

SUMMARY

AN ARTS STRATEGY
FOR SOUTH LAKELAND

2005-2010



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The arts are about communication – the communication of ideas and emotions.

They provide entertainment, enjoyment and inspiration, opportunities to participate and to learn. The arts are essential to our quality of life. More practically, the arts create employment, attract visitors, generate wealth and bring and bind communities together. To achieve this, the arts need to be accessible to everyone.

South Lakeland has a rich vein of arts activity and there is much to celebrate:

- hundreds of voluntary arts groups and events
- the largest number of festivals and carnivals in Cumbria
- more professional arts organisations than in any other rural district in the North West, many with national and international reputations
- a great diversity of professional artists - writers, visual artists, composers, musicians, dancers, choreographers, circus artists, actors, puppeteers, film makers, media artists, designers and makers
- a burgeoning creative industries sector

The Arts Strategy for South Lakeland looks at the impact of the arts and demonstrates why the arts matter. It highlights the diversity and wealth of arts activity in the district and their wider contribution in social and economic terms.

The Strategy is for the whole community and not for a single organisation.

It is for everyone who is involved in any way in the arts in South Lakeland – artists, voluntary groups, arts and cultural organisations, public, private and voluntary sector agencies.

It identifies opportunities to build on the district's strengths in the arts and to address its weaknesses.

It recommends ways to create more opportunities for more people, individually and as communities, to participate in the arts.

It suggests priorities for the allocation of resources to the arts and it offers a way for artists and arts organisations to make an even greater impact locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

The Vision of the Arts Strategy

The vision of the Arts Strategy is that, by 2010, South Lakeland will be a district in which the arts are central to the cultural, economic and social well-being of its people.

By 2010

- South Lakeland will be a vibrant centre for the creation and enjoyment of the arts.
- communities with least access to the arts will have had many more opportunities to enjoy the arts.
- the number of visitors to South Lakeland who include the arts among their reasons for visiting will have increased.
- there will be readily available evidence of the social and economic impact of the arts on the district.
- people working in the arts in South Lakeland will have significantly more access to opportunities to increase their knowledge and skills.
- the district's creative industries sector will have continued to grow.
- policy makers, funders, employers and arts practitioners will be working together to enrich the arts life of the district.
- the arts will be celebrated for their contribution to the quality of life in South Lakeland.

The Aims and Objectives of the Arts Strategy

The aims and objectives of the Arts Strategy support, to a significant extent, the strategic objectives of the Cultural Strategy for South Lakeland and reflect the priorities of the Local Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy and South Lakeland District Council's Corporate Plan.

The Aims of the Arts Strategy

The Arts Strategy has three equal and inter-related aims.

Aim 1 To strengthen the local infrastructure for participants in, and producers of, the arts.

If the arts in South Lakeland are to thrive, public, private and voluntary sector stakeholders (including politicians, funders, artists and arts organisations) need to work more closely together to ensure that the infrastructure of policies, people, facilities and systems that underpins the arts sector is informed, robust and responsive.

Aim 2 To address inequalities of access to the arts in South Lakeland.

Access to opportunities to enjoy the arts in the district is uneven. Young people, older people, disabled people and those living in remote areas, on low incomes and without access to transport, are at a particular disadvantage. The implementation of this strategy will increase access to the arts for all.

Aim 3 To encourage the high quality and diversity of the arts in South Lakeland and to communicate this within and beyond the District.


South Lakeland is home to some world-class arts practice in both traditional and contemporary forms. For the arts to flourish in South Lakeland, this quality and diversity needs to be encouraged, and promoted more widely. There is a need for more effective communication (within and beyond the district) of the quality and diversity the arts in South Lakeland.

These aims and the strategic objectives that follow respond to the findings of the research and consultation undertaken to identify the needs of the arts sector and the public, and ways in which those needs might be addressed in the context of the Community Strategy and the Cultural Strategy for South Lakeland.

The Objectives of the Arts Strategy

Between 2005 and 2010, the objectives are to:

- increase the extent and quality of collaboration between the district's artists and arts organisations and their peers, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.
- promote partnerships between current and potential service providers, funders and decision makers in the public, private and voluntary sectors.
- work for a continuous improvement in the range and quality of facilities for the arts in the district.
- foster, attract and retain skilled artists, arts managers and other creative practitioners.
- demonstrate and communicate the contribution of the arts to the cultural, social, economic and environmental well being of the district.
- increase the range and quality of opportunities for children and young people to be creative and enjoy the arts.
- increase the range and quality of opportunities for people isolated by geography, age, low incomes and disability to enjoy the arts.
- strengthen the relationship between artists and arts organisations and professionals and volunteers in other sectors (for example, the education, health, environment, housing and youth sectors and the criminal justice system).
- promote local awareness of opportunities in the arts in South Lakeland.
- increase awareness of the full range of arts practice and provision in South Lakeland among artists, arts managers and critics, commentators and funders outside the district.
- encourage innovation, experimentation and risk-taking in the arts.
- work for the highest possible aesthetic standards of architecture and design.
- promote South Lakeland as a cultural tourism destination.



This strategy has been developed by the Arts Strategy Steering Group, working with consultants Phyllida Shaw, Keith Allen and Peter Booth.

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