



# Sharing Protocol

(Updated July 2020)

NewcastleGateshead Cultural Venues (NGCV) is a voluntary consortium of 10 building-based cultural producers operating 20 venues and sites\* across visual arts, performing arts, music, dance, film, writing and literature, heritage, archives and museums and science communication.

NGCV is an association of non profit-distributing organisations, sharing most of these characteristics:

- Responsible for significant public cultural buildings within the Newcastle/Gateshead local authority boundaries
- Not for profit cultural organisations based in NewcastleGateshead, sharing a commitment and a capacity to work collaboratively with the other NGCV partners to increase public engagement in our work and knowledge and understanding of the arts, sciences and culture, and collaborate to develop more resource-efficient ways of working
- In whom the public sector are significant stakeholders
- Responsible for significant, originally created education and community programmes
- Where all executive decision-making resides with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who comes to the NGCV CEO group monthly meetings

We work together to maximise the artistic and economic potential of the cultural sector in the North East. We achieve this by developing strategic and creative initiatives, sharing practice and resources and by being a strong collective voice. NGCVs' shared aims are:

- To offer world-class cultural experiences and to sustain the rich cultural fabric of the region
- To develop audiences and encourage participation in culture in the North East
- To attract visitors, artists and producers to come to the North East
- To ensure the strength of culture in Newcastle and Gateshead is recognised in the national and international conversation
- To support innovation and nurture the next generation of cultural producers
- To contribute to the social and economic well-being of the North East
- To pursue training and educational opportunities to ensure ongoing expertise and leadership in the sector
- To protect the current and future physical assets of each of the cultural forms
- To develop sustainable organisational and financial models across the membership of the consortium
- To share good practice and opportunities with the wider cultural sector
- To collaborate in the realisation of international partnerships

\* As well as the main venues of the partner organisations, this includes: the area archives, plus the 9 museums, galleries and heritage sites of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, which are Arbeia Roman Fort, Discovery Museum, Great North Museum: Hancock, Hatton Gallery, Laing Art Gallery, Segedunum Roman Fort, Shipley Art Gallery, South Shields Museum and Art

