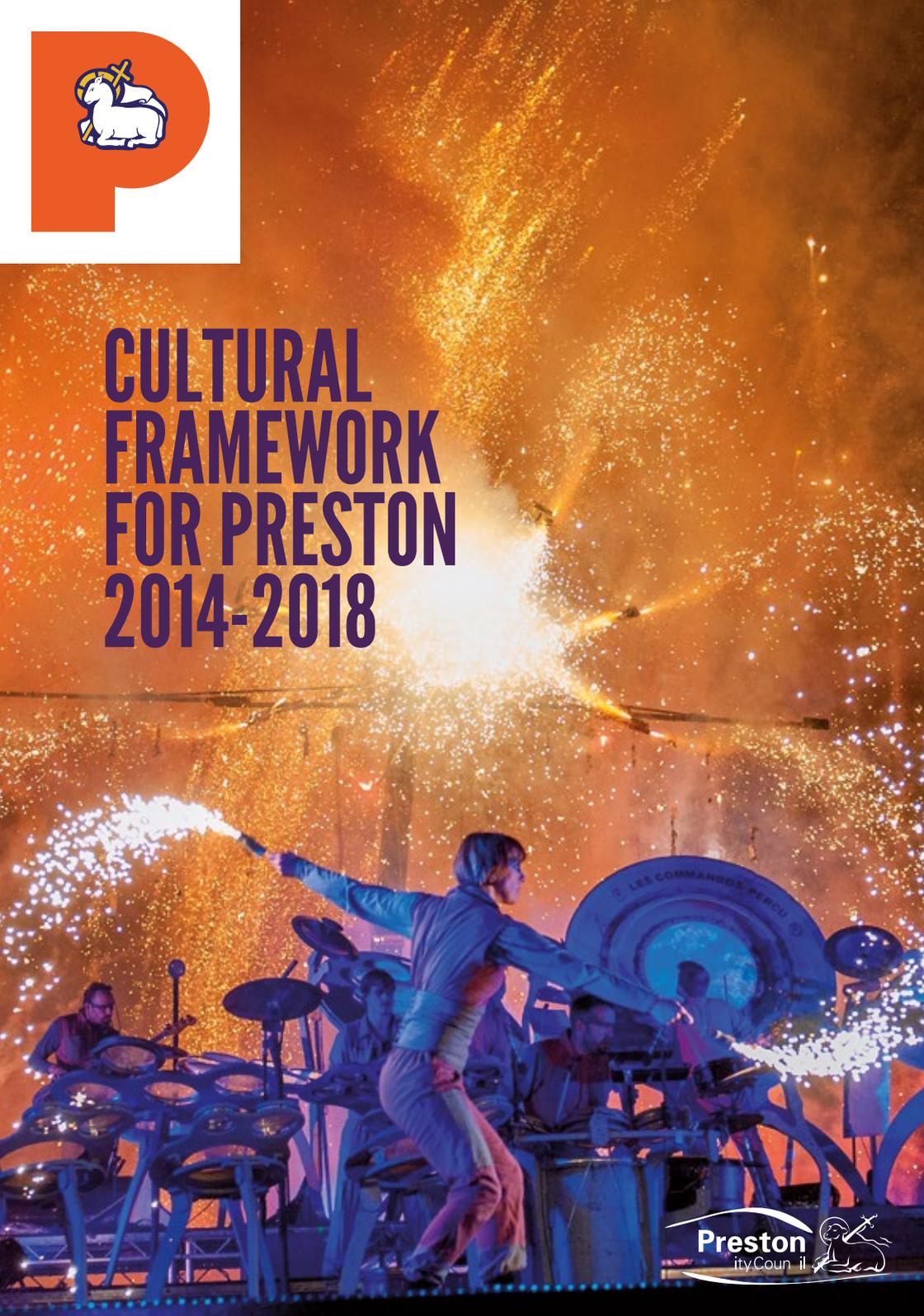




CULTURAL FRAMEWORK FOR PRESTON 2014-2018



Preston
City Council





OUR VISION FOR 2018

Preston is recognised as a major centre for culture in the North West, with a thriving creative sector, where everyone has opportunities to be inspired by and participate in arts and heritage and to have joyful experiences which reinforce the spirit of the Guild City.

A Step at a Time musical performance by More Music's carnival street band for the *Harris Flights* festival 8 September, 2013. Photo: Simon Critchley.

