

Tees Valley Festival & Events Development Plan (FEDP)

Background

In September of 2008 a sub-group of the One North East Board (ONE) was established to consider future single programme funding of festivals and events post 2010 when the current arrangements with culture10 expire.

Five options were considered by the sub-group, the option selected was the procurement of a regional co-ordination service by ONE to work with parties developing events and to plan and advise on which investments will bring maximum economic impact to the region from 2010.

Partners from each sub-region were invited to develop 5 year development plans for festivals and events, FEDPs. The collaborative plans are inclusive and involve a wide range of organisations including Area Tourism Partnerships, Local Authorities, private sector event companies, sporting clubs and facilities and community led events etc. The regional coordination service will then work with partners to 'horizon scan' to identify forthcoming major events and cross-regional opportunities, then bring these together with sub-regional plans into a regional plan.

Each sub-regional FEDP will be collated by ONE and a 'package' of events taken from all 5 plans will then be funded through single programme monies. Guidance has been issued from ONE that helped steer these plans and the content will be assessed independently against clear criteria. The sub-group considered future single programme funding levels, recommending £2.5m in 2009/10 and thereafter £2m per annum.

vTv have taken the lead role in delivering the Tees Valley FEDP in conjunction with the Heads of Culture of the 5 Las.

Our Vision:

"By 2015 Tees Valley will be recognised as an exciting, innovative and distinctive destination by both festival & event organisers and goers, capable of securing and delivering nationally and internationally significant festivals and events."

The following priorities for festivals and events have been identified:

- **Rooted** – Unique and Distinct- Tees Valley is a unique and culturally diverse destination where striking urban town centres sit alongside picturesque coast and country. Tees Valley is uniquely placed to deliver events in the **right event in the right setting** because of the close proximity and quality of its 'Coast, Countryside and Urban playgrounds.
- Our festivals and events reflect this and more often than not use their surroundings to enhance the event experience. Examples include R&CBC using Roseberry Topping as the backdrop and content of their illumination event – Odin's Glow, site specific street theatre commissions in Stockton, and carnivals in both Stockton and Darlington town centres, fire breathing dragons walking among late night shoppers in Middlesbrough town centre and Hartlepool, with its maritime heritage being chosen to host The Tall Ships Races in 2010. Using these unique selling points will set Tees Valley apart from competitors and engage / resonate with both resident and visitors.
- **Exploiting International and National links** – Tees Valley has established links all over the world, for example between Middlesbrough and the Ruhr Valley (twin towns), SIRF's co-commissioning links with Belgium, Italy, Spain, Slovenia, France, Sweden and Germany, and of course most famously Tees Valley links with Captain Cook and Australia. These links form part of our history, heritage and culture and are unique to the Tees Valley. Where possible these themes should be explored and celebrated through festivals and events. The further reach we can have internationally the larger audience we can communicate with and attract.
- **Future growth is in securing fewer, bigger, better events** – our emphasis will remain on researching and identifying major events that can use the sub-region's iconic structures and locations. This includes making a case for supporting indigenous events with growth potential as well as commissioning and attracting new ones.
- **Thematic linking of events across Tees Valley** – This has already started to happen in recent years and using this plan as a structure there is the opportunity to link and theme events throughout the year, this will enable both the clustering of events and the opportunity to take a stronger message to market. One mechanism that can assist this process is that each year carries a different overarching theme, for example (2010) will be the Tees Valleys Year of the SEA. Taking a thematic approach will also enable two other priorities to flourish.

- Firstly, the **clustering of home grown events** around annual themes will provide a focal point for smaller events to 'grow from' and support larger events. Additionally, home grown events tend to have more ownership amongst the communities around them and subsequently increase skills development and capacity building opportunities. Without the support and backing of local communities, events will not grow and develop – this is especially relevant in the Tees Valley where the highest visitor proportion is from visiting friends and relatives.
- Secondly it will enable the Tees Valley to **build on the current offer and expertise within Tees Valley**, as it will act as a focal point for the five Local Authorities and a robust private sector events industry to dovetail their endeavours. It puts us, not only in a competitive position but enables us develop a strong partnership, capacity build and make things happen.
- **Making the case for investment more clearly** – We need to make a more compelling case for Public / Private involvement and the third sector investment, via clear identification of Events & Festivals with the most local and regional economic impact. Therefore the Tees Valley FEDP will prioritise events which maximise the economic benefits to Tees Valley, help change perceptions and have effective promotion and marketing plans and media support. We also need to make clear the relevant benefits of involvement to our stakeholders in the Public, Private and Third sectors.

Important & Growing Events

The strength of the Tees Valley offer to visitors is its diverse range of experiences. These reflect the combination of distinctive places within the Tees Valley, but also a heritage of industrial and technical design innovation which continues today.

Priorities for existing event development

The principle here will be to build on existing events and fill the gaps where they exist. Major and established events can be used in a hub and spoke methodology to grow smaller events across the sub-region.

New Events

Tees Valley will concentrate on attracting events that fit with its natural advantages over the next 3-5 years, i.e. the right events in the right place – utilising the landscape literally and physically, ie the River and Barrage; the Beach and Sea and the Urban Spaces

To maximise sustainable, inclusive regional economic growth from festivals and event activities: Our sub-regional objectives are to:

- Increase attendances at events – from out of sub-region / out of region
- Increase repeat visitor numbers
- Increase visitor spend
- Increase overnight stays
- Increase visitor perception of sub-region / towns
- Increase the number of businesses participating in / or buying into events
- Business tourism growth
- Grow column inches and number of articles on sub-region / towns / events
- Increase resident perception percentage
- Increase non-resident perception percentage
- Increase non-user perception – willingness to visit.
- Support local procurement
- Create jobs
- Extend the season

What will success look like?

Success will be a quality visitor experience, bigger crowds at our events, more visitors from out of the area, increased national media coverage and more recognition in the International market place.

The events programme will be attracting events that fit with its natural advantages i.e. the right events in the right place, which means we are utilising the landscape literally and physically.

- The River and Barrage
- The Beach and Sea
- Urban Spaces

That Festivals and Events are viewed as being of critical importance for the Tees Valley. They are seen as supporting and enabling community cohesion, providing opportunities to demonstrate and dovetail with regeneration initiatives, supporting the worklessness agenda, providing an attractor to visitors and supporting economic

growth. This in turn is helping support and drive regeneration in the following areas identified in the Tees Valley AtMap.

- The urban playground experience of Stockton and Middlesbrough
- The coastal stretch from Hartlepool to Redcar, Saltburn and onto Staithes.
- The countryside and historic towns including Guisborough, Yarm, and Darlington

Three Levels of Events

The Tees Valley Festival & Events Development Plan identifies three levels of events – those that are seen as Tees Valley’s “lead” events which will attract a regional, national and international audience such as:

- The Tall Ships Races 2010
- Odin’s Glow
- SIRF& Fringe
- BBC Proms
- Middlesbrough Music Live

The second level of events is those that currently (or is anticipated to) attract a regional audience but have the capacity to grow and develop:

- Kiteival
- Living North Christmas Fair
- Middlesbrough Mela
- Redcar ½ marathon
- Take to the Tees
- Darlington Food Festival

The 3rd level are community based events primarily targeting the local audience:

- Summer Shows
- Firework Displays
- Family Fundays
- Christmas Light Switch On’s