

AN EXPLORATORY CASE

The potential for European Year of
Cultural Heritage 2018 in Northern Ireland

Report

3 November 2017

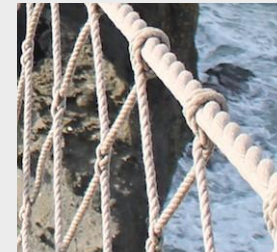
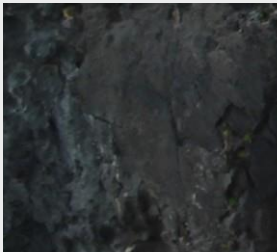
creativetourist

The potential for European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 in Northern Ireland



“Northern Ireland has a future filled with exciting tourism possibilities. One of these involves switching on the latent power and appeal of its cultural and heritage offer.”

excerpt from ‘A Prospectus for Change: a strategic framework to unlock the potential of heritage-led tourism in Northern Ireland’, May 2017



CONTENTS

1 Executive Summary 04

CONTEXT

2 Purpose statement 06
3 Background 07
4 Challenges 10
5 Objectives 12

OPTIONS

6 Situational analysis 17
7 Options appraisal 26

RECOMMENDATION

8 Clustered recommendations 29
9 Summary statement 33

Commissioned by



1. Executive summary

The European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 (EYCH2018) is very timely domestically in Northern Ireland.

There is a convergence of strategic thinking and progress across culture, heritage and tourism. Tourism NI has generated a new Heritage Tourism Framework which has directly informed this Exploratory Case. It will sit within a new Proposition of Scale (due early 2018) which will set out how NI will present itself to its domestic and international visitor markets. A strong new Heritage Value Narrative is also pending, which will help to engage all parts of government as well as the people of NI in the dynamic role that heritage plays.

This policy-level momentum is increasingly matched by collaborative networks and initiatives which reveal energetic partnerships and practice. This confidence is of course building on demonstrable successes for the sector. In the space of a year NI has become home to the world's best museum¹ and the best place to visit² (according to Lonely Planet). The existing programme of activity in 2018 is also very busy, with capital developments completing, significant anniversaries and festivals and some new, strong location-based collaborations that will generate exciting new programmes and enhanced offers.

For NI, the aims are a mix of internal and external – to galvanise the sector around a shared agenda, to use 2018 as a laboratory for new ideas and practice, and to raise international profile and local engagement through associated campaign and marketing communications activity.

However, there are a number of questions and challenges to address before committing to any course of action, including:

- _ What might EYCH2018 look like in 2018 in NI?
- _ What model will work best?
- _ What level of commitment, investment, leadership and delivery is required and from whom?
- _ What can be achieved in 2018, and what follows?
- _ How can the sector use EYCH2018 to be innovative and ambitious?

The ambitions, values and principles that need to underpin any response have been defined as: boldness; confidence; a focus on impact rather than on everything that could contribute; a sense of realism for 2018 but looking further ahead; a clear, light-touch model of management and delivery; a commitment to connect

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1. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-38183075
 2. www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/belfast-northern-ireland-causeway-coast-lonely-planet-worlds-best-region-a8016406.html



across sectors, strategies and programmes; to work to align to a singular brand; to seek out sector-leading 'next practice' where possible; and to encourage co-production and co-commissioning.

Five options have been presented, ranging from no response to EYCH2018 at all to replicating major past 'Year of...' campaign models. The recommended option is to use the Year as a positive and visible catalyst for new and exciting practice, product development, programming and animation – investing in the future.

A number of early 'incubator' project ideas are included in this report, but many more can be revealed and generated from the cultural, heritage, tourism and related sectors. This option was assessed as the only one that can paint a positive, realistic yet ambitious picture of where cultural heritage could be to in 5 years' time, if EYCH2018 was embraced as an opportunity for development. The overarching aim is to create a series of 'change moments' that add up to a 'year of change' but also provide dynamic foundations for sustained incremental change over the longer-term.



TITANIC BELFAST

More than a (very successful) museum, Titanic Belfast is an active symbol of regeneration a confident welcome to visitors and investors from around the world. It is also the anchor for future plans – Titanic Hotel, Drawing Room, Titanic Mile, Maritime Quarter, major events and public realm animation and so on.

CONTEXT

2. Purpose statement

To make a case, even an exploratory one, there is a requirement for a singular proposition or ambition to test. This is the purpose statement, setting out the strategic step to assess, building on what assets and activities are in place as foundations.

This statement relates specifically to the national response of NI to the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 (EYCH2018), an initiative of the European Commission³.

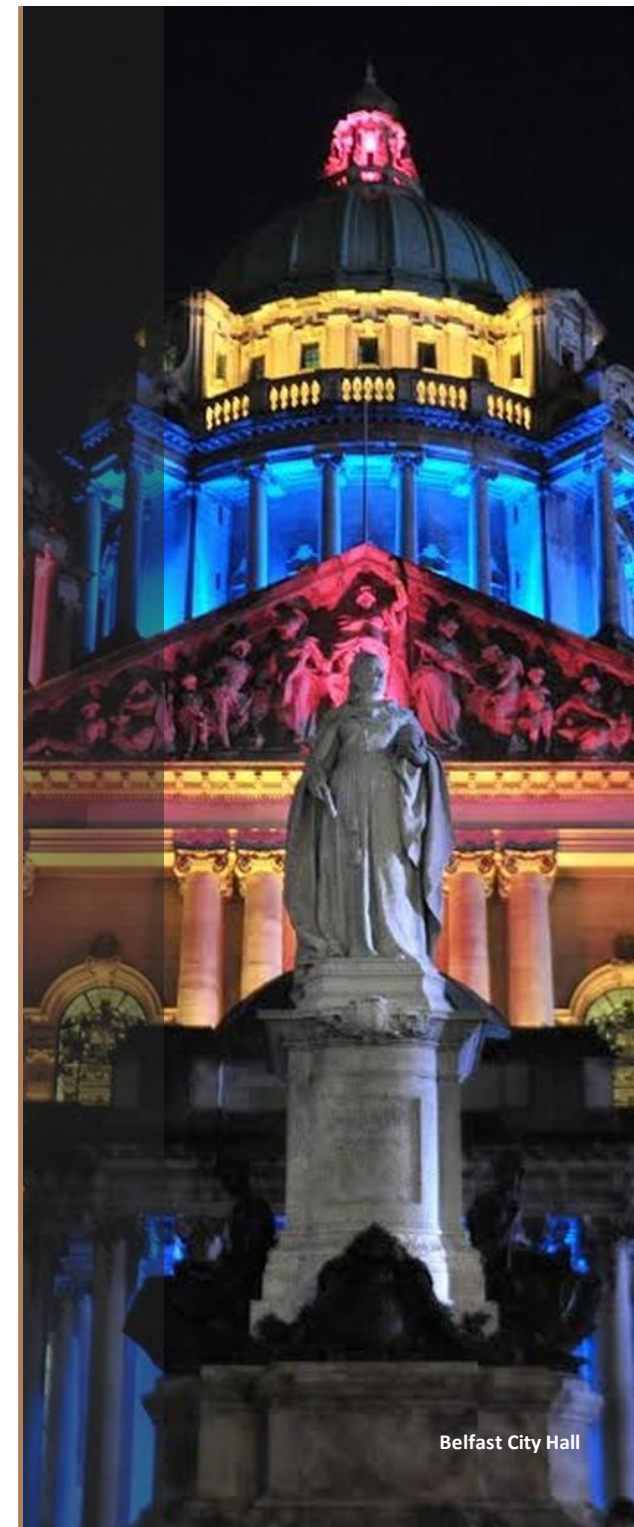
The purpose of this Exploratory Case is:

1. To identify any compelling reasons to engage with the EYCH2018 at a national level;
2. To set out how any such engagement might best be structured;
3. To request defined and coordinated sectoral support for a recommended route within which programme strands can be developed.