INTRODUCTION

In 2008 we published a Cultural Strategy for Preston that focussed on the run up to and delivery of the 2012 Preston Guild. This Framework seeks to provide a context for the development of arts and culture in the city to 2018.

We know that arts and culture are important to cities. They have been proven to have a positive impact on economic regeneration, tourism, health and well-being, community cohesion and place-making and branding. We saw all of that when Preston Guild 2012 attracted 4.8 million visits and participants to activities over the year. The whole city came together to celebrate Preston's unique cultural heritage throughout the year. As one participant said there was 'a wonderful feeling of community spirit, celebration of tradition, pride and entertainment'.

The Active People Survey carried out nationally in 2009 showed that Preston was in the lowest 20% for engagement in arts and culture. I would like to think that, with Preston Guild and the burgeoning of creativity in the city, the picture is changing. Independent research showed that there is an appetite for more cultural animation of the city.

The very successful *Harris Flights* in summer 2013 created a focus for over 60 events in the Market Square. Arts organisations, community groups and individuals from Preston and Lancashire

provided a range of activities including dance and drama performances, music, demonstrations, talks and film screenings. It provided proof yet again that Preston has a wealth of creative people and that Prestonians relish the opportunity to participate in cultural activities.

The Framework has been produced with the assistance of local people who care deeply about the future of arts and culture in Preston. Its development was overseen by a steering group made up of officers and elected members of Preston City Council, Lancashire County Council and representatives of the University of Central Lancashire, but its content is based on robust consultation which gave the wider cultural sector, community organisations, the business sector and the general public the opportunity to contribute their views.

The Framework draws on the responses of people who took part in focus groups and workshops, responded to an online questionnaire or responded to an initial draft. I would like to thank everyone who took part in the consultation. In particular I would like to pay tribute to my friend and colleague, the late Councillor Tom Burns. As Executive Member with responsibility for culture, and as Chair of the steering group, he played a key role in helping shape this Framework. His commitment to culture and his conviction that it has a major part to play in improving the lives of all Prestonians was an inspiration.

I hope that this Framework shows the level of aspiration that we have for culture in Preston. We shall use it to help shape the planning for our own services and for support for the creative sector in the City. Together we can realise our Vision for 2018:

Preston is recognised as a major centre for culture in the North West, with a thriving creative sector and where everyone has opportunities to be inspired by and participate in arts and heritage and to have joyful experiences which reinforce the spirit of the Guild City.

Councillor Peter Rankin,
Leader of Preston City Council

PRESTON - A CREATIVE CITY

Preston is the 'Guild City'. At the crossroads of historical events it has always played an important part in the life of the region and the nation.

It celebrates the only surviving Guild Merchant with an unbroken tradition going back to 1179. In 2012, Preston people demonstrated that the city is indeed 'Proud Preston' as we celebrated the Guild with a programme that embraced centuries old tradition alongside events which showcased the vibrant creativity of the city today.

Today Preston is home to a growing number of artists and enterprising creative businesses which are contributing to the cultural and social life to the city.



Postcards from the Past lighting installation by Andy McKeown at the 'Harris Flights' festival, 1 September 2012. Photo: Simon Critchley.

The city has a number of long standing cultural organisations – the Preston Caribbean Carnival will celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2014, arts organisation ALISON (Artists Working in Situations of Need) has worked on Brookfield for about 20 years and the Mela has been celebrated for 15 years.

More recent additions are the annual Tringe arts festival, Two Hats culture website, They Eat Culture, gallery and artist studios at Oxheys Mill and many others. Regional arts organisations based outside the city also work here, for example Ludus Dance Company has established the Preston Youth Dance Company and music development agency More Music, festival producers Walk the Plank and other Arts Council funded organisations deliver services in the city¹.

There are a growing number of venues including 53 Degrees, The New Continental and Korova Café which have significantly contributed to the live arts programming offer in Preston, showcasing both locally produced work and also receiving visiting productions and performances.

In Certain Places is a programme of temporary public artworks and events, which examines how artists can contribute to the development of a city. Initiated in 2003 as a partnership between UCLan and the Harris Museum & Art Gallery, In Certain Places has worked with regional, national and international artists to develop temporary public artworks for the city, hosted artist residencies and organised free public talks about art, place and the city.

The Harris Museum, Art Gallery and Library houses impressive collections of fine and decorative art and history as well as the central library for the county. The landmark Grade 1 listed building embodies the confidence and pride of 19th century Preston and there is much of the founders' original ambition for the Harris which remains relevant today, including a commitment to providing high quality experiences and serving the whole community.

