

**Title:** Mouth of the Tyne Festival  
**Report of:** Phil Witcherley, Director of Economic Growth and Innovation  
**Portfolio:** Home to a Growing and Vibrant Economy

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## **Report Summary**

The purpose of this report is to request approval to provide a funding contribution towards the Mouth of the Tyne Festival.

The Mouth of the Tyne Festival is North Tyneside's flagship music and performance event, which is expected to attract around 100,000 visitors and generate approximately £1 million for the visitor economy.

Wider project objectives include support for emerging artists, contribution to the longer-term growth of the visitor economy and enhancing the visitor offer. The application demonstrates alignment to North Tyneside Council / North East Mayoral Strategic Authority's (North East MSA) Net Zero commitments.

This report includes one project requesting a total of £80,000 investment funding towards a £180,000 delivery cost.

## **Recommendations**

The Chief Executive is recommended:

- To approve the award of a total of £80,000 of investment funding to North Tyneside Council to deliver the Mouth of the Tyne Festival; and
- To authorise the Director of Finance and Investment and Monitoring Officer to prepare the necessary documentation and enter into contract with the lead applicants, North Tyneside Council.

### **A. Summary of Investment Proposal (Context)**

Mouth of the Tyne Festival is North Tyneside's flagship annual event, drawing around 100,000 visitors and generating £1 million for the local economy. Its 21st anniversary in 2026 provides a strategic opportunity to elevate the programme and grow the festival's regional and national impact.

The 2026 edition (9–12 July) will feature internationally recognised performers alongside local talent, strengthening the artistic offer and supporting skills development. A new partnership with 'Sunday for Sammy' will expand opportunities for young people to gain hands-on experience in the events industry.

Investment will enable a significantly enhanced programme, increased visitor numbers, and targeted out-of-region promotion to drive overnight stays and showcase North Tyneside's coastline. This milestone year also begins the strategic build-up to the festival's 25th anniversary, positioning it for long-term growth.

The proposal forms part of the Events and Participation Investment Plan 2026-2029, endorsed by Cabinet on 17 March 2026, which committed £13m of Investment Fund resources to establish a coordinated regional programme of cultural and participation-based events. The Plan sets out three categories of activity – Major Events, Signature Events, and Grassroots Events – providing a structured approach to developing the region's events portfolio.

Within this framework, the Mouth of the Tyne Festival is designated as a Signature Event, reflecting its regional distinctiveness, strong cultural identity, and contribution to visitor growth. The proposed £80,000 investment therefore sits within the wider programme approved by Cabinet and directly supports the delivery of the Signature Events strand of the Investment Plan.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 Mouth of the Tyne Festival is North Tyneside's flagship annual cultural event, established in 2005 and now one of the region's longest running outdoor arts festivals. The festival attracts around 100,000 visitors each year, generating over £1 million for the local visitor economy and contributing to the borough's wider tourism value of £400m annually.
- 1.2 The 2026 edition marks the 21st anniversary, providing a strategic opportunity to enhance programming, increase visitor numbers and strengthen the festival's regional and national profile. It is rooted in Tynemouth, using the dramatic coastal setting of Tynemouth Priory and Castle, Front Street and surrounding areas for concerts, street theatre and community activity.
- 1.3 The festival has grown significantly from its early years, now featuring international performers alongside emerging local talent, with strong community participation including schoolchildren and volunteers.
- 1.4 Visitor surveys from 2025 show exceptionally strong public support: 91% said the festival is welcoming, 96% said it represents North Tyneside positively, and 93% believe it benefits local business. The festival attracts audiences from across the UK and internationally, including visitors from the USA, China, Canada, the Netherlands and Norway.
- 1.8 The event aligns with the North East MSA's ambition to position the North East as a premier destination for world-class events, supporting the regional goal of doubling the visitor economy over the next decade.
- 1.9 North Tyneside Council delivers the festival with long-standing partnerships across the cultural, education and business sectors, including Gateshead College, Nexus, Aspire, Salto and the North Tyneside Music Education Hub. Much of the programme is free at the point of access, supporting inclusion and community engagement, with additional accessibility measures such as BSL interpretation and dedicated viewing areas.
- 1.10 The 2026 proposal seeks to enhance the festival through new stages, expanded programming, youth performance opportunities, and targeted out-of-region marketing to increase overnight stays. It supports local employment and supply chains, using local suppliers wherever possible and providing skills development opportunities for young people entering the events industry.