The recommendations outlined in this document can deliver incremental benefits – a mix of quick wins and longer-lead activity – often in seemingly small ways as pilots and through changing the ‘normal’ ways of doing or thinking. Equally the EYCH2018 and its legacies can be driven through a high-profile strategy to maximise profile by the end of 2018 and onward.

This Exploratory Case is a framework, a way to define and connect the opportunity with the sector, and in so doing to connect with audiences/visitors; to enhance the visitor and destination offer; and make direct practical links between NI’s past and its future prosperity and wellbeing.

³ https://ec.europa.eu/culture/european-year-cultural-heritage-2018_en



Belfast City Hall

3. Background

The aim of this pan-European initiative is to raise awareness of European history and values and to strengthen a sense of European identity, including across its constituent national cultural heritages.

Contemporary heritage issues are encouraged to be explored and debated, through the prism of culture, including the impact of digital technology, and environmental pressures amongst others.

The main aims for the themed year are therefore centred around: the promotion of cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and social cohesion; highlighting the economic contribution of cultural heritage to the cultural and creative sectors; and emphasising the role of cultural heritage in EU external relations.

As the original brief puts it: 'EYCH 2018 could present Northern Ireland with an opportunity to create awareness of and strengthen its cultural heritage base. A programme of diverse activity across the year could present an opportunity to pilot initiatives, increase awareness of Northern Ireland's cultural heritage, celebrate its riches in ways which engage local communities, provide a platform to promote tourism and act as a catalyst to drive quality, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship in the culture and heritage sector.'

Challenges aside, there remains a number of opportunities for 2018 and beyond to generate sustained added value, notably:

- 1. Galvanising the sector** – Unlocking potential through enlivening the visitor offer, reinvigorating interpretation and storytelling, animating sites, creating new products, events, partnerships and ways of working, skills and practice development.
- 2. 2018 as laboratory** – Insights could be learned and then applied as a result of pilot-based initiatives across: new product development; new/enhanced programming and cultural heritage interpretation/storytelling; new/enhanced visitor experience; visitor service levels; digital interpretation and communications; research and data; and commercialisation and entrepreneurialism. This can form a list of initiatives, but also align with and inform a calendar of events and activities, especially during 2018.
- 3. Campaign and marketing communications** – Adoption of the new Proposition of Scale (see overleaf) to support Tourism NI's work on positioning, tone of voice, communications, choice of media, content development and storytelling.

Therefore, an Exploratory Case necessarily focuses on the opportunities for NI as part of the EYCH2018 for 2018 and post-2018.

What would NI have to gain by participation, and conversely, what would Europe miss without NI as part of the EYCH2018?



WELIG HERITAGE CRAFTS

Willow sculpture

3.1 THE PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

The Programme is the framework for what the government wants to achieve between 2016-2021. It has 14 key areas identified. This exploratory case and the strategies it aligns itself with have noted these priorities, and where possible and appropriate has addressed them. More information can be found at:

www.northernireland.gov.uk/consultations/programme-government-consultation.

3.2 A PROPOSITION OF SCALE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

In 2018, Tourism NI will launch a new proposition of scale for NI to the industry. Within the Island of Ireland the development of the *Wild Atlantic Way* and *Ireland's Ancient East* as propositions of scale have shifted the focus away from standalone attractions to a more coherent means of joining together, articulating and communicating experiences to the international visitor. Northern Ireland is now embarking on this journey to build its competitive positioning with a clear and single-minded articulation of what NI has to offer to its visitors. This goes beyond a marketing message – it is that authentic articulation of Northern Ireland's identity that will deliver standout on an international stage. The overall objective is to increase international visitor numbers and spend and the proposition will support a long term sustainable approach to delivering this. This vision will provide a framework for the strategic

development of NI's brand positioning, its messaging, campaign and experience development.

The proposition will have a number of clear developmental themes and will help join up the many, sometimes smaller experiences across the geography of NI to generate critical mass and build new iconic experiences and messages - distinctive products that can be best, often only, experienced in NI. It recognises that NI may be small – but that it is jam-packed full of stories, spirit and flavour.

Heritage and culture are the undeniable cornerstone of the stories and themes which make NI stand-out, and the proposition of scale recognises this. Furthermore it recognises the importance of the heritage and cultural sectors as active partners in delivering to the new framework, to ensure that stand-out messages are matched with stand-out experiences.

The EYCH18 presents an opportunity to build partnerships across the culture and heritage sectors and test new pilot models in support of both the Strategic Framework for Culture and Heritage and in turn the NI Proposition of Scale.

“Our heritage is our authentic voice and distinctive character. It is the basis for our confidence, our prosperity, and our health. It binds us together, attracts investment, and improves our quality of life.”

excerpt from the draft
Heritage value narrative

3.3 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR CULTURE AND HERITAGE TOURISM

In 2016, a new framework was developed to address a number of timely issues:

1. To highlight the current issues inhibiting key heritage tourism assets from performing to their full potential;
2. To identify new approaches to animating and interpreting heritage;
3. To identify and prioritise Northern Irish heritage assets that have the potential to increase visitor numbers and spend.
4. To identify best practice heritage management structures and practice and how these can be more widely adopted.

Recommendations cover: standards & practice; mapping & landscape; storytelling & animation; and partnerships & planning. This framework provides some clear connectivity between tourism and heritage and therefore has something significant to say about how NI could respond to EYCH2018.

3.4 A NARRATIVE FOR THE VALUE OF HERITAGE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

This important piece of work – a manifesto in effect – will be completed in time to inform the messaging, communications and advocacy of the sector from 2018, initially directed at government,

but ultimately to the public. The narrative will set out the beliefs and therefore help to (re)define the sector, its relevance to the public and what it stands for.

Full details will emerge at the end of 2017, but key messages, which can infuse and inform EYCH2018 activity and communications, include:

- Investment in heritage generates business growth, increases tourism, attract new businesses to NI and create jobs. Original thinking for the sector will deliver a return and attract further investment.
- Heritage investment boosts education, health, employment, and wellbeing. Integrating heritage into policy-making improves peoples' lives, and that community benefit can be returned as deeper engagement with culture and heritage.
- Heritage investment protects and celebrates the character of NI and its people. This is essential to a peaceful, prosperous and progressive future where heritage.

“Our heritage is our authentic voice and distinctive character. It is the basis for our confidence, our prosperity, and our health. It binds us together, attracts investment, and improves our quality of life.”

excerpt from the draft
Heritage value narrative

4. Challenges

There are a number of obvious challenges to face if Northern Ireland is to respond in a positive, coherent, and sustainable manner to the opportunity presented by EYCH2018. None are more obvious or urgent than timing, but this should not overshadow the bigger picture, or setting and driving forward a positive agenda.