The Harris is recognised as a leading contemporary art venue, commissioning new work from nationally- and internationally-recognised artists. It also receives exhibitions from major galleries including Tate and Hayward Gallery and works with partner venues across the country to develop collaborative projects. It has a role in helping to nurture the next generation of talented local emerging artists. The Harris attracts 220,000 visitors a year to the museum and art gallery and 500,000 visits are made to the Lancashire County Council (LCC) run Library.

In addition, Lancashire County Council has five branch libraries in Preston. Libraries are increasingly becoming community hubs and venues for cultural activities. The Library service focuses on the universal reading offer, the digital agenda, health and well-being and information provision.

Preston's museums - the Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Museum of Lancashire, Lancashire Infantry Museum, Ribble Steam Railway Museum and South Ribble Museum, have come together to form the Preston Museums Group which works collaboratively across a number of areas including training, marketing, learning and engagement programmes and projects such as the Preston Remembers First World War commemorative programme.

Following the success of the 2012 Guild, Preston City Council recognised the desire for a vibrant events programme in the city centre, creating a programme with summer and winter events. Preston is fortunate in having remarkable parks including the Victorian Miller and Avenham Parks which have been extensively developed in recent years. They provide venues for a range of outdoor activities including the traditional Egg Rolling event.

The Guild Hall is a major sub-regional entertainments venue. Adjacent to the Harris Museum, it comprises an 800 seater theatre, the Grand Hall (with capacity of 2,200) and a retail arcade. It has conference, car parking and catering facilities. The venue currently attracts a range of nationally known performers from all aspects of the entertainments industry.

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) with its state of the art facilities and world class teaching is the first modern university to achieve inclusion in the 2010 QS World Rankings with 500 undergraduate and 200 post-graduate courses attracting students from the UK and over 100 countries. Graduates are helping to establish Preston as a thriving centre for creative industries alongside established cultural organisations and individual artists.

UCLan's campus cultural offer is rapidly becoming one of the region's leading centres for contemporary visual art, film, theatre, music, literature and digital media and has the potential to gain an international reputation for artistic excellence and innovation in partnership with the Harris and a thriving independent arts sector. The university facilities include galleries, theatre and cinema that are accessible not only to students but the wider community².

Preston College has a very strong offer in design and visual art, performing arts including drama, music and dance, photography, games design and media and film studies. The College is committed to working with the community, schools and students to widen participation in the arts.

There is an active voluntary and amateur cultural sector as Preston people find fulfilment through visual arts, crafts, writing, performance, music, local history and much more. Preston Arts Association, an umbrella organisation for about 40 voluntary arts groups, was established in 1970 and runs an annual arts festival³.

All of this creativity was evident on the streets of Preston during 2012 as we celebrated the Guild. The momentum was not lost in 2013 as the very successful *Harris Flights* demonstrated.

This Framework will provide the context for the development of culture in Preston, ensuring that the spirit and vibrancy of the Guild is maintained in the future.

NOTES

1. Cultural organisations active in the city in late 2013 include Two Hats, They Eat Culture, Oxheys Mill Studios, Lancashire Arts Network, ALISON, Soundskills, Preston Tringe Festival, Preston Black History Group, Wooden Spoons Theatre, JCR Creative, Music and the Mind Festival, Kitchen Sink Arts Group, ArtFull, Bluestreak Arts, Preston Arts association, Preston Faith Forum, UCLan Confucius Institute, World Wise Samba Drummers, Preston Caribbean Carnival, Preston Mela and Blaze. This list is indicative of the range of organisations and is not a comprehensive guide. We apologise for omissions.
2. UCLan facilities include 2 art galleries, 3 theatres, a cinema, 2 band/comedy venues, a dance studio, 2 open plazas, a set of printmaking workshops, ceramics workshops, video art study collection, Black Art archive.
3. Voluntary arts organisations in Preston include Preston Orpheus Choir, Preston Twinning Partnership, Preston Musical Comedy Society, Preston Playhouse and Preston Arts Society. A more complete list of active groups and their activities can be found on Preston Arts Association's website: www.prestonarts.com



OUR GOALS

1. QUALITY

We will aspire to achieve quality and excellence in the cultural life of Preston

2. PARTICIPATION & INCLUSION

More people are involved in cultural activities as audiences, participants and creative producers

3. SUPPORTING CREATIVITY

Creative people and groups thrive in Preston

4. PRESTON AS A CULTURAL CENTRE

Preston is recognised as the cultural hub of Central Lancashire

GOAL ONE: QUALITY

We will aspire to achieve quality and excellence in the cultural life of Preston

People are able to have meaningful and extraordinary cultural experiences.