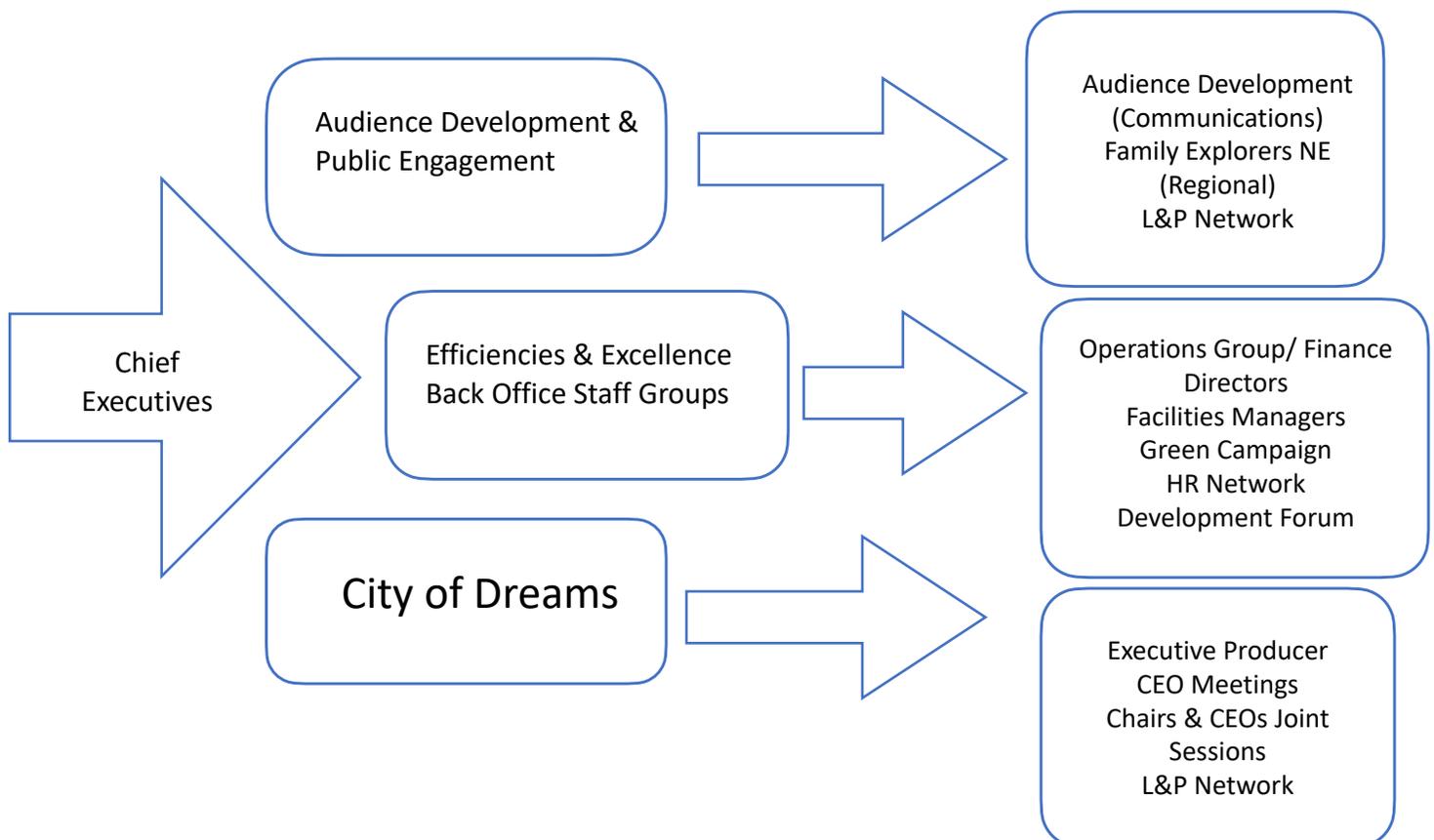
Gallery, Stephenson Steam Railway; plus BALTIC 39 operated by BALTIC; and Gateshead Old Town Hall operated by Sage Gateshead.

## 1. Collaborative Working Principles

Between the 10 member organisations there is a huge range of skills and expertise. Wherever possible, the partners will consider sharing knowledge, experience, expertise and services. All NGCV partners agree to the following collaborative working principles:

- **Savings or benefits must outweigh costs.** The collaboration should result in either economies of scale, financial savings or increased knowledge, leading to improved delivery of services;
- There should be a **balance of benefit** for larger and smaller organisations;
- **Flexible collaboration** is important. Not all NGCV members may be able to or want to take advantage of all of the opportunities or ideas presented. Smaller groups with common interests can explore sharing arrangements associated with specific technical or organisational opportunities;
- Sharing and collaborating must be **practical and legal**. Organisations must operate within their agreed procurement processes, particularly those that are linked to public bodies. Feasibility studies and enquiries will need to be made into more complicated areas where there are potential legal issues or barriers to joint working;
- **Evidence of progress** on any joint working or shared services needs to be gathered and tracked to demonstrate to NGCV members and partners the cost savings and efficiencies achieved, as well as wider benefits of collaboration.

## 2. Working together in practice



Chief Executives of all 10 organisations meet bi-monthly to agree strategies, monitor progress and identify any additional actions or support required to progress the collaboration. Guest speakers or partners may attend to discuss key issues, areas for consideration or new opportunities.

In terms of key strands of work and task groups progressing activities, these are usually led by Chief Executive Champions, who report back to the CEOs' group. They have included Finance Directors, Facilities Managers and Human Resources Network, Digital, Public Engagement (including Learning and Participation Forum, Development Forum, Creative Programmers) and Physical Assets. The groups are flexible and change over time, depending on where there is need. The groups operating in 2020-21 are Audience Development, Human Resources, Facilities & Green Group, Learning & Participation and Development Forum.