4.1 KEY QUESTIONS

The Exploratory Case must address some fundamental strategic questions:

4.1.1 Commitment and model

1. Should NI participate in EYCH2018? What is appropriate?
2. What can be delivered that is timely, worthwhile and has legacy?
3. What is achievable for 2018? How might 2018 activity feed positively and directly into post-2018 activity? Is there the confidence and sense of purpose to act decisively?
4. With the lack of lead-in time, what would a viable route plan look like from autumn 2017 to post-2018? How far ahead should this business case look?

4.1.2 Planning, leadership and management

5. What capacity exists within the sector to leverage any identified opportunities that EYCH2018 presents?
6. What planning, management and delivery model will work best? Who should provide central leadership, if that is what is required? How will active stakeholder buy-in and contributions be secured?⁴
7. How can strategic management ensure a sustainable impact?

4.1.3 The opportunity

8. What other opportunities could be exploited or supported through EYCH2018?
9. How much activity is required to achieve a positive 'critical mass', adding value to partners, contributors and audiences?

4.1.4 Funding, investment and ROI

10. What is affordable? What resources can/should be brought to bear? What funding and investment is possible?
11. Where can investment make a difference?

4 Including, but not limited to: Historic Environment Division, National Trust, Local Councils, Tourism NI, Heritage Lottery Fund, National Museums Northern Ireland, Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust, Mourne Heritage Trust. A full list of consultees is included in the appendices.



BOA ISLAND

The enigmatic Megalithic figures of Lower Lough Erne have inspired poets including Seamus Heaney and Francis Harvey.

12. How can the existing programme calendar for cultural heritage be best supported and exploited/enhanced?

4.1.5 Programme, partnership and activity

13. Which elements of the programme are relevant?
14. How can the diverse range of cultural heritage sector organisations and potential stakeholders be dynamically involved in a variety of ways?
15. What areas would particularly benefit from an R&D approach?
16. What product development is possible, necessary, desirable?
17. How creative and different should partnership development aim to be?
18. What should the role of local communities be in telling the cultural heritage stories of NI through EYCH2018?

4.1.6 Marketing and communications

19. What influence on programming and planning should the proposition of scale impart?
20. What content development is possible, necessary, desirable?
21. What content, digital, communication assets and toolkits are required for campaign activity to work across all channels?

One major question informs and draw these points together:

What will success look like at the end of 2018, and more importantly, in 3-5 years?



HOMEPLACE

Seamus Heaney's grand-daughters Aibhin and Anna Rose celebrate the launch of Seamus Heaney HomePlace, the arts and literary centre that marks the poet's life and work in Bellaghy, Co Derry. Photograph: Marc O'Sullivan.

5. Objectives

5.1 EYCH2018 AIMS

The EYCH2018 aims to:

- _ Encourage the sharing and appreciation of Europe's cultural heritage as a shared resource;
- _ Raise awareness of common history and values;
- _ Reinforce a sense of belonging to Europe;
- _ Better protect, safeguard, reuse, enhance, valorise and promote Europe's cultural heritage.

European cultural heritage allows us to understand the past and to look to our future. EYCH in 2018 will emphasise and promote cultural heritage through its contribution to:

- _ Building stronger societies;
- _ Cultural diversity and inter-cultural dialogue;
- _ The economy;
- _ Relations between the EU and third countries.

5.2 PRINCIPLES

Whatever the route taken to respond to the opportunities presented by EYCH2018, a clear set of principles as to NI's approach has emerged to achieve demonstrable 'step-changes':

1. **Boldness & confidence** – This does not relate necessarily to scope or breadth of ambition, but rather in the strength of purpose to do something new and distinctive.
2. **Focus** – A clear understanding is required to ensure that every initiative or action is part of the wider EYCH2018 programme and makes sense as such to audiences and stakeholders as appropriate, including European. Some of NI's historic landmarks in 2018 have direct and distinctive European resonance. What measured risks can NI take to bridge to this opportunity? How can EYCH2018 help to inform and evidence the case for #weare2023?
3. **Realism** – In planning terms, 2018 is already here. That does not mean that there is a lack of ambition or sense of purpose. It does mean that a sensible and incremental view of investment and resource management is essential.
4. **Time & motion** – To make a demonstrable success of any response to EYCH2018, strong coordination and monitoring is required, with clear measures and an equally clear sense of what success will look like along a detailed timeline. This is different from overall leadership. The opportunities post-2018 are certainly greater than those in 2018 and should be planned for over time accordingly. Quick wins and longer-term developments should be part of the same programme.
5. **Allocation** – Who leads, partners and contributes to each element and overall management should be on the basis of fitness, willingness and appropriateness. Progress will be impeded if all possible interested parties/stakeholders are 'round the table' as a default partnership model.



PRONI

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland is now a visitor attraction in its own right, as well as an archive and social resource.

6. **Connectivity** – The full response to this opportunity may have many facets, and whilst they can connect through a number of means – brand proposition, logistics, communication, planning and so on – they need to do so in a coherent manner.
7. **From best practice to next practice** – NI can start to initiate 'next practice'⁵ in telling the stories of NI, through significant innovation to ensure that the heritage of the past benefits the future. This requires an open, shared, cross-sectoral approach to link stories and communities that can feed into national and international narratives.
8. **Co-production** – To achieve new positive outcomes, one of the necessary innovations will be to work across sectors and with new types of partner, providing fresh perspectives, ideas and challenge.
9. **Making sense** – a 12-month 'Year of...' programme is not necessarily in the model of previous events, e.g. Giro D'Italia, Year of Food & Drink. It should 'add up' for contributors, media and public alike, avoiding the impression of being a 'Year of... lite' rather than a coherent and exciting programme, whatever the approach – major year programme, catalyst programme, current programme magnifier etc.

5 Next practice is distinguished from best/better practice by its focus on developing new approaches to working practice – who you work with, how you work with them, what you work with them on etc. – as opposed to just systematic improvement of existing working practices (which are still important of course).

5.3 OBJECTIVES FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

5.3.1 Build energy, confidence and capacity through new partnerships and working practice

- Establish co-production processes and partnerships with agencies, organisations and independent cultural producers to develop programmes and supporting infrastructure – aiming for 'alchemy' between culture and heritage.
- Speed dating-style programme across the sector to develop buddying relationships across disciplines, notably animation.
- Develop selected task/finish groups for key programme elements, rather than a single, national steering group for the operational delivery and control of EYCH18.
- Work with partners, notably #weare2023, to build working relationships that inform the Bid development.



A WILDE WEEKEND (2015)

Kabosh Theatre Company's *Ballad of Reading Gaol* at the Old Gaol, Enniskillen

5.3.2 Build capability through pilots that focus on skills development and ‘next practice’ rather than ‘better practice’

- Position EYCH2018 as a new kickstarter initiative within the context of NI cultural heritage and other events, to develop new ideas, approaches and initiatives as a sector.
- To seek to work with commercial, independent and cross-sector operators in supported projects, to encourage their involvement in the EYCH2018 and cultural heritage generally, e.g. festival/event producers, digital and media producers, universities, special interest groups, developers, BIDs, town centre managers etc.
- Include a local community (group) focus within the existing cultural heritage infrastructure and operations to develop their skills, engagement and capacity to contribute, including through volunteer programmes.