## **2. The Investment Proposal**

- 2.1 The Mouth of the Tyne Festival is North Tyneside's homegrown flagship event, attracting 100,000 people and generating an estimated £1m for the visitor economy. The proposal is to enhance the two-decade celebration, grow visitor numbers and celebrate the 21st anniversary in 2026.
- 2.2 Specific activities that the North East MSA's funding will support include:
  - A grassroots music programme supporting emerging artists
  - Real life event industry work experience for students
  - Introduction of a Sunday for Sammy stage giving young performers the chance to perform
  - An additional performance stage to bolster the visitor offer
  - Extended digital marketing with out-of-region targeting to generate overnight stays
  - Additional in-region promotion including radio and public transport campaigns

- The production of a festival video and other assets capturing all elements of the event using local creative talent
- 2.3 The proposal will be delivered at Tynemouth Priory and Castle, in the village itself and surrounding areas. Performers will be engaged from across the North East MSA area.
- 2.4 North Tyneside Council will deliver the celebration between 9-12 July, although spin-off shows may take place into August and September.
- 2.5 Out of region promotional activity will begin from 1 May with targeted social media ads. Additional in-region promotion will be stepped up from May half term to include media and public transport campaigns.
- 2.6 North Tyneside Council will deliver the proposal, working in partnership wherever possible to reduce costs and increase the effectiveness of the activity.
- 2.7 Beneficiaries will be businesses operating in the area, suppliers to the event and related supply chains, visitors and residents.
- 2.8 Investment Objectives:
  - Deliver Mouth of the Tyne Festival's 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary event
    - Deliver Mouth of the Tyne Festival between 9 – 12 July 2026. Achieving at least 100,000 visitors, economic impact of £1m+, increase social media followers by a minimum of 5%, attract out of region visitors (establish benchmark in 2026), measured by visitor surveys, ticket sales and social media accounts. Monitoring in previous years has been effective, and established systems are in place. Promotion for the base elements of the festival is underway with further activity planned around the additional activity from May onwards.
  - Integrate elements of the emerging Regenerative Tourism Framework
    - Introduce a 'Regenerative Tourism' section in the main event plan. Conduct a survey amongst festival traders, develop a food waste strategy, promote the use of public transport in 2000 event programmes, highlight cycle storage, investigate the use of hydrogen generators with one local company. North Tyneside Council has been developing a greener approach to events and now refers to the Regenerative Tourism Framework.
  - Generate out-of-region visitors
    - North Tyneside Council will use their social media accounts (and partners) to promote the festival out of region. The use of ticket data and feedback from accommodation providers to establish levels of success. North Tyneside Council are aware that visitors attend elements of the festival from outside the region. They will use reliable data and methods of attraction to establish a benchmark with partner hotels and ticketing companies in 2026 with the aim of demonstrating an increase in 2027 and 2028. Promotion for North Tyneside Council's first run of evening concerts is underway but full promotion is scheduled for May once the full scale of the event is known.

### 3. Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs	26/27	27/28	Total
Number of cultural / tourism events taking place	5		5

Outcomes	26/27	27/28	Total

Number of attendees participating in a cultural tourism event	105,000		105,000
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#### 4. Timetable for Implementation

Milestone	Forecast Date
Proposal Start Date	01/04/2026
Out of region promotional activity commences	01/05/2026
Mouth of the Tyne Festival – Event	09/07/2026 – 12/07/26
Financial Completion Date	31/12/2026
Anticipated Proposal Completion Date (date by which all outputs / outcomes will have been achieved)	31/12/2026

#### 5. Evaluation

5.1 An evaluation will be undertaken by North Tyneside Council. In addition, the North East MSA will commission an evaluation company in July to assess the upcoming Events & Participation Programme: 2026-2029. The Mouth of the Tyne Festival will be part of the evaluation, depending on the commissioning timeline, the event will be evaluated retrospectively.

#### 6. Appraisal

6.1 The appraisal of the business case provided by the applicant has been assessed and is rated GREEN on all aspects.

Overall RAG assessment		
Risk Rating	The Strategic, Economic & Commercial Case	GREEN
	The Financial & Management Case	GREEN
	<b>Overall Rating</b>	GREEN
Overall RAG assessment		

#### Appraisal Summary – Mouth of the Tyne Festival 2026

This business case seeks £80,000 of Investment Fund support towards a total project cost of £180,000 to deliver the 2026 Mouth of the Tyne Festival. The festival is North Tyneside’s flagship music and performance event, attracting around 100,000 visitors and generating approximately £1 million for the visitor economy.

The funding will support the delivery of a music and performance programme that enhances the visitor offer, supports emerging artists and contributes to the longer-term growth of the visitor economy.