Sub Groups, Forums and Working/task Groups, have nominated specialists of some or all of the organisations, who share knowledge, establish links and identify common issues. The groups develop action plans and implement these when there are clear advantages to working together. Where there are more complex issues, the Groups will make recommendations to or seek advice from the Chief Executives' Group. Task groups are set up, when more detailed pieces of work are required. All report to the appropriate sub-group. All groups monitor and report progress.

Board Chairs meet twice a year with Chief Executives.

### 3. Communications

Good communications are important and enable people to share information, offer and take advantage of opportunities as they arise. NGCV organisations agree to communicate in an effective way face to face and online.

#### *Internal Communications*

- **Staff relationships:** The collaborative work is supported by networks and meetings as appropriate, to build trust, personal relationships, mutual benefit and a sense of shared purpose and vision. In addition, annual staff events have been organized to share the outcomes of the work and plans for the future.
- **Ning:** The NGCV online social network, the 'ning' <http://gnculturalvenues.ning.com/>, enables information, learning and opportunities to be shared, as a whole community, or in specialist areas (sub-groups, task groups and forums). Staff are encouraged to use the ning to communicate with each other, share details of NGCV events and as a document archive to store relevant information in a neutral space.
- **Staff offers** (one from each venue) have been in place since October 2010 and encourage staff to engage with other venues and activities, as well as enabling staff to feel valued. Weekly mails of additional offers, activities, vacancies and opportunities are shared with all staff and staff can post blogs to the ning to alert people to any activities or opportunities they feel others would be interested in.

#### *External Communications*

- **Website:** [NGCV.org.uk](http://NGCV.org.uk) is a business to business website operates to share information and learning with the wider cultural sector. This contains information about NGCV and shares key documents, case studies and learning.
- **NGCV News:** A quarterly newsletter was produced from June 2014 to share information about the activities and achievements of NGCV. This is in the process of being relaunched as a twice yearly bulletin sharing partnership news with a broader range of stakeholders across the public, private and voluntary sector. All Board members receive this, as do local, regional, national politicians, decision makers and influencers. Anyone can [subscribe to the newsletter here](#).
- **Economic Impact Assessment:** Every year we work with an economic research consultancy, ERS, who produce an independent assessment of our collective contribution to the local and regional economy. This document is a key communication too for advocacy.

#### **4. Working with external organisations**

NGCV is keen to share learning and draw upon the expertise of external organisations, but recognises the need to embed the collaboration, test and achieve outcomes within the 10 organisations so that sharing is meaningful.

Working with external organisations should be based on the following guidance:

##### **Working with external organisations as part of NGCV work**

- Working groups can involve other organisations in projects, group meetings or in sessions with external experts, where this is deemed appropriate and useful
- Attendance of external organisations at NGCV meetings/events is to be agreed with the relevant Champion/Chair and any NGCV business which would not be appropriate for discussion with external stakeholders should be within a session for NGCV staff only

##### **Sharing learning and dissemination**

- Sharing learning with external organisations is encouraged to promote collaboration and information about NGCV will be shared with peers and colleagues as appropriate
- Documents which can be shared have been approved by the Chief Executives
- Reports, studies and data which may be sensitive or confidential will not be shared with external organisations (unless expressly permitted by the Chief Executives' group)
- A set of key statistics is available to share with external organisations
- NGCV Chief Executives, staff and the Partnership Co-ordinator agree to share learning and good practice with colleagues and organisations across the sector. NGCV is often approached by other networks and organisations to share information about how the partnership works and what it does in practice. All queries will be responded to and where appropriate representatives give presentations to groups, networks and conferences or share relevant information by email.

#### **5. Press, publicity and public relations**

Any NGCV specific press, publicity or public relations opportunities should be cleared with the Chief Executives' group. This includes any interviews with, or statements to, the media. Agreed statements and statistics will be shared with all Chief Executives for use in promoting NGCV.