5.3.3 Raise the profile of Northern Ireland as a cultural heritage destination nationally and internationally

- Commit to the strategic generation of new content as part of an integrated strategy which connects with cultural heritage storytelling and audience engagement.
- Explore and test how to enhance the digital platforms and communications/engagement of the sector, working with media partners and specialists as required.

5.3.4 Deliver a coherent 2018 programme with demonstrable legacy activity

- Interrogate potential European subject matter and themes through a Northern Irish prism.
- Identify and confirm primary and secondary themes and strands to a EYCH2018 programme, with a clear view of post-2018 legacy and sharing learning.
- Identify and support key programme areas for enhanced support, again with a clear view of post-2018.
- Identify and instigate new, fundable programme strands that fit with the agreed themes, strands and priorities.
- Work on all of the above with clear target audiences, campaign and communications channels, and evaluation criteria built into the planning and delivery process.



HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

The national coordination and promotion of Heritage Open Days in Northern Ireland is one of the strongest in the UK.

5.3.5 Drive engagement by telling cultural heritage stories in new ways.

- _ Audit with intent – undertake a gap analysis to identify where provision is underperforming and visitor engagement opportunities exist.
- _ Test and develop new ideas and initiatives for how to further place users, visitors and audiences at the centre of how history is told – engaging, investigating, discovering, recording, experiencing, becoming part of the storytelling.
- _ Reveal and respect the complexities and tensions in historical narratives.

5.3.6 Put in place a flexible, flat management structure to support innovation and progressive practice across NI and its cultural heritage stakeholders.

- _ Ensure that the management model builds in benchmarking, target setting and evaluation as a priority, starting with formative evaluation in planning.
- _ Work with partners and funders to ensure that EYCH2018 is not just a 12-month programme.
- _ Establish long-term working relationships with partner agencies⁶ on live agendas supported through EYCH2018, and how these connect with wider, ongoing programmes and opportunities, and secure ongoing roles & responsibilities and their evolution, e.g. Thrive, local authorities, NI Museums Council.
- _ Monitor, review and evolve a leadership model that is fit for purpose, flexible enough to encourage for cross-sector working, and action-orientated, as opposed to bureaucratic and over-representative.
- _ A flat management and monitoring approach will enable more rapid response to new ideas and opportunities, releasing investment to support the most important resource – ideas.

⁶ Partner agencies can include RoI, notably Tourism Ireland. There has been liaison with Tourism Ireland. They are planning market testing, e.g. GB media approach, which may present shared target audiences to test messages, offer etc., and inform investments in innovative developmental projects.



ULSTER AMERICAN FOLK PARK

An important asset in connecting the Northern Irish diaspora with their heritage.

Case study – Mount Stewart (National Trust)



“For hundreds of years, this has been Ireland’s secret retreat for royals, leaders of state, influencers and aristocracy. For generations this has been a powerhouse of great thinking, art, music, talks and deliberation, and this energy lives on today.”

Jon Kerr, National Trust General Manager, Mount Stewart

Home to the Londonderry family for a quarter of a millennium, Mount Stewart evokes the passage of time and its influence wonderfully. A historic home for political discussions, it boasts European connections as diverse as the Congress of Vienna and the Nazis. It is this heritage that the National Trust, who have invested £8m to restore the property, is now celebrating with its annual *Conversations Festival* – ‘a carnival of sparkling conversations, arts and culture’.

“[Conversations] is a truly unique festival weekend that brings Mount Stewart’s history to life in a completely new way. The idea is that we will bring an eclectic range of people together for conversations on a central topic... We are also keen that visitors get really involved in those conversations... the ethos of the weekend.” Abby Williams, Mount Stewart

The mix of arts music, literature and debate could only be staged at Mount Stewart – it is of the place. It is also encouraging diverse artists and writers to respond to the place and key themes that resonate with Mount Stewart’s stories – royal, political and social – whilst in turn being a ‘gateway to the world’ (lovebelfast.co.uk, 2016).

Conversations can grow to benchmark with established events such as Port Eliot Festival, Cornwall, with more of an edge than Hay-on-Wye or Cheltenham literary festivals. Past events like Voewood Festival in Norfolk could also inform how the event develops.

OPTIONS

6. Situational analysis

6.1 APPETITE & WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE

Consultations and workshops met with positivity and encouragement across the board, with a strong alignment of opinion as to what is desirable and realistic – and what isn't.

In this sense, concerns were expressed as to the need to manage expectations, but these were in the context of 'other people'. No-one consulted in this process thought that EYCH2018 could deliver a miraculous and sector-transforming 2018. Realism about what can be achieved is well rooted. Expectations that this might reflect the scale and scope of the successful NI Year of Food & Drink 2016 are, at this stage, accepted as unfeasible (and not actually what is being requested). This is especially so if the plan is clear and communicated well. There is an existing calendar of activity at a variety of scale (both consumer facing and sectoral) and a raft of anniversaries to mark.

Collaborative working however is not especially well progressed through existing programmes or generally as a sector. Some progress through new networks is encouraging, but they are fledgling. Much of the current thinking is 'organisational' in focus although the desire to create partnerships that bridge arts and heritage – and culture and tourism – is strong. This presents a potential opportunity for the EYCH2018 to respond to.

There is an element of the offer being 'not as strong as it can be'. Some of the thinking is quite academic, aimed at a more specialist or peer-to-peer market, rather than consumer facing. This of course could be seen as an opportunity to engage in wider sectoral debate and showcase this thought-leadership, given the large numbers of relevant conferences in NI during 2018. All of the stories NI has to tell can find an audience – some will require different means to engage – from seminars to contemporary cultural responses. Not all cultural heritage subjects will easily engage and excite mainstream/large audiences. They can however still find their interested markets with the right targeting and packaging.

6.2 EMERGING STRATEGIC MOMENTUM

This momentum presents a real opportunity to move NI forwards through participation in EYCH2018, delivering to clearly set out objectives and plans that can build momentum over time – far beyond 2018. Momentum can often be quite intangible to measure but it can be easily recognised when it is present, and can then be nurtured.

It has been building through demonstrable successes and investments – the NI2012, Londonderry Derry UK City of Culture 2013, the Titanic Quarter, Seamus Heaney HomePlace, Game of Thrones, the Year of Food & Drink 2016, 2014 Giro D'Italia, the emergence of Belfast as a short-break destination and so on. Numbers grow, visitors come and then return, starting to explore more and search out deeper experiences as they do.



Antrim Round Tower

As visitors become more confident, so does the sector and its key protagonists. Campaigns, programming, investment build on the momentum, and start to help to shape new perceptions in the sector and its communities and markets.

The imminent new Proposition of Scale (Tourism NI) is the next stage in managing and growing the NI brand (positioning) for cultural heritage visitors, both domestic and international in origin. There is further evidence of supporting local progress, ready to integrate their visions with the national strategic view. Community Plans, Tourism plans are bearing this out, and there are numerous examples of explicit ambition for cultural tourism, including Belfast, Londonderry Derry and Bangor to name just three. This can of course converge on a significant target date – not 2018, but 2023 – with the Londonderry Derry/Belfast developing bid to become a European Capital of Culture that year. Yes, this has named cities leading the bid, but it is certainly a national bid for NI given the scale of the designation and the potential social, cultural and economic impact it can bring to the whole country.