Although net zero is not a specific objective of the project, the proposal demonstrates alignment with North Tyneside Council’s Carbon Net Zero by 2030 commitment and includes appropriate measures to minimise environmental impact and promote sustainability. Overall, the approach to environmental sustainability is considered strong, with a wide range of impacts appropriately identified and addressed.

## The Strategic, Economic & Commercial Case

The business case describes activity and objectives that clearly align to regional priorities including Mayoral missions; particularly *A North East we are proud to call home*. It supports cultural sector development opportunities and has clear economic benefits, largely for high street and hospitality businesses.

Outputs are appropriate and aligned to the activity. The value for money case clearly sets out the festival scale and growth and the contribution to local economic growth. Local opportunities such as community engagement, Gateshead College involvement and use of third-sector supply chains demonstrate a sound social value.

The proposal is distinct to the North Tyneside area, therefore there is no displacement of existing activity.

## The Financial & Management Case

Revenue costs are considered reasonable and relevant to the activity. A clear governance structure and delivery team are in place, including political oversight and senior management involvement, with named individuals and appropriate experience providing confidence in delivery capability.

Three low-probability risks have been identified, typical of an event programme, and the delivery team has demonstrated sufficient experience and appropriate mitigations to manage these effectively, giving comfort that risks will be identified and controlled.

The subsidy control position opinion has been provided by supporting email. Legal agreement is ongoing and compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 must be confirmed prior to contracting.

### **6.2 Recommended Conditions of Funding**

None.

### **B. Potential Impact on North East Mayoral Strategic Authority Objectives**

The Mayoral Manifesto, devolution deal and Interim Local Growth Plan recognise the benefits that events bring to the region – socially, economically and reputationally. The North East MSA Corporate plan sets out an objective to establish a regional events programme.

The Mouth of the Tyne Festival 2026 directly supports the Mayoral objectives of ‘a home to world-class sporting and cultural venues and events, underpinned by eclectic and fast-changing grassroots creativity and energy’ as part of our new Corporate Plan. The Mouth of the Tyne Festival 2026 therefore contributes to the following missions: ‘A home of real opportunity’ – ‘by growing our cultural and sporting sectors’; and, ‘A North East we are proud to call home’ – developing a ‘thriving creative economy’ and working to ‘establish and deliver a regional events and culture programme’.

### **C. Key risks**

A full risk register is included in the business case. High-level risks comprise:

- Environmental / weather - Mouth of the Tyne 2026 postponed. Mitigating action: indoor alternatives, communication around event being ‘all weather’, appropriate grounds maintenance, and full safety plan ahead of event.
- Supplier issue – potential postponement or cancellation (or parts of). Mitigating action: all suppliers will be contracted ahead of event.
- Performer availability - potential postponement or cancellation (or parts of). Mitigating action: All performers will be contracted well ahead of the event. Ticket companies experienced in refunding customers wherever necessary.

## D. Corporate Implications

### D1. Financial and other resources implications

The financial profile for the project/programme is included below.

<b>Funding source</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>Total</b>
North East MSA Investment Fund Capital (£)			
North East MSA Investment Fund Revenue (£)	£80,000		£80,000
<b>Total North East MSA</b>	<b>£80,000</b>		<b>£80,000</b>
Recipient's Funds Capital (£)			
Recipient's Funds Revenue (£)	£100,000		£100,000
<b>Total Match</b>	<b>£100,000</b>		<b>£100,000</b>

As noted in section A of this report, this investment is part of the £13m committed by the North East MSA Cabinet in March 2026 for the Events and Participation Investment Plan, within which the Mouth of the Tyne Festival is designated as a Signature Event. The £80,000 contribution set out in this decision is therefore drawn from

### D2. Legal implications

The comments of the representative of the Monitoring Officer have been included in this report.

### D3. Equalities implications

The North East MSA complies with the Public Sector Equality duty and this report has due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken for the project and the implications of this will be considered in the project mobilisation and delivery stages.

### D4. Consultation and engagement

Consultation has been undertaken with North Tyneside Council, Director of Economic Growth & Regeneration, Chief Executive, Finance Director, North East Mayor at the North East MSA.

## E. Appendices

None

## F. Background papers

North East MSA Cabinet, 17 March 2026

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 17/03/2026 14:00](#)

[Decision - Delivering the Mayor's Culture, Creative Industries and Sport Strategic Framework - North East CA](#)

## G. Contact officers

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**H. Glossary**

NTC	North Tyneside Council
North East MSA	North East Mayoral Strategic Authority
MOTF	Mouth of the Tyne Festival

**I. Consultee**

Cabinet Member:	Director/Head of Service:	Director of Finance and Investment:	Monitoring Officer:
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes