

Neil MacGregor - Director of The British Museum

Conference Chair

Neil MacGregor took over the directorship of the British Museum in 2001. Prior to joining the British Museum he was Director of the National Gallery from 1987. Before the National Gallery he lectured in the History of Art and Architecture at the University of Reading, and was Editor of the Burlington Magazine from 1981 to 1986.

Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State DCMS

Tessa Jowell has been the MP for Dulwich and West Norwood since 1992. She was born in London and was educated at St Margaret's School in Aberdeen and the universities of Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Goldsmith's, London. She is a visiting fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford.

Before her election to Parliament in 1992, Tessa had a career in psychiatric social work, social policy and public sector management.

Tony McNulty, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Housing, Planning and Regeneration

Tony McNulty was appointed as Minister for Housing, Planning and Regeneration in May 2002. He has particular responsibility for the Rent Service and the Planning Inspectorate as well as providing support for the Dome – based regeneration proposals. He is also Minister for London.

Hazel Blears, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health

Hazel Blears MP was appointed as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health June 2001. She became Public Health Minister May 2002. She was educated at Wardley Grammar School; Trent Polytechnic; Chester College of Law.

She was elected MP for Salford in May 1997.

Tom Bloxham MBE, Chairman of Urban Splash Group

The Urban Splash Group, the innovative property developers, have won over 100 awards for architecture, regeneration and business success. As well as chairing Urban Splash, Tom chairs the North West Arts Board, sits on the Government's Property Advisory Group and its Urban Sounding Board (ODPM), and is a director of Liverpool's City of Culture bid. Tom was awarded an MBE for his services to architecture and urban regeneration and is an honorary

member of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Paul Collard, Regional Chair of Northern Arts

Paul Collard is a member of the Arts Council and the new Regional Chair of Northern Arts. Paul is probably best known for his role in the successful delivery of Visual Arts UK. He has recently returned north to take up the position of Director of Programme Development for the Newcastle Gateshead Initiative. Paul's career has involved being a policy adviser to the Government; Deputy Director of the Institute of Contemporary Arts; Deputy Controller of the British Film Institute, and most recently Director of the International Festival of Arts & Ideas, USA.

Paul Brookes - Chief Executive - Bradford 2008

In October 2001, Paul was appointed Director of Bradford 2008. Before then he was Chief Executive of the Culture Company, based in Huddersfield which grew out of Photo 98-the agency established to undertake the programming, fund-raising and marketing of the 1998 Year of Photography and the Electronic Image. Previous to that, he was Director of Arts for Yorkshire and Humberside Arts. He has recently lectured abroad in places as diverse as New York, Slovakia and Tokyo. He is currently a trustee of the Yorkshire Film Archive.

Adele Blakebrough, Director of Community Action Network

Adele Blakebrough is founder and director of the Community Action Network, a relationship and Internet-based network of social entrepreneurs. This UK-based project began on 1 April 1998. Prior to this, she was director of the nationally renowned Kaleidoscope project, a voluntary organisation for heroin dependents. Adele is an ordained Baptist minister, and Chief Commissioner for the Home Mission Fund (for the Baptist church) in London. An experienced broadcaster and speaker, she regularly comments on social and religious issues on TV and radio.

John Walker - Acting Chief Executive, English Partnerships

John joined English Partnerships as Chief Accountant responsible for Financial Accounting based in Gateshead. He was subsequently appointed Director for all Central Finance and IT services. He is a Director of Priority Sites Ltd, English Partnerships' joint venture with The Royal Bank of Scotland, represents English Partnerships on the Boards of Tees Valley and Sunderland URCs and is a representative of English Partnerships on the Board of the English Cities Fund. He joined English Partnerships from Stoy Hayward Consulting, where he was a management consultant specialising mainly in regeneration and property development.