People have opportunities to experience national and local talent.

The cultural offer has a 'wow' factor - whatever its scale.

Culture in Preston is innovative and not afraid to take risks and to surprise, delight and challenge audiences.

Cultural programmes reflect the diversity and character of the city and its people.

Culture provides good value for money for stakeholders and participants.

GOAL TWO: PARTICIPATION & INCLUSION

More people are involved in cultural activities as audience, participants and creative producers

Culture in Preston is inclusive and attracts and develops new audiences.

People have opportunities to engage in a wide range of activities.

People have opportunities to shape and participate in creative activities.

Communities are able to come together in cultural activities which are relevant to them.

People feel that the cultural life of the city is important to them, their families and their communities.

Commissioning is carried out by a wide range of organisations and groups.

People are able to find out easily about the cultural opportunities that are available.

GOAL THREE: SUPPORTING CREATIVITY

Creative people and groups thrive in Preston

There are networks and processes to enable better communication between arts practitioners and the public and business sectors, to enable strategic approaches to planning and to attracting investment.

Graduates are retained in the city through opportunities to develop creative businesses.

There are multiple and varied opportunities for creative work to be showcased in the city.

Mentoring and training opportunities are available to artists and creative businesses.

Creative individuals and groups are supported to develop funding applications and business proposals.

GOAL FOUR: PRESTON – A CULTURAL CENTRE

Preston is recognised as the cultural hub of Central Lancashire

Policy makers in local authorities, the university and the business sector recognise the value of culture and support its development.

Public open spaces are animated by activities and events.

Preston's unique character is understood and developed.

Promotion of the city highlights culture as key feature.

Regional, national and international cultural producers are attracted to show work in Preston.

MAKING IT REAL

Preston City Council is fully committed to promoting arts and culture in Preston. The Council has dual roles: it is both a provider of cultural services through the Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Guild Hall, Events and Parks, and it supports the heritage infrastructure of the city.

The Council is also a facilitator and catalyst to support the independent arts, education and community organisations to create cultural activity. This was most clearly demonstrated in the period running up to, and including, Guild 2012 when the cultural sector was galvanised to celebrate a year of vibrant and joined-up cultural expression in the city.

The Council recognises the contribution that culture makes to economic regeneration, to making Preston distinctive, to the well-being and quality of life of people who live and work here, and to attract visitors to the city.

The Council will work with other bodies, including Lancashire County Council, UCLan, Marketing Lancashire and Arts Council England, towards promoting the city as a cultural hub in Central Lancashire where creative people can thrive and where visitors enjoy the distinctiveness of Preston as the Guild City.

The Council will seek to increase external investment in culture both for its own services and to support the independent creative sector.



Crowning of the 2012 Preston Caribbean Carnival King and Queen competition - Queen for the Rainbow Association carnival troupe.

Photo: Preston Photographic Society.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Preston City Council will work with Lancashire County Council, UCLan and other strategic partners in business, visitor economy, health, and education to form a group to monitor progress in delivering the Goals of the Framework. It will develop an action plan for the Framework and progress will be reported annually.

The partnership will support strategic planning for culture, identify priorities for funding and co-ordinated action to attract external investment for culture into the city. It will work with the independent cultural sector to support mechanisms to develop wider communication networks, shared planning and collaborative working, both within the sector and with the public sector and UCLan.

Preston City Council officers will continue to support the creative sector through training, mentoring and advice to those seeking to gain external funding. The Council will establish a budget to support cultural development that helps deliver the Goals of the Cultural Framework and, where appropriate, to provide match funding for applications for external funding to grant giving bodies and other funders.

The Council will work with the cultural sector to identify effective means of promoting and marketing culture in Preston and to develop audiences, including those who are currently under-represented.



Torchlight Procession, Preston Guild 2012.
Photo credit: Preston Photographic Society.



WHAT YOU SAID

The Framework for Preston is based on research and consultation with local people. In early 2013, Panacea Associates held three focus groups and two workshops in Preston and carried out an online survey which received 120 responses. The Goals of this Framework are derived from the responses to this consultation. A draft was issued which received further comments.

