



Creativity in the Coalfields

Transforming the coalfields

The National Coalfields Programme is bringing about the creative transformation of former colliery sites and adopting new and exciting regeneration techniques that have grown from close working with the coalfield communities. By engaging creative practitioners such as leading landscape architects, designers, artists and craftspeople in this regeneration process, the National Coalfields Programme wants to help strengthen local identity and pride. We call this process '**Creativity in the Coalfields**'.

This innovative approach has its origins in a study financed by the Heritage Lottery Fund called 'Heritage – something to be proud of' (July 2002). The study focused on what coalfield communities identified as their community heritage, and we would like to explore this further with communities in what we put on the ground as part of regenerating the coalfield sites themselves.

English Partnerships is already committed to promoting high standards of design and sustainability in the regeneration of sites in our portfolio. By engaging designers, artists and craftspeople at the earliest possible opportunity in the development process, we believe the quality of the final product can be improved even further.

Public art can play an important role in providing an attractive, high quality environment and in helping to build a new community. Public art can provide a focal point, enhanced sense of place and delight for local residents. To provide added value, the process associated with commissioning the artwork can involve local communities, help build local pride, and help foster social cohesion and community cohesion. It can act as a catalyst for cultural expression and experience and, in certain prominent locations, create cultural icons and contribute to regional identity.

Our '**Creativity in the Coalfields**' initiative seeks to explore the full range outlined above; from engaging better designers to meet the cultural aspirations of coalfield communities through to repositioning areas for investment.

Front cover images (clockwise from top left)

'Blue Carpet', detail. Newcastle City Centre.
Artist: Thomas Heatherwick Studio. Photo: Mark Pinder.

Discovery Flame for Dunblane, Conkers Discovery Centre, Rawdon, Leicestershire.*

'B of the Bang', City of Manchester Stadium, Manchester.
Artist: Thomas Heatherwick Studio. Photo: Len Grant.

Twin Roundabouts, A13 Artscape, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.
Artist: Thomas Heatherwick Studio. Photo: Steve Speller

Above image

'Work', Trinity Way rail over road bridge, nr Chapel, Salford.
Artist: Simon Watkinson. Photo: Paul Jones.

Images marked with * show what has already been achieved in the coalfields, whilst the others show the range of possibilities.



English Partnerships is the national regeneration agency helping the Government to support high quality sustainable growth in England.

We have five core business areas and deliver our objectives through:

- Developing our own portfolio of strategic projects.
- Acting as the Government's specialist advisor on brownfield land.
- Ensuring that surplus public sector land is used to support wider Government objectives, especially the implementation of the *Sustainable Communities Plan*.
- Helping to create communities where people can afford to live and want to live.
- Supporting the Urban Renaissance by improving the quality of our towns and cities.

The National Coalfields Programme is a significant priority, along with Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders, Millennium Communities, the National Brownfield Strategy and Urban Regeneration Companies.

Above images (clockwise from top left)

Twin Roundabouts, work in progress, A13 Artscape, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

Artist: Thomas Heatherwick Studio.
Photo: Steve Speller.

'Quantum Cloud' at Greenwich Peninsula.
Artist: Antony Gormley.

'Angel of the North', former Team Valley Colliery, A167 (Durham Road), Gateshead.*
Artist: Antony Gormley. Photo: Gateshead City Council.

Fryston Wheel, New Fryston Village Green, Castleford, Yorkshire.*
Designer: Martha Schwartz.

Back cover image

Log Sculpture, Conkers Discovery Centre, Rawdon, Leicestershire.*

Top: Layered network of stone walls and pathways,
New Fryston Village Green, Castleford, Yorkshire.*
Designer: Martha Schwartz.

Bottom: Residents planting wildflowers at Goresbrook Park, A13 Artscape,
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. Collaboration between artist
Andrew Darke and landscape architect Lynn Kinnear.
Photo: Andrew Darke.

Millennium Beacons,
The Centre, Bristol.
Artist: Martin Richman.
Photo: The Artist.

Hickleton Colliery, Barnsley, Yorkshire.*

Artists: Graeme Mitcheson, Jason Thompson, Coralie Turpin.



