

THE INITIATIVE

Annual review

2011



Business
Tourism is
BIG BUSINESS

Taking
NewcastleGateshead
TO THE WORLD

Have the Tyne
OF YOUR LIFE

Under starter's
ORDERS

north east
england

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Welcome

Welcome to The Initiative, a review and overview of the many activities, highlights and success stories from our work throughout 2011 to promote NewcastleGateshead as a world-class place to live, learn, work and visit.

All of our activity seeks to attract leisure and business visitors, change perceptions and deliver economic benefits as a result. The fact that the destination was named the 'hipster capital of the north east' by the influential Lonely Planet Guidebook earlier this year is just one indicator that our combined efforts to position NewcastleGateshead on a national and international stage are continuing to attract attention and deliver high profile results.

None of this work would be possible without the strong and consistent support of Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, Northern Rock Foundation, Arts Council England North East and our many private sector partners. The achievements we report here are very much your successes too.

Jamie Martin,
chair, NewcastleGateshead Initiative.





If I have an enduring memory of 2011, I believe it will be of 'Show Boat' at our inaugural NewcastleGateshead Bridges Festival. Set against the backdrop of iconic buildings and bridges, the pyrotechnic display from the boat in the middle of the Tyne was a true spectacle.



Average weekend hotel occupancy for 2011:
Average across England: 65%

86%



NewcastleGateshead 2011



1.5m

people visited
NewcastleGateshead
attractions in 2011.

The festival brought thousands of people to enjoy themselves on the Quayside, as well as bringing together many of our own partners. This year's event was a pilot and we now intend to build on its success in 2012 and beyond. Throughout the year we have continued to develop our key festivals, including Juice Festival, EAT! NewcastleGateshead and the forthcoming Winter Festival. As always, we are proud to bring a programme of exceptional, original events to North East England.

This year we have also attracted major new conferences to the region. In April, I presented to over 1,200 members of the National Union

of Students at The Sage Gateshead - a fantastic opportunity to influence and inform the business leaders and key influencers of the future about all that NewcastleGateshead has to offer. In the year in which Newcastle was, for the third time running, named 'best university city' we were delighted to help bring this major event to the 'twin cities'.

On behalf of our partners and wider stakeholders, we have also hosted visits from leading national figures this year, including John Penrose, minister for tourism and heritage; Lord Heseltine, chair of the Regional Growth Fund; and James Berresford, chief executive of VisitEngland.

It is vital for our success as a destination that we maintain a productive ongoing dialogue

with representatives in Westminster and the national tourism industry. These key visits and my recent appointment to the board of national tourist board VisitEngland can only help to ensure that there is always a voice for the region at the national table.

Finally I'd like to thank our existing partners and welcome those organisations which have joined NewcastleGateshead Initiative during 2011. It is the strength of our public-private partnership which continues to ensure NewcastleGateshead as a destination can punch above its weight on a national and international stage.

During the year we've continued to see significant developments and exciting events that provide us with strong product and an improved NewcastleGateshead 'package' to promote.

We are thrilled to have Turner Prize 2011 currently showing at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art. This is the first time the prize has been exhibited outside of Tate and resolutely confirms the transformation of NewcastleGateshead as an international cultural capital. Another of our cultural gems, the Theatre Royal, has undergone a major restoration over the past year, bringing the theatre back to the elegant 1901 Frank Matcham design.

The past year has also been a great success in terms of hotel developments. Four new hotels have opened in NewcastleGateshead in under 12 months and three more properties are due in 2012. Not only is this a huge vote of confidence in the destination from hotel developers and investors, it really enhances the accommodation offer for people in every budget range in terms of both quality and quantity.

The Great North Run continues to be an annual highlight. With the City Games now held on the Saturday, thousands of visitors are attracted to NewcastleGateshead Quayside for an exciting event and to experience mounting anticipation of the run ahead.

The whole weekend is given great coverage by the BBC and is a real showcase opportunity for NewcastleGateshead.

It's also been really exciting to see the emerging plans for Science Central, part of the Science City project, which has just been awarded £6m in capital expenditure. This project is going to be fundamental to the way our region develops in the future and is certainly one to watch. Similarly, we welcome the Toffee Factory, which will act as a hub for the creative industries while also cementing Ouseburn's reputation as a vibrant creative quarter. And beyond the urban core, developments such as the Offshore Technology Park at Walker further confirm the North East as a major international player in the marine sector.

