

# County Durham Culture Trust (CDCT)

Inception Plan  
April 2024 – September 2025

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**Counterculture Partnership LLP**

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**Subject to DCC Cabinet approval to progress**

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## 1. Executive summary

The proposed County Durham Culture Trust will play a role in increasing access to and participation in arts and culture, improving wellbeing, boosting the economy, and creating a strong sense of place and belonging for the benefit of those living in County Durham. It will do this by partnering with other organisations that promotes similar charitable aims and whose remit is to deliver arts and culture programmes of public engagement across the County.

Its proposed charitable objects are:

- a.** The promotion of the arts, culture and heritage in County Durham in particular but not exclusively by encouraging public participation; the presentation of performances, exhibitions, and festivals; and by supporting and representing others in the sector.
- b.** To advance education in culture, arts, heritage and science in particular but not exclusively by the establishment and maintenance of museums, galleries and other venues.
- c.** To provide or assist in the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation in the interests of social welfare.

The application to the Charity Commission is seeking approval to the establishment of the CDCT as a foundation charitable incorporated organisation (CIO).

During an initial 18-month inception phase the CDCT plans to:

- develop the organisation;
- build partnerships;
- fundraise for priority projects;
- raise awareness of the organisation.

To support the future development and growth of the CDCT, a detailed business plan will be developed as part of the inception phase.

A start up grant of £70,000 is being sought from Durham County Council to support CDCT's inception costs and its operation in its initial 18 months.

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## 2. About County Durham Culture Trust

### 2.1 Charitable Objects

The following charitable objects have been identified, subject to comment, possible amendment and approval by the Charity Commission. The proposed objects of the County Durham Culture Trust are:

- a.** The promotion of the arts, culture and heritage in County Durham in particular but not exclusively by encouraging public participation; the presentation of performances, exhibitions, and festivals; and by supporting and representing others in the sector.
- b.** To advance education in culture, arts, heritage and science in particular but not exclusively by the establishment and maintenance of museums, galleries and other venues.
- c.** To provide or assist in the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation in the interests of social welfare.

### 2.2 Context

The proposed County Durham Culture Trust (CDCT) will be a new Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Its creation is being sponsored by Durham County Council which recognizes and wants to support the advantages of an independent arts and culture charity operating across the County for the benefit of its residents.

Durham is amongst the top 20% most deprived local authority areas in England. Of 225 'left behind' neighbourhoods across the country (those deprived areas chronically lacking places to meet, connectivity and an engaged community), sixteen are in County Durham, twice as many as any other area of England. Residents of these neighbourhoods have measurably worse lives than even residents of other equally economically deprived areas.

Arts Council England (ACE) has identified County Durham as one of 54 places across the country in which engagement with arts and culture, and the associated benefits of that, is low.

In establishing the new CDCT, the trustees recognise the vital role that arts and culture can play in addressing such a context. Through its work it will aim to play its part in increasing access to and participation in arts and culture, improving the wellbeing of residents and visitors, boosting the economy, and creating a strong sense of place and belonging.

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### **2.3 Where we are now**

The proposed CDCT is in the early stages of its inception. The case is being made to Durham County Council to support the creation of this charity, along with a request to grant £70,000 to support the Trust's establishment and early expenditure.

To lead on the creation and inception of the CDCT, three founding trustees will come together to manage the application to the Charity Commission and support the delivery of the organisation's early priorities. This will include recruiting additional trustees to meet the future needs of the charity. At present the organisation does not employ any staff.

### **2.4 Strategic aims**

The following strategic aims have been identified for the inception phase of the CDCT, to:

- develop the organisation;
- build partnerships;
- fundraise for priority projects;
- raise awareness of the organisation.

### **2.5 Inception phase development**

To achieve the strategic aims, a programme of key activities and milestones has been developed for delivery during the first eighteen months of the new CDCT. These are detailed at Appendix 7.1 and are summarised as follows:

**Organisational development** – activities include setting up a bank account, registering with the HMRC and Fundraising Regulator, arranging insurance, appointing additional trustees, establishing and administering a regular calendar of trustee meetings, developing and approving policies and preparing a detailed Business Plan.