Four key approaches to

'Creativity in the Coalfields' is being taken forward in four distinct ways that range from grass roots community engagement to regional positioning or 'signposting' of a site.

Achieving Design Excellence

This approach is based on assembling a skilled, multi-disciplinary team at the outset of a regeneration project. Creative work becomes an integral part of delivering best practice in regeneration and design. This will involve encouraging designers, artists and craftspeople to shape and influence the overall concept for a development and contribute to the detailed design and construction of elements within the development. The Commission for Architecture in the Built Environment (CABE) and CABE Space support English Partnerships in this approach, offering enabling and design review skills and collaborating with English Partnerships to identify and develop exemplar projects.

An example of this approach is work by architect Martha Schwartz and BDP masterplanning at Fryston Village, Castleford, Yorkshire. Here, the design team was involved in large-scale masterplanning, community engagement workshops and the design and construction of the new village green and play facilities for the local community.

Cultural Connections

This approach aims to tap into cultural issues at the local or regional level. The intention is to harness community aspirations and work to translate these hopes into elements of the regeneration project. Projects could range from memorials to the history of the community represented through art works.

Exploring and interpreting history and culture with local artists and designers will be encouraged, and there will be an emphasis on encouraging local employment opportunities. The Coalfields Regeneration Trust and the Land Restoration Trust will work with English Partnerships to identify potential projects that can play an important role in strengthening the community.

Top: Hickleton Colliery, Barnsley, Yorkshire.*

Artists: Graeme Mitcheson, Jason Thompson, Coralie Turpin.

Bottom: 'Secret Garden' landfill site, Malmö, Sweden.

Artist: Adriaan Geuze of West 8. Photo: West 8.

Wrought Iron Bollards, New Fryston Village Green, Castleford, Yorkshire.*

Artist: Anthony Gormley.

Rainton Bridge Towers, Houghton Le Spring, Tyne and Wear.*

Top: The Rotunda, Bury.

Artist: Maurizio Nanucci. Photo: Cathy Newbery.

Bottom: 'B of the Bang', core of the sculpture during construction in Sheffield.

Artist: Thomas Heatherwick Studio. Photo: Len Grant.



creative regeneration

Regional Distinctiveness

3

Repositioning Areas of Change

4

The delivery process

This method involves working with designers; artists and creative thinkers to make a site distinctive and give it market advantage in a region. Projects could range from large-scale earthworks and sculpting of the landscape to specific structures, gateways or focal points.

English Partnerships will be working in partnership with the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) to develop these projects. This will lead to close working with the selected site developer and ultimately with the occupiers.

Arts Council England, through the Regional Arts Boards, can help identify appropriate designers, artists and craftspeople for the delivery team to work with and to help prepare briefs for creative involvement.

In a few selective areas the role of large-scale artwork as a signifier of change, landmark or icon is likely to be of benefit to the wider regeneration area as well as specific development sites. These projects would normally be in prominent locations, alongside transport corridors, but could also include smaller scale artworks in trail systems such as the Forest of Dean Art Trail. English Partnerships would work jointly with the RDAs and the Regional Arts Boards on these projects.

The strategy for 'Creativity in the Coalfields' has been developed for English Partnerships by **Working pArts**.

The strategy has been directed by a steering group comprising; Arts Council England, CABE, CABE Space, Land Restoration Trust, Coalfields Communities Campaign, Coalfields Regeneration Trust and English Partnerships. These bodies form the core of an ongoing steering group together and, when projects are in their areas, RDA and Local Authority representatives.

All parties will be encouraged to use English Partnerships' investment to lever other forms of arts and heritage funding to maximise project potential.



English Partnerships is committed to delivering a broad range of benefits to the former coalfield communities through its National Coalfields Programme. In the coalfields where we are actively involved, we are interested in exploring the use of creativity in the regeneration process. We are looking in particular for initiatives that enhance the image and increase the attractiveness of an area to businesses and visitors, bring benefits that engage local people and contribute to the provision of employment opportunities. If you have a potential project that would add value to a regeneration of a coalfield site, we would be interested to explore your proposal with you.



If you would like to discuss potential projects please contact us.



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