Swedish cultural delegation to strengthen ties with North East

Tuesday 19 June, 2018

A senior delegation from Region Västra Götaland, Sweden arrived in the North East last week, to tour the region's cultural venues and to extend the Culture Agreement; a formal partnership between the Region Västra Götaland and the North East to develop cultural opportunities, strengthen business and export links and promote creative industries on both sides of the North Sea.

Senior players from the North East Culture Partnership, as well as Arts Council England, introduced the Swedish delegation to some of the region's highly prized cultural institutions, such as the National Glass Museum (Sunderland), Seven Stories (Newcastle) and Theatre Hullabaloo (Darlington).

The Swedish delegation were joined by the Counsellor for Cultural Affairs from the Swedish Embassy, who were keen to build on the already successful partnership projects already being delivered, contributing to the richness of cultural life in each region and supporting economic regeneration and development.

A signing ceremony included a significant presence from the Västra Götaland Regional Council including the President of the Cultural Affairs Committee Conny Brännberg, who said "We are pleased to extend the Culture Agreement with North East England, we are clear that we have gained much from the various exchanges that have taken place since the Creative Links agreement was first signed between our two regions in 2009. We have enjoyed visiting some of the region's cultural and heritage venues, there has been much to learn and we will be taking ideas back to Sweden from the North East's cultural landscape."

The North East Culture Partnership (NECP) represents the twelve North East local authorities, major cultural institutions and heritage organisations to drive the cultural and creative economy in the region; the development of international partnerships is one such initiative led by NECP.

Mayor of Middlesbrough and co-chair of NECP David Budd said, "We are delighted to renew our Creative Links partnership with Västra Götaland, taking pro-active steps to strengthen links with our international partners is more important than ever. Our two regions have decided that, rather than wait to see what Brexit and the future holds, we are in fact going to create our own future which supports and champions the creative, business and cultural opportunities in both countries."

Some of those opportunities resulting from the partnership over the next three years will include the development of an artist's residency program in each country, collaborating on projects where digital technology and culture meet as well as a series of projects which focus on creative opportunities for young people in both Sweden and the UK.

Adrian Waddell, CEO of NE1 Ltd, Business Improvement District Company for Newcastle city centre, who are also involved in the project, said; "A visit from such a high-powered delegation is a real coup for the city and the region and is testament to the strength of the North East's cultural offer, its success and global reputation. The Swedes do things well and to attract such international collaborations and partnerships is a mark of our own creative talents, knowledge and expertise and the opportunities we are lucky to have here. There are many examples where enterprise has grown on the back of shared cultural activity. It is vital, therefore, for Newcastle and the North East to explore international opportunities for the creative industries as in other sectors and to ensure that the city is 'top of mind' when companies and countries are considering investing or looking for creative partners."

To find out more about the partnership and opportunities available people are encouraged to visit the NECP website; www.case4culture.org.uk.

Editors Notes

The North East Culture Partnership (NECP) enables the region's arts and heritage organisations to work strategically with local authorities, business and universities to develop the cultural agenda for the North East. The partnership is ambitious about what culture can bring to communities and how it can create distinctiveness. In a time of change and economic challenge the NECP is campaigning for new funding and more regional influence over funding decisions as an important part of the region's development.

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NECP’s Board of 25 includes elected members from each North East local authority as well as leaders from universities, arts and heritage organisations and business. http://www.case4culture.org.uk/necp/

Formed in 1999, the Region Västra Götaland, or Västra Götalandsregionen, is the devolved County Council of Västra Götaland County in Sweden.

CRYSTLSD is an arts, film and culture marketing agency working with clients in the sector to reach new audiences and develop brands, projects and campaigns. Clients and projects range from international artists and exhibitions, feature films, museums, heritage and performers in the UK and Europe. www.crystlsd.com

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