The ability to connect the local/county/council to the national is a comparative strength for NI when it can be achieved. The national strategic view – such as the Proposition of Scale, Culture & Heritage Tourism Framework and the Heritage Environment Division's cross-sector (net)working and stakeholder partnership – is now coming from a shared place, reflecting better working and a sense of what is possible as a sector.

6.3. A NEED TO 'MOVE NOW' (A GENUINE IMPERATIVE)

For the second-stage European Capital of Culture 2023 bid (scheduled for September 2018) it will be essential to demonstrate R&D (creativity), effective partnership working (readiness), identification of the gaps and opportunities that being a Capital of Culture will help resolve (need, opportunity) – and then how to deliver to that opportunity. The ability to evidence good and growing practice and pathways already in place will enhance the credibility and readiness of the bid (not least as NI will have used one European initiative to drive towards another).

There are of course a number of compelling anniversaries in 2018 (and on the horizon that need preparing for) that will otherwise run the risk of being missed opportunities (some once in a lifetime, literally). These include: Derry Walls (400th anniversary), Ulster Scots to America (300th anniversary), Lagan Navigation (250th anniversary), Irish Convention, Armistice, Votes for Women (100th anniversary), 1968-1998 (20th & 50th anniversary).

There are also examples of 'near and present danger' to cultural heritage in NI. Threats to Belfast Cathedral Quarter are well-publicised, but others perhaps less so, such as the generational loss of traditional skills. EYCH2018 can provide a platform for these urgent messages and campaigns, placed in a positive, forward-facing context. There is a need to raise the profile of the ongoing mission to preserve and conserve. This can be an expansive,

“If the initial ideas for further cooperation between partners materialises that will be a fantastic outcome.”

Belfast workshop participant

dynamic message, such as the contemporary revival of the linen industry.

By joining these threads together through a multi-faceted year of development and activity, the cultural heritage sector could enhance its value case-making (note the heritage value work underway by AV Browne) for the establishment and delivery of a joined up cultural heritage strategy, policy and delivery mechanism for NI. This has a very strong appeal with those consulted in the preparation of this Business Case. There are clearly good reasons to speak as one with a clear, policy-level voice: maintaining and building momentum on a positive trajectory; the threat to the visitor economy of Brexit and its possible border implications.

6.4 IT IS TIME

There are amazing stories and assets that are genuinely distinctive and contribute to a shared EU heritage. There is strong territory for NI to 'own' and this has been expressed by many in the cultural heritage sector as a feeling that the next decade could/should be the moment for NI to take its place in the spotlight.

NI has some real and positive points of differentiation to exploit:

- _ It is a crucible for a timely conversation (WW1 Armistice anniversary) around post-conflict societies, healing & renewal;
- _ The possible last land border between UK and Europe (Brexit);

- _ Extraordinary diversity – of landscape and community – within such a small, accessible landmass;
- _ Much of the cultural heritage offer is largely little known and undiscovered, which in part explains why it is comparatively unspoiled and underdeveloped;
- _ NI has a Proposition of Scale that fits – it is rich in giants (mythical and real), including Saint Patrick, globally renowned writers and storytellers, stand-out landscape features, the most famous ship, the oldest walls... the list goes on;
- _ It sets the European standard for the narrative of plantation towns and settlements;
- _ Walls and Borders;
- _ NI exclusively tells stories of global fame and enduring fascination – Titanic and Giant's Causeway.

6.5 REFRAMING THE ASSETS

NI's cultural heritage stories and assets can be revisited, repackaged and represented in new ways for existing and new audiences. A number of areas have emerged:

What might European visibility, profile and reach deliver in terms of leveraging opportunities to slipstream/magnify campaigns?

- _ Major projects and programmes;
- _ Walls and Borders;
- _ Troubles and Peace.

“The European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 gives us a mandate to make items in our plans happen, like setting up the Belfast Heritage Forum.”

Belfast City Council

Thought leadership

- _ NI arts & culture leading the way in creative and engaging responses to conflict resolution;
- _ Conferences and summits – Museums Association, Inner Cities Trust, Building etc.;
- _ Creating a model of working – practice that happens in between the formal spaces (literal and metaphorical).

Innovation – new ways of working/thinking

- _ Bridging arts and heritage to tell the stories of NI, both known and hidden;
- _ Bridging culture and tourism;
- _ Digital.

Training and skills

- _ Digital;
- _ Cross-sector understanding (arts and heritage and landscape, culture and tourism, heritage and screen/film etc.);
- _ Traditional skills (jobs, crafts, conservation);
- _ Communicators (guides, storytellers)

Community buy-in

- _ Young people, Kick the Dust;
- _ Volunteering, Heritage Angels, Friends of;
- _ Public awareness/support.

Resilience

- _ Strategic partnerships embedded;

- _ Leadership and advocacy;
- _ Support and investment;
- _ Leadership, structure.

6.6 THERE IS NEED

There are gaps, and an increasing shared understanding and agreement around what they are. In essence, these can be summed up in two simple statements:

- _ The heritage sector knows that it is not as strong as it can be;
- _ EYCH2018 is an opportunity to invest in getting things 'off the ground', and as such is more a catalyst for change than a typical 'Year of...' programme.

6.7 CLUSTER PROJECTS CAN INFORM ACTIVITY...

There are a series of cluster projects that could shape an activity programme. Much more detail is included in the appendices, but these include the following. This is very much a long-list to illustrate the scope of areas that could be developed under the EYCH2018 banner.

1. How to animate a heritage site;
2. Revive, tour and adapt old work (sustainability);
3. A cultural heritage tourism campaign;
4. Tell a shared story across a number of different places;



NEW GENERATION TOURS

Walking and taxi tours enable contemporary stories to connect with established heritage and tourism confidently, to bring destinations to life for new audiences.. Image: Black Taxi Tours, a recent Lonely Planet Award Winner

5. Do digital;
6. Work + live cross border (RoI);
7. Conference – showcase and sector profile;
8. Case studies to develop and share best practice building local engagement;
9. Incubator pilot projects

6.9 MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Whatever the model, there are two characteristics which are to be avoided in general terms:

1. A single agency with top-down control. It is unlikely that this is desirable to either the agency in question or the sector, who may then defer to the lead partner and not contribute as proactively as it otherwise could.
2. A pan-democratic model, where every cultural heritage player has a say/place at the table. Firstly, there are existing networks that are now in place to raise and explore issues and generate national consensus and set priorities. Secondly, a potentially cumbersome and top-heavy model will both suggest that more consultation is required as opposed to action, and will by its size certainly slow down progress in both decision-making and delivery.

“We want there to be a NI response to EYCH18. We want to be a part of it. It is in our local plan, but there needs to be some centralised resource and coordination.”