NewcastleGateshead is not a place to rest on its laurels and these and other ambitious developments continue to make NewcastleGateshead a world-class place to live, learn, work, visit and invest.

Sarah Stewart

Sarah Stewart, chief executive,
NewcastleGateshead Initiative.

Destination marketing

...the hipster capital of the north east, a cool urban centre that knows how to take care of itself and anyone else who comes to visit with an unexpected mix of culture, heritage and sophistication, best exemplified not just by its excellent new art galleries and magnificent concert hall, but by its growing number of fine restaurants, choice hotels and interesting bars.

Lonely Planet,
Great Britain Guidebook,
May 2011

Have the Tyne of your Life

Domestic city breaks campaign 2011

Have the Tyne of your Life is our ongoing domestic campaign to promote NewcastleGateshead for city breaks in spring and autumn, aimed at an economically attractive target market we call 'Nesting Cosmos': 25-35 year old couples or groups of friends living in urban areas.

The campaign promotes NewcastleGateshead as a vibrant and fun place to visit, with the key themes of shopping, eating and drinking, festivals and cultural attractions as the main reasons to visit during spring and autumn.

Activity includes national press inserts, radio advertising, online advertising and press adverts, all focusing on the target geographical areas of Scotland, Yorkshire and North West.

A media visits pitch, to support marketing activity and encourage journalists to come to the destination during Turner Prize 2011, also saw particular success.

Partners in campaign activity include:

East Coast trains, CrossCountry trains, Hilton Newcastle Gateshead, Marriott Hotel Gosforth Park, Eldon Square shopping centre, Theatre Royal, Rockliffe Hall, Jurys Inn and Holiday Inn Express.



Visitors discover discount pass



For 2011/12 the Discover Pass has been revamped and improved to make it much more relevant to visitors. It now includes offers from a wider range of businesses, including attractions, bars and restaurants, sport, leisure and cultural venues and accommodation providers from across NewcastleGateshead and North East England.

Reflecting the significantly broader range of offers included – now over 120 – the Discover Pass is both commercially self-funding and great value at £10.

Online sales continue to be strong through the NewcastleGateshead.com online shop, with purchases from as far afield as the USA! Sales channels also include media partnerships with ncjMedia and Metro Radio as well as the Tourist Information Centre network and transport and accommodation providers, including Malmaison, DFDS and Euro Hostel.



With a thriving cultural scene, award winning nightlife, Europe's biggest shopping centre, not to mention excellent transport links, NewcastleGateshead is poised to be the destination of choice for Irish travellers in 2011.

Irish Daily Star, 26 January 2011

International impact

Putting NewcastleGateshead firmly on the map, raising the profile of the destination beyond the UK and attracting leisure visitors from three core international markets is a key part of our remit.

Ireland 2011

Tactics: consumer PR campaign promoting sport, shopping and nightlife.
Partnership working: Jurys Inn; the opening of Jurys Inn NewcastleGateshead Quays hotel (a renowned Irish export) provided an excellent hook to attract some of Ireland's leading travel journalists.

A highlight: Media visit and significant coverage on RTE2FM, Ireland's second biggest commercial radio station.

Norway 2011

Tactics: consumer PR campaign focusing on shopping, sport and the night-time economy delivered by on-territory PR agency.
Partnership working: VisitBritain Norway; NewcastleGateshead Initiative partners providing in-kind support included Eldon Square, The Townhouse Hotel, Jesmond Dene House, John Lewis and Slaley Hall.

A highlight: 'Dream weekend' competition for football fans delivered extensive online and national Norwegian TV coverage.

Holland 2011

Tactics: spring and autumn integrated marketing and PR campaign with shopping and premier league football as main drivers.
Partnership working: DFDS Seaways - joint campaign in its third year.

A highlight: City break coverage in national Dutch newspaper, Metro.

Passenger numbers remain strong despite a significant decline in consumer confidence in Holland during 2011.

