

2014 Conference in Nové Hradý: Declaration

Delegations from different Newcastles gathered in Nové Hradý, Czech Republic, from 28 April to 4 May 2014 for our ninth conference. Following the original initiative of Shinshiro City, Japan, we have continued to exchange views and have deepened understanding, friendship and solidarity among us. We have succeeded in establishing and maintaining an international network connecting our towns and cities for the mutual benefit of our citizens.

On behalf of our respective Newcastles, we have agreed to use our best endeavours to progress the following programme:

1. To implement the funding arrangement, as agreed between us, at the earliest possible date which will provide resources to establish a paid secretariat - responsible for taking forward this agreed plan of action.
2. To share information and best practice, and to support each other in any other practicable way to further our principal common interests which are:
 - * To create employment opportunities, especially for our young people, together with the skills development that underpins it.
 - * To develop new initiatives that provide affordable housing for those in our communities who need it.
 - * To address the gap in communication and involvement between local leaders and institutions and the people and communities who they are there to serve.
 - * To support services that recognise an ageing population, meeting their needs but recognising the experience that older people have and the contribution that they can make.
 - * To sustain the viability of our town centres and district centres in the face of out-of-town and online retailing.
 - * To develop new uses for our historic buildings and identify the resources to carry this out.
 - * To protect and sustain for future generations our environment, including our surrounding agricultural land and forestry.
 - * To further our additional interests (more important for some individual Newcastles than others) of building a clear civic identity; tackling inequalities, discrimination and/or civil disobedience or disengagement; developing a more cohesive local society that welcomes new communities.
3. To improve communications between us by:
 - * Having nominated contact points among officers, politicians and relevant individuals and agencies who guarantee to take initiatives, provide information and otherwise respond promptly and positively as necessary.
 - * Creating greater content and functionality in our on-line presence to include: topic forums to share concerns, ideas and best practice (both member-specific and open access); clear links from our municipality websites to Newcastles of the World
 - * Subject to individual agreement, to share contacts in each of our Newcastles across a range of disciplines and interests
 - * Developing a virtual and/or print gazette of all Newcastles of the World as a basis for contacts, interaction and public information.
 - * Creating and keeping up to date a calendar of events and activities so we can promote each other's programmes but also avoid conflicts of dates.
 - * Opportunities for income-generation through site sponsorship/management, advertising etc
- * A more proactive approach to Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms, perhaps with some rotation of site management and updating responsibility.



4. To create a shared tourism strategy and city branding, as a key vehicle for driving economic development, that will have the following elements:

* A platform of digital/social media-based connectivity that operates for the benefit of both our own individual citizens and our visitors/investors, but which is also customised to facilitate the participation of as many Newcastles as possible. The “Omni City” model developed by Neuchatel will be examined by us all to see if it can be the basis of such a shared platform.

* A Newcastle's tourism passport or card which offers a mutually-guaranteed range of benefits to all visitors from one Newcastle to another. The Nove Hradky model is to be examined as a basis for such development.

*Common or shared branding based on heritage (castles, other historic buildings, industrial heritage and regeneration); culture and festivals; our towns and cities as gateways to surrounding areas of natural beauty

*A range of appropriate promotional material that can be used in our individual information centres, online and for exhibitions.

5. To encourage and develop a range of contacts and opportunities between businesses and business agencies, especially through online presence and the interests that we have in chambers of commerce and trade, exchanging information on important business sectors with possibilities for trade, research and development and other collaborations.

6. To pursue opportunities for collaborative applications for EU and other international funding involving those Newcastles who wish to be part of such appropriate applications and can commit to finding their share of any match-funding that may be required. Initial areas of opportunity might be: international exchange programmes, work experience and training; choirs, traditional music and other creative cultural and craft programmes; conservation and regeneration; sustaining the viability of local centres; citizen engagement in decision-making institutions and in civic pride initiatives. The Erasmus +, Europe for Citizens and Cultural Programmes appear to provide most opportunities among the Transnational Funds; also work and skills from the Social Fund.

7. To respond to the agenda developed and presented by the **2014 youth conference**, with positive intent, both as individual Newcastles and collectively, to support this within the future business plan, and to encourage our members to agree that all delegations to future conferences should include youth delegates, with a guideline of at least 25% of the delegation numbers.

8. To develop further between us educational, cultural and business links, with particular focus on schools; colleges/universities; chambers of commerce and trade; heritage (castles, museums and galleries), recognising that some partnerships will be one-to-one, others may involve a small number of Newcastles with common characteristics and interests and some may involve all Newcastles.

9. To welcome and accept the invitation extended by Newcastle, Ontario, Canada to host the tenth conference in 2016.