Derry workshop participant

6.10 SUMMARY AS SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Variety and depth of cultural heritage offer 2. Commitment to working together around ECYH2018 from major agencies and smaller organisations 3. Busy, lively heritage calendar already in place for 2018 4. European Capital of Culture 2023 bid 5. Major heritage anniversaries in 2018 6. Awareness of ECYH2018 amongst heritage sector 7. Recent collaborative experience of Year of Food & Drink 2016 8. New/pending key strategic reports: Proposition of Scale, Culture & Heritage Tourism Framework, Heritage Value Narrative 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of strategic leadership leading to change/impact 2. Lack of established partnerships and networks nationally/regionally/locally, particularly cross-sector 3. No identified new/central fund to support EYCH2018 4. Lack of coherence of existing cultural heritage offer in the general marketplace
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use EYCH2018 as a catalyst for collaboration and partnership 2. Develop new cross-sector partnerships throughout NI 3. Potential to deliver economic, cultural and social benefits for and within communities 4. Implement aspects of the converging strategies (see above) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Political uncertainty at national and international level 2. Lack of identified/confirmed new/additional funding 3. Limited resources across NI to programme and support additional activities 4. Poor digital infrastructure in heritage sector 5. Competition from other nations for visitor market 6. Bureaucracy slowing down leadership, momentum and drive



ARMAGH ROBINSON LIBRARY

Museums and archives can be used for a variety of events, even fashion shoots.

6.11 MAPPING OVERVIEW

Across the full range of stories/narratives that make up the whole sector, themes connect and pop-up with implications for packaging, itineraries and partnership working.

The categories detailed below and supporting maps are just thoughts in how to 'slice and dice', and might be used to inform the next generation of visual maps and itineraries. Once a small number of headline themes are established, then partners could upload plans to a centralised database from which the content can be drawn.

The ideas below, however, demonstrate how this might work and the richness and the power of connecting and grouping together activities and initiatives – some public facing some not. It will be essential to select a few rather than try and be inclusive.

6.11.1 Thematic: a number of strands and stories leap out as being ripe for some NI-wide exploration

1. Linen, e.g. Linen Biennial, Lagan Navigation Story, Kabosh)
2. Maritime, e.g. Titanic, Maritime Mile, maritime festivals, Carrickfergus, Larne U-Boat etc.
3. Hidden stories with 'giant' connections and potential, e.g. Lough Neagh eels, food & drink, landscape, traditional skills and industry revivals etc.

4. Literature and language, e.g. Seamus Heaney HomePlace, The Selfish Giant, Wilde Weekend, CS Lewis/Narnia Festival, Derry Irish Language Week, Friel Festival etc.
5. Troubles and Struggles, e.g. Derry Walls, Plantation anniversaries, Suffrage and Year of Women, 14-18NOW! etc.

6.11.2 Core/signature programmes/calendar

1. Key anniversaries, both local, national and international.
2. New products, e.g. Titanic Drawing Office, Heaney Walks, Hillsborough Castle phase 1, Linen Biennial, Montalto Estate etc.
3. Peer and developmental, e.g. skills, partnerships and consortia, volunteers, digital infrastructure.
4. Walls and Borders – This is something that so many heritage and cultural partners want to explore and use to openly discuss political and sensitive issues of the day relating to, for example, Brexit, 'Contested Histories', Modern History, contemporary collecting. There is lots of exemplary practice in NI which is highly relevant to a wider European experience.



MERCHANT QUEST – BIG TELLY

A new theatre production in Newry, autumn 2017 (or more accurately part treasure hunt, part immersive theatre), drawing on rich local history as a port.

5. Heritage conservation – live programmes, issues and advocacy, e.g. Derry Walls, Armagh city centre, Belfast Cathedral Quarter, Bangor Courthouse, Navan Fort and UNESCO, The Lagan Navigation, Belfast Heritage Forum, Lough Neagh Storytellers – partnerships of expertise.
6. Community engagement, e.g. Friends of Derry Walls, Ards & North Down, Bangor, Kick the Dust.
7. Industry skills and capacity, e.g. digital optimisation; tourism marketing; animating heritage sites; heritage sites for TV and screen; traditional skills - Waterways College for example.



DERRY WALLS

Following the success of Londonderry Derry 2013 UK City of Culture, how might European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 inform European Capital of Culture 2023 bid for Northern Ireland?

Case study – The eels of Lough Neagh

“Against
ebb, current, rock, rapids
a muscled icicle
that melts itself longer
and fatter, he buries
his arrival beyond
light and tidal water,
investing silt and sand
with a sleek root.”

excerpt from
A Lough Neagh Sequence
(For the fishermen)
Seamus Heaney



The Lough Neagh Eel is a designated European food with protected status. The award recognises the heritage, tradition & authenticity of the best quality eels available in Europe, exported around the world as a uniquely NI delicacy.

The eels tell an amazing tale – not only of themselves, their journey to this SSSI – but as part of a living cultural heritage landscape, supplying a curious and inspirational source of storytelling spanning many core themes of legend, giants, faith and storytelling:

- _ Finn McCool pulled a clod of earth to throw at a rival giant, leaving a crater to form the giant basin of the Lough.
- _ When St Patrick banished snakes from Ireland, it was said many entered the water. Striking physical Christian heritage remains evident.
- _ The eels have supplied a livelihood to local fishing families for centuries, sustaining communities and their fishing traditions.
- _ Lough Neagh centre locations proved strategically vital in the Nine Years War and the subsequent Plantation of Ulster.
- _ It is part of the restoration of the Lagan Navigation, and features in the stories of heavy industry (linen, coal, mining) and rural (boat-building, reed harvesting and basket-making).
- _ Seamus Heaney, Moses Taggart and Geordie Hanna are just some of the poets and musicians inspired by Lough Neagh.
- _ The Heritage Lottery Fund is currently running a project to create a network of community storytellers to keep the stories alive and build heritage experiences.

<http://discoverloughneagh.com/heaney-country-tour>

7. Options appraisal

There are in essence five options. Each one will have a detailed rationale and review in this section:

1. Do nothing
2. Badging campaign
3. Enhancement funding
4. Strategic incubator projects
5. Major investment as a 'Year'

7.1 THE OPTIONS

A set of comparable tables in the appendices provide a more detailed view and outline costings, but the following summaries set out a rationale for each option as a quick reference.

7.1.1 Do nothing

Effectively ignore EYCH18. Rely on existing activity, fora, bids and plans for progress as a sector. This could be read as a lack of ambition or ability to galvanise the sector to a shared agenda or opportunity.

There are a number of reasons why timing is now short, but a conversation would be required to understand why a response was not advisable or possible, and how national and international

opportunities (whether home grown or not) could be positively responded to in the future.

7.1.2 Badging campaign

This model would in effect seek to coordinate and promote existing activity, for 2018 only. Despite basic badging assets, guidance and toolkits being available, there would be a need for coordination to elevate a NI response beyond a group of proactive individual organisations 'opting-in', which is a likely outcome of Option 1.

The calendar/programme would not therefore be formerly curated, although it would be packaged. A brand 'marque' could be used, either simply the EU standard one or one tailored for NI. Packaging would focus on identifying key themes that would resonate with audiences and could be marketed as seasons, top 10s etc. This would require a rapid audit of the collective programme calendar and a consensus about the focus and level of programme and content appropriate as a national response to the European construct.

7.1.3 Enhancement funding

This would take badging to the next level by funding targeted enhancements to the existing 2018 programme with additional/bolt-on activity that could leave a modest legacy of new work/practice and learnings. This would require a more structured national campaign model and management to service the year and support



MARBLE ARCH CAVES

The Global Geopark offers a stunning landscape within which to create cultural experiences, e.g. Abandon Normal Devices Festival at Castleton Caves, Peak District; and Shakespeare Underground at Kents Cavern, English Riviera Global Geopark.

the programme strands, anniversaries and festivals that will be specifically engaged with. These would have to be in a position to respond to the opportunity and it is expected that the timeframe would dictate that the majority of this activity would be in the second half of the year. That said, the cultural animation model developed in Belfast could accelerate this process.