	2009	2010	2011
Mini Cruise passengers:	37,375	38,855	39,160
Overnight passengers:	7,053	8,170	8,200

Once upon a Tyne

Excellent progress has been made this year in the development of the NewcastleGateshead place brand story. A project being led by NewcastleGateshead Initiative on behalf of Gateshead and Newcastle City councils, it aims to support economic growth by differentiating what NewcastleGateshead has to offer in order to improve promotion of the area to national and international audiences.

Following extensive research and consultation, specialist agency Brand Vista has now developed the primary themes for our place brand story which were tested with more than 200 people in November, across a range of sectors and backgrounds - from students to scientists, business leaders to journalists.

The responses and feedback received are helping to shape the narrative, now in final development, that will provide us all with the tools to effectively and consistently tell the NewcastleGateshead success story into the future.



Media matters

Managing the reputation and profile of NewcastleGateshead in the media remains a key focus; you'll see throughout The Initiative soundbites from press cuttings which have helped tell our story, change perceptions, stimulate interest and ultimately attract visitors to this great place.

During 2011 we took an increasingly targeted approach to attracting journalists from key markets. Amongst the high profile publications we've welcomed are: The Times and Daily Telegraph; Scotland's largest Sunday newspapers; The Irish Daily Mail; Metro (Holland) and Stavanger's largest regional publication Lokavisen (Norway).

Our proactive approach has helped maintain the level of journalists visiting the destination during a difficult year for the media industry.



NewcastleGateshead.com

Unique visitors in Oct 2011

73,037

Unique visitors in Oct 2010

45,508



Social networks:

Facebook 1,653 Likes (30 Nov 2011)
3,000 - 4,000 average active monthly users

Twitter altweet_pet 1,846 followers
MeetonTyne 792 followers
DiscoverPass 200 followers

NewcastleGateshead 2.0

We have focussed on improving our digital capabilities over the last year.

Back in September 2010 we successfully amalgamated two websites into one and launched NewcastleGateshead.com which has developed over the last year and is now regarded as one of the UK's leading destination websites.

Visitors are increasingly demanding information via digital platforms and, significantly, well informed visitors spend more money. In light of this, our site now offers a host of new features and enhanced content, including Trip Advisor reviews, city guide i-App, online shop, local resident testimonials (shown above) and our 'Tyne of your Life' blog.

We're currently in the process of implementing a brand new customer relationship management (CRM) system to help deliver more effective e-communications and we have clear direction for our social network activity across key media, including Facebook and Twitter.

We are now working on a host of new projects and content ideas and we're always keen to hear from partners about how we can improve our digital activity and work together.

Destination media coverage about NewcastleGateshead is evaluated independently:

- **Total articles**
Feb - Sept 2011: **1,008**
- **Total readership:** **2.19bn**
- **Total AVE:** **£5.43m**
- **Percentage positive:** **99%**

“ Across the city it is clear people have come here for all sorts of reasons... In fact, as with the best, most vibrant cities, the ability to accommodate all these tribes is one of the qualities that marks somewhere truly hip. ”

Financial Times, 07 October 2011

Business tourism



Taking NewcastleGateshead TO THE WORLD

Here at NewcastleGateshead Convention Bureau, our business is all about meeting people, and there's no better way of spreading the word than by attending the conference industry's biggest events and exhibitions to share our passion for NewcastleGateshead. Over the last year, the Convention Bureau and our partners have been represented at key domestic and international events including: International Confex, the Event Organisers Summit, IMEX in Frankfurt and EIBTM in Barcelona.

Business tourism IS BIG BUSINESS

2011 has seen a number of major conferences taking place in NewcastleGateshead, some of them the result of many years work.

For example, in October we welcomed the European Society for Paediatric Research to The Sage Gateshead. One of the largest international medical congresses the destination has ever hosted, the event attracted a record 1,400 delegates and delivered an estimated economic boost of £1.2m. NewcastleGateshead Initiative partners, including The Sage Gateshead, Centre for Life, Blackfriars Restaurant,

BALTIC, Stanley Travel and a number of hotels, played their part in making sure delegates from across the world experienced the legendary Geordie welcome.

Looking forward, there are some major events on the books for 2012, 2013 and beyond. Next year kicks off with the Liberal Democrats' spring conference which takes place in March and completes NewcastleGateshead's hat-trick of hosting the big three political parties. 2013 will be a big year for international congresses with a host of global associations coming to the destination attracting thousands of delegates from across the globe.

86%

of all delegates questioned in NewcastleGateshead in 2011 would 'definitely' or 'maybe' return for a city break in the future.

£1.5m

worth of business placed by NewcastleGateshead Convention Bureau in 2011 for 140 separate events.

Ambassador success

It's been a bumper year for the successful Conference Ambassador Programme. Working with leading academics from Newcastle University, Northumbria University and University of Sunderland, and medical professionals from our hospitals, bids for a wide range of major conferences have been generated, including for the British Association of Paediatric Surgeons and the Association for Upper Gastrointestinal Surgeons.

We've hosted a range of networking events for our ambassadors including a fabulous VIP evening at the Turner Prize at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, supported by Meeting Makers, and a stunning evening at

The Assembly Rooms for the Great North Eco Feast. These events are a great way of thanking our ambassadors for their hard work and encouraging them to bid for future events.

Conferences taking place during 2011 generated by the Ambassador Programme include major meetings for the College of Emergency Medicine, the British Association of Sexual Health & HIV and the International Conference of the Regional Studies Association, all of which have helped to underline the area's reputation for world-class research, innovation and academic excellence.



The NewcastleGateshead stand at International Confex 2011.

“ One of the outstanding characteristics of the most successful meeting destinations is their ability to reinvent themselves and NewcastleGateshead is no exception. ”

Meetings & Incentive Travel, June 2011

Making connections

We've been working closely with partners at a national level including MeetEngland (part of VisitEngland), the Association of British Professional Conference Organisers (ABPCO), the International Congress & Conventions Association (ICCA) and the Meetings Industry Association (MIA) to ensure NewcastleGateshead has a voice on the national stage. We're delighted that NewcastleGateshead is part of the England Large Congress Group, working with colleagues from Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and Brighton to attract more major conferences to the country, and to be part of national campaigns such as Britain for Events and ABPCO's 'Conference Cloud'.

All of these activities help us to build on NewcastleGateshead's reputation as an innovative and forward-looking destination and to champion the role that business tourism plays in driving a vibrant visitor economy.

2011 in pictures



Show Boat

NewcastleGateshead's bridges dance for their very own festival.



All aboard for NewcastleGateshead Initiative's summer social evening at Beamish Museum.



NewcastleGateshead stand partners at International Confex 2011.

Just Jam

Hip-hop 'til you don't stop for Juice Festival, NewcastleGateshead's festival for children and young people.



Cakebook

EAT! NewcastleGateshead's Cakebook (North) event - literally, it was there to be eaten.



Tourism and heritage minister John Penrose MP with Sarah Stewart during his whistle-stop tour of the North East hosted by NewcastleGateshead Initiative.



NewcastleGateshead launches its first iPhone app for visitors on the move around the 'twin cities'.

Culture and major events

We produce and deliver five major festivals each year: EAT! NewcastleGateshead, NewcastleGateshead Bridges Festival, Juice - NewcastleGateshead's festival for children and young people, NewcastleGateshead Winter Festival and Chinese New Year.

The core aim of each festival is to encourage visitors to the 'twin cities' and reinforce the positive reputation of NewcastleGateshead both nationally and internationally. NewcastleGateshead Initiative also supports and helps profile the huge number of festivals and events which have collectively established the destination as one of Britain's most exciting places to visit.

EAT! NewcastleGateshead

EAT! NewcastleGateshead celebrated its fifth year in 2011 and one of the key themes this year was partnership and collaboration with regional businesses and attractions. The EAT! Cook School at Fenwick is an excellent example of how partnership working between local businesses and the cultural sector can deliver an exciting and innovative customer experience.

Our partnership with the National Trust also delivered impressive results. On Sunday 26 June 2011, thousands of visitors made their way to National Trust property Gibside for Cakebook (North), smashing previous attendance figures at the popular tourist attraction.



On the same June Sunday in 2010 we had 700 visitors, but the additional publicity and enticing event activities helped us achieve one of our busiest ever days at Gibside with over 3,500 visitors through the gates.

Emily Bryce,
visitor services manager,
Gibside

The festival attracted more visitors to the Quayside, helping to boost businesses and deliver a great experience for visitors.

Sean Bullick, chief executive, NE1 Ltd



99%

of hotel rooms were occupied on 17 September 2011, the night prior to the Great North Run.

On the weekend of Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 August 2011, we delivered a brand new pilot festival celebrating the 'twin cities' iconic Quayside, the River Tyne and the seven bridges which connect the two.

Sponsored by NE1, the business improvement district, and Port of Tyne, custodians of the River, we were able to work with both partners to provide valuable business benefits. With the festival attracting thousands of visitors to the NewcastleGateshead Quayside over the two day duration, businesses and attractions around the wider Quayside area benefitted significantly too.

95%

of visitors to NewcastleGateshead Bridges Festival said events such as this would make them visit the Quayside more often.



NewcastleGateshead's festival for children and young people

Now recognised as one of the leading children's festivals in the UK, Juice Festival is in its fourth year and has garnered the support and praise of NewcastleGateshead's cultural venues and many partners. Work by children and young people stands alongside work by internationally acclaimed artists and reflects the ambition and talent of young people in NewcastleGateshead.

Juice Festival is the most potent symbol of the deep-rooted collaborative spirit that characterises the NewcastleGateshead arts scene. Virtually all NewcastleGateshead's arts and cultural organisations believe passionately in the importance of developing work made with and for young people...The Sage Gateshead is enormously proud to be involved with it.

Anthony Sargent, general director, The Sage Gateshead



In addition to producing and delivering our core festivals, we also support cultural venues and partners across NewcastleGateshead to help add value to other key events...

Turner Prize 2011 at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art

We worked with BALTIC throughout its Turner Prize campaign, particularly its education and outreach work. The Turner Prize Café, a project supported by NewcastleGateshead Initiative, toured the 'twin cities' throughout the summer igniting conversation about Turner Prize 2011 and the four nominated artists.

We also played a key role in brokering the Nokia sponsorship of Turner Prize 2011.



What makes NewcastleGateshead Initiative's Winter Festival so distinctive from other festive events across the country is the collaboration between partners, collectively offering a unique and attractive reason to visit NewcastleGateshead during the winter months.

The festival relies on the twinning of the commercial and cultural sector to establish a programme of events as diverse as Enchanted Parks in Gateshead to the Christmas lights switch-on in Newcastle.



KUNG HEY FAT CHOI! Happy Chinese New Year!

On Sunday 6 February 2011, NewcastleGateshead marked Chinese New Year with a free public event on Stowell Street and a series of activities at Dance City, Newcastle.

Celebrating the year of the rabbit, festivities produced by NewcastleGateshead Initiative included an exhibition of Chinese costume, food, arts and crafts.



175th anniversary celebrations Theatre Royal Newcastle

Following its historic restoration throughout the summer, the Theatre Royal's next major milestone is its 175th birthday in February 2012. We have worked with the theatre to appoint an independent producer to develop ideas for the celebrations and will continue to work together to develop and realise the event.

UNDER STARTER'S ORDERS

Throughout 2011 we've been working with partners regionally and nationally to ensure that NewcastleGateshead and North East England makes the very most of the tourism and profile opportunities associated with the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Some of the activity included:

- Commissioning our own HD footage of the destination and key iconic sites - now freely available to international broadcasters to maximise next year's unrivalled opportunity to showcase the destination to a 4 billion TV audience.
- Hosting a special Olympics Breakfast Briefing exclusively for our partners.
- Appointing two freelancers to help coordinate and maximise promotional opportunities from the 2012 Games across the region.

It wasn't just our confidence in NewcastleGateshead as an enduring tourism destination which convinced us we had to come here; we were also impressed by the ubiquitous warm Geordie welcome we received from all we encountered when we made our plans...

David Myers, chief executive,
Sleeperz Hotels

Destination management

More rooms with a view

This year NewcastleGateshead has experienced a surge in hotel developments that has seen the breadth of accommodation on offer to visitors expand to include everything from innovative hostel brand Euro Hostel, to the first UK outing for Canadian brand Sandman Signature, with its four-star property next to Newcastle United Football Club.

Other new hotels to have opened in 2011 include Jurys Inn NewcastleGateshead Quays and DoubleTree by Hilton Newcastle Airport. Joining us in 2012, to be ready for Olympic visitors, will be bespoke budget hotel Sleeperz, Ramada Encore and Hotel Indigo, all creating significant employment opportunities and providing greater choice.

NewcastleGateshead Initiative has been working with these new hotel partners to maximise marketing and PR opportunities in our domestic and international markets, profiling the properties to potential visitors to the destination.



Information EVERYWHERE

NewcastleGateshead Initiative has led a review of visitor information services across the destination working with Gateshead and Newcastle City councils.

The review has refocused the current activity of all three organisations to create a single approach that responds to the changing ways people access information.

Underpinned by the mantra of 'taking information to the visitor' rather than expecting them to find it, some key changes have been agreed including work to develop a range of Information Partners in high footfall areas who will answer enquiries, provide literature and digital information.

This is a hugely exciting opportunity for NewcastleGateshead and its 17.6 million annual visitors and will allow us to extend the range and scope of our retail offer, answer enquires in a dynamic way using social media and instant messaging, and take our information provision into the 21st century.



BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, East Coast Taxis, DFDS, Port of Tyne and Eldon Square are just a handful of partners who have invested in their front line team members in recent months with Welcome to NewcastleGateshead training.

Written in partnership with the North East Hotels Association, Welcome to NewcastleGateshead is destination awareness and customer service training for everyone who plays a part in welcoming visitors to the area. Over 500 people have now taken part in the fun and interactive three hour workshop, which covers topics such as the story of NewcastleGateshead, our history and heritage, famous people and achievements, and the truth about where Geordies and Mackems come from!

It provides an overview of our destination today, looking at what attracts people here, plus top tips that are sure to impress and encourage visitors to explore and want to come back.

Whether born and bred here or new to the region, participants get a whole new understanding and enthusiasm for NewcastleGateshead which can only benefit visitors to the area.

Providing a warm Geordie welcome

Corporate news

NewcastleGateshead was named as one of the key tourism destinations set to benefit significantly from VisitEngland's successful bid for additional funding from the Regional Growth Fund (RGF). The announcement, made in October by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, will see extra funds allocated to us in order to deliver domestic marketing campaigns to attract more visitors over the next three years.

Identified as a result of our proven ability to grow tourism in the region and strong private sector support, we will work closely with VisitEngland to design and implement domestic campaign activity aimed at inspiring Britons to take more short breaks and holidays at home and in doing so grow jobs in the tourism sector.

Initial campaigns will capitalise on next year's once-in-a-generation events like the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, The Diamond Jubilee, the Cultural Olympiad, and the Torch Relay.



National tourism board appoints NewcastleGateshead Initiative chief

Sarah Stewart was selected to join the board of national tourist board VisitEngland in June this year. Following the launch of the Government's tourism policy, a recruitment process was undertaken to strengthen their existing board with wider representation from destination management organisations across the country.



Toast of the Toon

NewcastleGateshead Initiative marks ten years.

The anniversary event celebrated key events and achievements of the past decade with an audience of partners, stakeholders, staff (past and present) and council, cultural and business leaders who have supported the organisation over the past decade.

10 years ago both councils recognised the opportunity to have a greater impact globally and nationally through joint working. NewcastleGateshead Initiative has clearly demonstrated the level of success that we can achieve, consistently punching above its weight and putting NewcastleGateshead firmly on the map.

Cllr Mick Henry,
leader of Gateshead Council



City leaders past and present gathered at Northumbria University's Sport Central to mark a decade of success for NewcastleGateshead Initiative. The agency has attracted millions of pounds to the region and has helped establish NewcastleGateshead as one of the most vibrant places in the country. *The Journal*, 14 January 2011

Chosen Charity

NewcastleGateshead Initiative is delighted to be supporting St. Oswald's Hospice this year. The partnership is the first in a programme of year-long collaborations where NewcastleGateshead Initiative has pledged to use its position within the business community to help charities raise their profiles as well as funds.

St Oswald's Hospice provides specialist care for North East adults, young people and children with life-limiting conditions. To find out more visit www.stoswaldsuk.org.



Proactive partnership

Following a review of our existing membership scheme during 2011, we're now introducing a series of changes to improve the way we work with partners in future. We believe more interactive partnership working will deliver greater benefits and success for businesses and the destination as a whole.

The total number of NewcastleGateshead Initiative members has remained strong and constant despite challenging economic times and we're therefore looking to evolve rather than revolutionise our approach.

The review has resulted in the following changes:

- A clear shift in emphasis away from a passive membership scheme.
- Revised partner levels, pricing and benefits; the three partner levels are now Gold, Silver and Bronze.
- Improved communication and engagement tactics.
- Better delivery processes and procedures.

Put simply, but significantly, membership becomes partnership; members become partners.

To find out more, call us on **0191 440 5729**

Partnership in practice

During 2011, we've worked with our partners on a wide range of projects and initiatives.

A newly established Retail Forum has brought together retail partners to help us better package and promote the breadth of offer and help us to effectively differentiate the NewcastleGateshead shopping experience from competitor destinations.

Our leisure marketing campaigns have greater impact and can often be measured more effectively through partnership working. In Holland our match-funded campaigns with DFDS continue to deliver an excellent return as a result of greater combined spending power and marketing expertise.

There are many more examples of successful joint working; but don't just take our word for it - here's what just a small selection of our partners have to say:



NewcastleGateshead Initiative promotes the area, its economic and cultural attractions very effectively. This is all the more important now, following the recent loss of the Regional Development Agency.

John Marshall, senior partner, Dickinson Dees LLP

In short, NewcastleGateshead Initiative works to attract more visitors, which boosts private sector involvement, which in turn boosts confidence in the region. That is absolutely vital to our business.

Michelle Percy, director, Silverlink Holdings Ltd

It's so important for the region - especially in the current climate - that we are united and work together to promote ourselves as one destination. NewcastleGateshead Initiative profiles the destination as a place to visit for leisure but also to host conferences and events, which is vital to our own business whilst also supporting development and the regional economy.

Lynn Waterman, director of sales, Hilton NewcastleGateshead



Looking ahead TO 2012

2012 promises to be another busy year. Major events such as the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and new areas of work - inward investment marketing and visitor information services - provide significant opportunities for NewcastleGateshead Initiative.



The London 2012 Games will be informing many of our events over the next year. The Olympic torch will be coming through North East England in June and we look forward to a dazzling event to celebrate its arrival. St

James' Park will host nine Olympic football matches, including a quarter-final in both the men's and the women's competitions.

With an Olympic Host City on our doorstep we have unparalleled access to the Games, with sporting and cultural events in close proximity. But more importantly, as businesses and organisations, we all have the chance to make the very most of the opportunities on offer for the benefit of the region as a whole: improved external perceptions, greater profile, significant business contracts and a major boost for the visitor economy, in both the short and long-term.

The 2012 Games are a great opportunity for us to welcome as many people as possible to visit NewcastleGateshead - and one which we intend to seize! We are working with many cultural partners to programme a summer of festivities, which will capture the spirit of celebration around the Games, as well as making NewcastleGateshead an attractive destination for visitors from around the world.

The Queen's Jubilee weekend in June, closely followed by the 150th anniversary of the song, The Blaydon Races, will kick-start the summer in style, displaying the mix of creativity, regional pride and right royal fun for which NewcastleGateshead is known.

A highlight undoubtedly will be the return of NewcastleGateshead Bridges Festival, piloted this August to great success, which will form the centrepiece of our activities.

In 2012, NewcastleGateshead Initiative will also be taking on new roles and responsibilities. We will host a new business winning team and will provide tailored marketing and PR expertise in promoting NewcastleGateshead to potential inward investors. On behalf of Gateshead and Newcastle City councils, we will also be taking on responsibility for the destination's visitor information service, providing a single approach to delivery and strategic management so that visitors can access information where and when they need it most.

Whether it's our domestic marketing campaigns or new visitor information plans and provision, we will continue to embrace partnership working over the coming 12 months. Everything we do is driven towards delivering economic benefit for the people, institutions and business of the 'twin cities'. We love to work with organisations who share our vision, organisations who recognise the vital importance of collaboration and who want to play an integral role in boosting the profile of our place in order to deliver mutual benefits for our partners and the destination as a whole.



Sarah Stewart

**Sarah Stewart, chief executive,
NewcastleGateshead Initiative**

Meet the team



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Chief Executive

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