Although not directly forming part of the consultation, the framework is also informed by other work undertaken during the last year including work by Ben Casey of The Chase on developing a brand for the city. Other recent studies include the evaluation of Guild 2012 by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, work undertaken by Creative Tourist on the potential for the Harris Museum to attract cultural tourism to the city, and consultation undertaken by Marge Ainsley on support for visual artists by the Harris Museum. Each of these reinforced the views expressed in the consultation.

Examples of comments made include:

“Opportunities for all, but a high level of professionalism so that Preston experiences the best that arts and culture have to offer”

“[Preston should be] a place for artists to thrive.”

“I would like to see arts and culture the main focus for visiting the city”

“Seeing more leaders within this community truly value the arts would be amazing”

“Big and small – keep the momentum going throughout the year”

“I want to become part of this process by setting up my own creative project in the near future. I would like support to do this from creative people.”

“A way for disparate cultural organisations to be able to connect =, work together and learn from best practice, knowledge and skills... to create a cultural offer that is more than the sum of its parts”

“It should be serious, adult and make your head hurt.”

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the consultation.

A list of people who took part, and who make comments on this consultation draft, will be available on the Preston City Council website, www.preston.gov.uk



Still from the *Piercing Brightness* science fiction film written especially for Preston by artist Shezad Dawood and commissioned by In Certain Places - a programme of temporary public artworks and events in Preston. Photo: In Certain Places.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Arts Council England (ACE) published its Strategic Framework *Achieving Great Art for Everyone* in 2010.

It identifies five Goals:

- Talent and artistic excellence are thriving and celebrated.
- More people experience and are inspired by arts.
- The arts are sustainable, resilient and innovative.
- Arts leadership and workforce are diverse and highly skilled.
- Every child and young person has opportunities to experience the richness of the arts.

Funding applications made to ACE are assessed against one or more of these Goals (depending on the programme). The themes identified in the consultation are broadly compatible with these Goals.

For some time there has been an emphasis on the benefits of the arts and culture to places, communities and individuals. The ‘instrumental versus intrinsic’ arguments have been well rehearsed. Arts and culture is increasingly being justified by its potential impact on economic regeneration, tourism, health and wellbeing, community cohesion and place-making and branding.

Arts Council England and the Local Government Association has recently published the report, *The contribution of the arts and culture to the national economy*.

Key findings included:

- There are strong links to the tourism sector, with at least £856M per annum of tourism being linked to arts and culture.
- The government's 0.1% of spend on the arts yields 1.4% of GDP.
- Arts and culture generate more money per pound invested than health, retail, professional and business service sectors.
- The sector grew from 2008-2010 with some decline as the economy shrank in the past 3 years. However the greatest sum of money supporting the sector is earned income.

The report also demonstrated the important role of museums in attracting tourists, supporting creative industries and contributing to education, research and skills development.

Research for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), *A holistic approach to valuing our culture*, explored whether and how the value of culture can be measured. It concluded that relying on economic indicators alone is unrealistic in practice – but by combining economic and non-economic material, useful evidence can be gathered.

More locally, research commissioned by North by NorthWest, a contemporary visual arts network of 12 venues in Lancashire and Cumbria including the Harris, was published in 2011. *Why Arts Works*, by Rebanks Consulting, demonstrated a range of benefits from investment in art galleries. A key finding was that culture should not just be regarded as something which is focussed in the big cities and that it can play an important role in attracting and retaining talent, trade and tourism in sub-regional centres.

However, with increasing emphasis from central government on the role of philanthropy and private investment, Arts and Business has recently published research showing that in 2011-12, only 1.6% of individual giving to the arts, and 7.2% of business investment went to the north west of England, while London attracted 90% and 67.8% respectively from these sources.

Other sources informing this Framework included *Towards a Greater Sense of Place*, a Lancashire County Council report examining arts provision across the county, the Heritage Lottery Fund's Strategic Framework 2013-18, Museums Association 2020 strategy, and the DCMS' Tourism Strategy.



Lakes Alive: Les Commandos Percu - On the Night Shift.
Preston Guild 2012 Festival finale performance
on 9 September, 2012.
Photo: Preston Photographic Society.

Cover Image:

Lakes Alive: Les Commandos Percu - On the Night Shift
Preston Guild 2012 Festival finale performance
on 9 September, 2012.

Photo credit: Preston Photographic Society.