7.1.4 Strategic incubator projects

This is not a 'stealth' extension of Option 3. It instead purposefully seeks to take the EYCH2018 platform as a catalyst for incremental step-change for the cultural heritage sector and its protagonists. These contributors should span culture, heritage and tourism as needed to develop new products, tools, services and programmes.

There are a number of large organisations who have and do invest like this. But there are also less-well known but equally innovative companies like Seedhead Arts, Big Telly, Doran Browne and Kabosh who regularly create new programmes and practice through new partnerships, including with local communities. The current cultural animation programme in Belfast is a good example, and one which may be able to be built upon in 2018, drawing support from partners including Belfast City Council, and in turn informing the city's new tourism strategy in the context of the Proposition of Scale.

These incubator projects will take risks, looking to exploit opportunities and surmount challenges that have been identified as

inhibiting audience, market and other development areas. New commissions, strategic interventions/enhancements, pilots and projects will not necessarily be large-scale, but will add up – a doctrine of 'purposeful incrementalism' and 'cumulative impact'.

7.1.5 Major investment as a 'Year...'

NI now has a track record of delivering great year-long programmes and major events, so can that energy and skill set be directed with confidence and expertise into cultural heritage in the form of this EU initiative for 2018? It would require the largest level of funding, a rapid-response management team to deliver and the outcomes and legacies would really only emerge as the Year progressed.

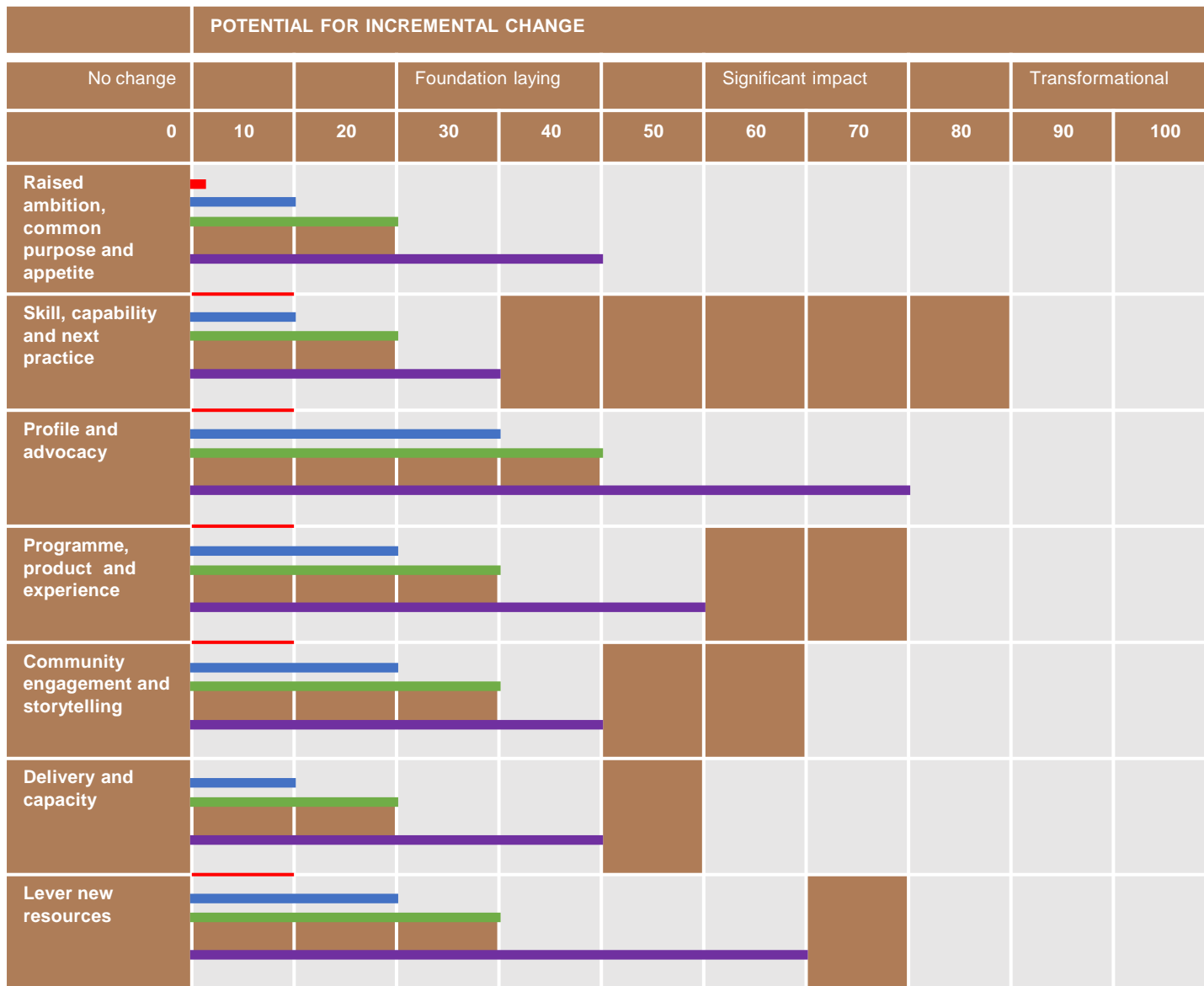
This option would have a major campaign focus with high-level marketing communications which would be domestically and to some extent RoI and GB targeted. European targets would realistically be more B2B focused, e.g. a cultural heritage conference.



ST GEORGE'S MARKET, BELFAST

The market is the last surviving Victorian market in Northern Ireland, and is now a bone fide tourist attraction as well as a thriving – and award-winning – market.

7.1.6 The options rated against primary objectives



OPTIONS COMPARATOR

All ratings are assessed in terms of potential (incremental) impacts over a 5-year period, and are subjective assessments based on the evidence available.

The top axis relates to the objectives stated earlier, and provides a benchmark to test each option. In addition, the general ability to deliver and the associated funding requirement/risk and addressed.

- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3
- Option 4
- Option 5

RECOMMENDATION

8. Clustered recommendations

There is an opportunity, in fact an imperative, that when the sector, and indeed other sectors, engage as a whole, that the strategic vision and ambition match the collective capability.

For EYCH2018 there are collective resources that can be brought to bear, and further funds that can be leveraged. One resource that is in shorter supply is time, although a longer-term vision can largely mitigate this short-term challenge.

As such there should be a clear and collective aim to achieve **step-changes**, whether large and very visible or smaller and clustered (but with cumulative impact).

As an Exploratory Case, this document seeks to set out what can happen with the right strategic and collective commitment, and therefore what actions are worthwhile pursuing further. As such, this set of routes and recommendations are a selection – a shopping list – to refine and take forward within an agreed programme model following a shared commitment to do so.

8.1 LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND DELIVERY

1. Lead agencies will need to take a lead in *funding and securing funding* for the EYCH2018 programme.
2. Establish and create a flexible *three-tier management model* with clear lines of management, delivery and oversight.⁷
3. Provide the *oversight* to monitor, review and evolve a leadership model that is fit for purpose, flexible enough to encourage cross-sector working, and action-orientated where necessary.
4. Ensure that the management model builds in *benchmarking, target setting and evaluation* as a priority, starting with formative evaluation in (programme) planning and funding allocation.
5. Commit to, and secure Bid team support for, EYCH2018 being a strategic, advocacy and developmental 'outrider' for the *#WeAre2023 European Capital of Culture Bid*.

⁷ A more detailed modelling of the recommended delivery model approach is in the appendices.



8.2 PROGRAMME – THEMATICS, ENHANCEMENTS AND COMMISSIONING

1. *Audit with intent* – undertake a panel-led or commissioned gap analysis to identify where provision is underperforming and visitor engagement opportunities exist. This leads to clear criteria for funding allocation.
2. Resolve the *priority themes and subjects* for 2018, across all activity areas – reframe the assets for the target audiences, and that works for funder criteria, e.g. HLF.
3. Identify a limited number (3-6) *key/signature projects* in 2018 to enhance with funded support to animate the storytelling and visitor experiential impact – this could major on one site to create transformational impact, before rolling out nationwide, e.g. Carrickfergus. Each identified pilot/programme strand will then select a task/finish group and nominal group lead, not the other way around.
4. Interrogate potential *European subject matter and themes* through a Northern Irish prism.
5. Consider a *conference* at the end of 2018 to draw together key live case studies of developmental practice, possibly around a core strands of big openings, anniversaries and themes which can be developed for markets over many years. This can also link with the wider European programme – if committed to early, otherwise it will be a largely UK-focused event. This could include stands at pre-scheduled conferences in NI, sector.

6. *Badging*, but with a focus on the significant and distinctive elements (not a mass listings), with a view contributing to the wider European cultural heritage discussion and debate.

8.3 PROGRAMME – PILOTING ‘NEXT PRACTICE’ INNOVATION

For a series of pilots and initiatives, formally and transparently solicit ideas (via a briefing paper and supporting process), potentially including the following. Develop selected task/finish groups for key programme elements, rather than a single, national steering group for the operational delivery and control of EYCH18.

1. *Debates*: Liaise with visiting conference events to explore ways to offer innovative cultural heritage interventions that carry the key messages to new and sector-specific audiences and encourage networks and contacts to be developed.
2. *Incubate*: E.g. 10x10 – 10 partnerships given £10k to create incubators to add value to existing programmes of activity.
3. *Exchange*: A ‘go-see’ programme of showcases – where stakeholders and partners get put on a bus and taken to see the new things – buy-in to the idea of a joined-up NI offer / knowledge and ideas exchange / raising standards.
4. *Animate*: New animation of heritage with creative cultural partners – single site, multi-site, online, location, events etc. such as linen, peace and so on. This could develop, test and embed new co-production processes and partnerships with



PIPE BANDS

Police Service of Northern Ireland
Pipe Band at Bangor 2017

agencies, organisations and independent cultural producers in the creation of programmes (and supporting infrastructure).

5. *Voice*: Community engagement and social wellbeing agenda – community as story owners, storytellers, inspired by and inspiring cultural heritage – part of the stories and telling the stories.
6. *Volunteer*: community buy-in and ‘friends’ type programmes, develop community custodians and volunteer programmes, e.g. exporting Derry Walls success to Armagh, Belfast CQ.
7. *Share*: Inclusive training that spans the interconnected sectors of arts & culture, heritage, social & community, place-making, leisure & tourism, building understanding and insight.
8. *Service*: assign a task/finish group to develop a next practice and distinctively NI visitor service manifesto and standard raising toolkit.
9. *Insight*: Exploring the research, evaluation and metrics available to the sector that can be better harnessed to generate insight into existing and new audiences and markets.
10. *Buddy*: A speed-dating programme across the sector/sector-spanning (and even cross-border) to develop buddying relationships based on priority issues/functions, notably animation & interpretation, digital & communications, but potentially any subject area. This should look to span the cultural heritage sector, but also look at other partners e.g. festival/event producers, digital and media producers, commerce etc. These relationships can be light-touch or develop over time – they should be reciprocal, not mentoring-based.

8.4 DIGITAL, CONTENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

1. Develop a *digital content development toolkit*, with partnership-enhancing training support.
2. Develop a *digital optimisation toolkit*, with partnership-enhancing training support.
3. Develop, and where necessary, commission, *new content* as part of a ‘content action plan’ to project the new positioning’s tone of voice and key messages through the cultural heritage programme. A *curated ‘programme’* could live on Thrive, Tourism NI/ Culture NI websites and cultural event pages.
4. Create, deliver and evaluate a *coherent branded campaign* that blends EYCH2018 with the new Proposition of Scale.
5. Support the 2018 public programme with centrally managed consumer *marketing communications*, especially the enhanced/signature events.
6. Support the whole 2018 pilot/development programme through centrally managed *sectoral marketing communications* – focusing on, value, innovation and progress (already demonstrably underway).
7. Clearly define and *target specific, limited visitor markets* for the EYCH2018, including public and professional.
8. Target national (and international) *consumer, specialist and trade media* to generate profile for NI EYCH2018 and its ongoing programmes, including working with Rol partners to co-promote programme and key messages.



BIG NAME HUNTING

Northern Ireland’s landscapes have always inspired writers, including CS Lewis’s Chronicles of Narnia.

9. Ensure that the EYCH2018 *campaign is embedded* into the planning and delivery of upcoming culture, heritage (and less so tourism) campaigns by public-facing organisations.

8.5. LEGACY, SUSTAINABILITY AND MAKING THE CASE TO CONTINUE

1. Create and capture structured *case studies* of all aspects of 2018 and ongoing programmes, using a variety of media.
2. With a positive message, incorporate the current *conservation threat* to key heritage sites.
3. Incorporate the *value messaging* developed for HED by AV Browne into the pilot and sector development project communications support activity.
4. Through programme, pilots, conference, messaging etc., take a *thought leadership role* in the international subject areas of peace and conflict, walls and borders (as well as connected language and literature).



INSPIRING FIGURES

Cole's Monument in Forthill Park, Enniskillen is said to have inspired Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*, which in turn inspires writers and producers to this day.

9. Summary statement

The options set out in this Exploratory Case show that a level of commitment is required to achieve various 'tipping points' – in sector engagement, developmental progression, and potential return on investment over time through the visitor economy and contributions to organisational and key projects/bids.

The preferred option – **Option 4** – is not the easiest option, but it is the one that balances the realities of the situation in autumn 2017, and takes a long-term view. It also creates opportunities for some quick wins, enabling discrete partner delivery activity to accelerate. This can create a cumulative impact, rather than managing a potentially unwieldy central model that lacks agility. This also recognises the opportunity and necessity of responding visibly and practically throughout 2018. It is ambitious but realistic, strategic but pragmatic in the short-term.

To develop 'next practice' that has impacts internally and externally for the culture, heritage and tourism sectors as partners, a considered and determined approach to encourage innovation is required. This model can deliver the incremental and irreversible step-changes that will help NI's cultural heritage offer work better for its contributors, communities and visitors alike.

So, when asking that big question – **What will success look like at the end of 2018, more importantly 1, 2, 5 years later?** – the cultural heritage leadership and community can answer with clarity and confidence, building on a distinctive product offer and emerging brand positioning.



LOUGH NEAGH

The predominant body of water in NI has its own stories to tell, on the banks, on the surface, and below water.