**Partnerships** – activities include developing relationships with key strategic partners (i.e., Durham County Council, Durham University, Culture Durham) and identifying key priority partnership projects.

**Fundraising** – activities include developing a Case for Support for the CDCT, preparing a fundraising strategy, and commencement of initial fundraising for priority partnership projects.

**Awareness raising** – activities include further development of the website and other public facing communications.

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### 3. Legal considerations

The application to the Charity Commission is seeking approval to the establishment of the CDCT as a foundation charitable incorporated organisation (CIO). If approved, this will require registration with and accountability to the Charity Commission only. As a foundation CIO, the charity's voting members will be its trustees and as such there will not be a separate voting membership.

Early priorities for the new CIO will be registration with HMRC and the Fundraising Regulator. In this inception phase, the CDCT will not be registered for VAT and the necessity for that in the future will be considered as part of the detailed Business Plan development.

In its first eighteen months, the CDCT will be working closely with Durham County Council on the initial legal administration of the CIO. This will include the identification of suitable independent legal, professional or other advisers who will work with the charity beyond this initial phase.

Trustee Liability Insurance will be purchased upon Charity Commission approval to the creation of the CIO. As part of the development of the detailed Business Plan, the need for other insurances e.g., professional indemnity, employer's liability insurance, events insurance etc. will be taken into consideration and put in place if required.

### 4. People, management and governance

#### 4.1 Our board

##### i) Founding trustees

The founding three trustees will have the following lead responsibilities once the County Durham Culture Trust is established.

**[NAME Trustee A]**

#### **Biography**

*[INSERT BIOGRAPHY HERE – NO MORE THAN 250 WORDS]*

#### **Lead responsibilities**

- Ensure good governance.
- Lead on set up tasks, establishment of processes.
- Policy development
- Trustee recruitment process development, training and induction

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- Statutory and governance documentation and process including acting as secretariat.

**Term of office**

- Two years

**[NAME Trustee B] Chair**

**Biography**

*[INSERT BIOGRAPHY HERE – NO MORE THAN 250 WORDS]*

**Lead responsibilities**

- Strategic lead & chair.
- Ensure good governance and compliance.
- Lead fundraiser
- Lead on development of the detailed Business Plan, including vision, mission and initial timebound priorities
- Lead on stakeholder management and partnership development
- Trustee recruitment
- Strong advocacy for the CDCT
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion awareness

**Term of office**

- Four years

**[NAME - Trustee C]**

**Biography**

*[INSERT BIOGRAPHY HERE – NO MORE THAN 250 WORDS]*

**Lead responsibilities**

- Marketing & Communications Lead
- Awareness building
- Human Resources Lead

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- Equality Diversity & Inclusion Lead
- Fundraising
- Trustee recruitment
- Advocate for the CDCT

### **Term of office**

- Three years

### **ii) Additional trustees**

The proposed draft CDCT constitution requires there to be minimum of three trustees, up to a maximum of ten. As part of this inception phase, the founding trustees will carry out an assessment of the skills, experience and knowledge that will be needed to support the newly worked up vision, mission and detailed Business Plan of the CDCT. With this understanding in place, the founding trustees will develop and implement a trustee recruitment strategy with reference to the Charity Commission's best practice guide on trustee recruitment entitled [Finding new trustees: what charities need to know](#) and the Arts Council England's *Let's Create Investment Principles Resources* [Transforming Governance](#) materials.

The founding trustee's recruitment strategy is therefore likely to include:

1. Determination and agreement to a recruitment process including the roles and responsibilities of the founding trustees within it.
2. Development of short job descriptions and person specification for each new trustee role.
3. Consideration of the best ways to attract a diverse range of candidates. This will include incorporating the best practice recommendations of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations in its EDI guidance entitled [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Board Level](#).
4. An open recruitment process including advertising in range of suitable places and across different media.
5. Short-listing and interviewing against an agreed set of criteria.
6. Proper vetting and references for those candidates the founding trustees wish to appoint to the Board.



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## **4.2 Key advisors**

Throughout the inception phase, the trustees will work closely with Durham County Council and Counterculture LLP on the formal establishment of the CDCT and its initial growth. Key advisors to the trustees will include:

**Alison Clark** – Head of Culture Sport & Tourism, Durham County Council

**Dr Sarah Glynn** – Strategic Manager Culture, Durham County Council

**Kathryn Athey** – External Funding Co-ordinator, Culture Sport & Tourism, Durham County Council

**Keith Arrowsmith** – Solicitor, Senior Partner (Legal), Counterculture LLP

**Val Young** – Associate, Consultant Fundraiser, Counterculture LLP

## **4.3 Policies**

During the inception phase the following policies will be developed and adopted:

- Trustees' expenses
- Conflicts of interest
- Complaints policy
- Ethical fundraising policy
- Grant making policy

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## 5. Budget

### 5.1 Operating Budget – Year One

Durham County Council Cabinet is being asked to consider granting CDCT an initial sum of **£70,000** to fund its set up costs and year one operating costs (decision date 15 November 2023), broken down as follows:

<b>Fundraising Costs</b>	<b>Set up costs</b>	<b>Year 1 operating costs</b>
Case for Support development	£10,500	
Donation points		£3,850
Cashless donation card readers	£2,000	
Gift Aid Documentation		£1,000
Fundraising schemes materials		£5,000
Case for Support Campaign documentation for DLIMAG	£4,000	
Hospitality and cultivation events		£3,600
Database - data cleanse and preparation	£10,000	
Database - fundraising module	£2,000	
Donor recognition		£5,000
Database training		£1,000
Fundraising total	£28,500	£19,450
<b>Governance Costs</b>		
Financial administration		£13,440
Financial software		£360
Bank charges		£240
Trustee Indemnity Insurance		£1,500
Fundraising Regulator Fee		£150
<b>Governance total</b>		<b>£15,690</b>
Sub total	£28,500	£35,140
Combined Sub total		£63,640
Contingency and risk		£6,360
<b>Total</b>		<b>£70,000</b>

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## 6. Contact details

- Who will be the main contact for CDCT?

Trustee A???

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## 7. Appendices

### 7.1 CDCT - Key Activities and Milestones

Activity	2023	2024				2025		
	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep
<b>1. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>								
<b>CDCT establishment</b>								
Founding trustees sign off application to Charity Comm								
Application submitted to the Charity Commission								
Application review period								
CDCT established								
Policies and procedures written and approved								
Bank A/C, insurance & HMRC arranged								
Gift Aid Registration								
Register with Fundraising Regulator								
<b>Meetings calendar</b>								
Inaugural meeting								
Quarterly meetings arranged and held					1	2	3	4
<b>Trustee recruitment &amp; induction</b>								
Trustee role profiles developed								
Trustee recruitment and appointment								
Trustee induction								

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Activity	2023	2024				2025		
	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep
<b>Business Planning</b> Detailed business planning work Detailed business plan approved								
<b>2. PARTNERSHIP BUILDING</b>								
<b>Strategic Partnerships</b> Initial discussions with strategic partners Business Plan consultation Priority projects for support agreed								
<b>3. FUNDRAISING</b>								
<b>Fundraising Strategy</b> Case for Support developed Fundraising Strategy prepared and agreed								
<b>Fundraising Database</b> Agreement signed for shared use of Spektrix database Data cleanse and set up of fundraising module								
<b>Fundraising Activity</b> Grant funders identified and applications submitted Commission and install donation points in key venues Develop and launch individual giving schemes								

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Activity	2023	2024				2025		
	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep
<b>4. RAISE AWARENESS</b> Website development Develop and deliver communications campaign Launch event								

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