Peter Stark, Head of Centre for Cultural Policy and Management, Northumbria University

Peter has over thirty years direct experience of management in the cultural sector and of the interaction of the arts and heritage with issues of economic and social regeneration. He is an internationally acknowledged expert in cultural policy development, in cultural management training and in the conceptualisation, design and realisation of cultural projects.

John Newbigin - Head of Corporate Relations Channel 4 Television

John joined Channel 4 television as Head of Corporate Relations in January 2000. Prior to that, John was Special Adviser to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport, Chris Smith MP, from the General Election of 1997 until stepping down in November 1999. His previous jobs have included working as an executive for David Puttnam's film company Enigma.

Michael Wilford - Michael Wilford Architects

Michael's architectural projects have gained international renown and include significant public buildings such as performing art centres, art galleries, museums and libraries around the world. These projects have won many architectural awards, the most recent including The Royal Fine Art Commission Building of the Year Award in 2001 for The Lowry. He also teaches extensively in schools of architecture. He has been an external examiner at many UK schools of architecture and sits on juries for numerous international architectural competitions and architectural awards.

Bill MacNaught - Director of Cultural Services, Gateshead MBC

Bill joined Gateshead Council in 1984 becoming Director of Libraries and Arts in 1991 and Head of Cultural Development in 2002. He has responsibilities across the full range of cultural services; chairs the Council's Lifelong Learning Partnership, and is a member of the Society of Chief Librarian's Executive Committee. As a member of the North Music Trust he has an important role overseeing the development of the 'Sage' on Gateshead Quays, and is closely involved in the Newcastle/Gateshead Capital of Culture bid.

Abi Ekoku - Chief Executive, Bradford Bulls

Abi Ekoku qualified as a teacher from St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill and taught in London. He represented Britain in the Commonwealth Games, as a Discus thrower before becoming a professional Rugby League player with London Crusaders. He joined Bradford Bulls in 1997, appearing in the Challenge Cup Final at Wembley and winning a Super League Champions Medal. After retiring in 1998 he headed the Rugby League Professional Players Association before becoming Managing Director at Keighley Cougars in 1999. He joined Bradford Bulls as Chief Executive at the beginning of the 2000 season.

Anna Whyatt - Director of Creative Futures, Era Ltd

Anna has worked in economic regeneration and public sector top management at local, national and European level since 1976. She has worked on major projects including the Tate Modern and the national strategy for the Film Council. From 1981 to 1994 she was Senior Assistant Director, Industry and Estates for Leeds City Council, Chief Executive of Southwark Borough Council, Chair of the Society of Metropolitan Chief Executive and a board member of Business in the Community. She has acted as advisor to several ministers of the current government and has ten years experience both as Chief Executive Economic Advisor to the Association of Metropolitan Authorities.

Dr Geetha Upadhyaya, Director, Kala Sangam

Having qualified as a Chemical Pathologist, Geetha worked in India, Malaysia and the NHS before she chose to use her other post graduate qualification in classical Indian dance and music and co-founded Kala Sangam which has been earmarked £1.5 million by the Arts Council of England to establish a centre of excellence for south Asian arts in Bradford.

Matthew Taylor, Director, Institute for Public Policy Research

The Institute for Public Policy Research is Britain's leading centre left think tank. Matthew was appointed to the Labour Party in 1994 to establish Labour's rebuttal operation, and during the 1997 General Election he was Labour's Director of Policy and a member of the Party's central election strategy team. Until December 1998 Matthew was Assistant General Secretary for the Labour Party.

Jane Beardsworth, Head of Development, North West Arts

Head of Development in the North West office of Arts Council, England. Her portfolio includes audience development, cultural diversity, disability, education and social inclusion. The focus of her work is on increasing people's engagement with the Arts particularly those who are traditionally excluded and in promoting the arts in a social and educational context. Previously Jane has worked as an arts development officer in a local authority, set up a national touring theatre company and has worked with young people and disabled people all over the country to enable them to make and perform their own work.

