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Cultivating Creativity: *Building the Creative and Cultural Industries of North East Scotland*

– Keynote and welcome address, Professor Paul Harris

Cultivating Creativity, Sowing Seeds: Growing Networks Conference, Aberdeen – 20 May 2011

Good morning everyone, my name is Paul Harris, and I'm head of Gray's School of Art.

It's a great pleasure to see so many of you here today, and to welcome you all to the Robert Gordon University. Thank you for coming to our *Cultivating Creativity, Sowing Seeds: Growing Networks* conference today.

Cultivating Creativity is part of a series of innovative residency projects, funded by Creative Scotland's Creative Futures programme. My thanks go to Creative Scotland for supporting the project, and also to our other delivery partners in this event: Growing Audiences North East, the Cultural Enterprise Office, Creative Cultures Scotland, and Aberdeen City's & Aberdeenshire's Arts Development teams.

As many of you will be aware, in 1998, the UK Government's Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) defined the creative industries as:

"those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property." (DCMS, 1998)

This definition was taken to include 13 sub-sectors (the DCMS 13), a classification that has proved remarkably durable and which is increasingly used as an international benchmark.

The 13 sub-sectors are:

advertising; architecture; the art and antique market; crafts; design; designer fashion; film; interactive leisure software; music; the performing arts; publishing; software; and television and radio.

During my speech today, I would like us to consider the scope and value of, and the opportunities within the creative and cultural industries in this region: North East Scotland.

The importance of the creative industries to the UK economy is now widely accepted. According to data published by the DCMS (2010)¹, in 2008, 1,165,500 people were employed in 157,400 businesses in the creative industries in Great Britain, with a further 805,700 employed in creative occupations in businesses outside the creative industries. By way of wider comparison, this far exceeds employment in life sciences and even exceeds financial services.

In Scotland, the latest data indicates that almost 80,000 people are employed in the creative industries with concentrations in music and the visual and performing arts (25% of the total) and software, computer games and electronic publishing (23% of the total).

Just over 9,000 people work in the creative and cultural industries (CCIs) in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, 14% of the Scottish total. By way of comparison, this exceeds the region's employment in ICT, which is circa 5,000, and agriculture, food and fish processing, which is circa 8,500².

Between 2003 and 2008, employment in the CCIs in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire increased by 37% compared to growth of 11% at the Scottish level, driven largely by growth of jobs classed as creative in architecture at over 60% in the City, designer fashion at over 90% in the Shire, music, the visual and performing arts at nearly 100% in the city, and radio and television at over 60% in the Shire³.

Looking in detail at the available evidence from 2008, data for textiles suggests that 274 people work in textiles manufacturing in Aberdeen City and Shire (2008 data) with a further 327 across the HIE area. However, as there is no data for design activities as it not collected by official statistics, this will again underestimate the scale of the sector.

It is also worth noting that the data that I've just referred to does not include any self-employment, and research has shown that 68% of those working in the visual arts in Scotland, 36% of those in crafts and 26% of those in design are self-employed, figures that would significantly increase the reported scale of activity⁴. *I must admit that the reason why the design sector seems lost to governmental statisticians baffles me, particularly as everything around us has been designed by someone!*

¹ DCMS, *Economic Performance in Culture and Sport: Economy Data*, October 2010

² Ekos, *Gray's School of Art, Market Assessment Report*, November 2010 (Unpublished commissioned report) [This analysis uses the 2003 Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC 2003)]

³ *ibid*

⁴ Creative & Cultural Skills, *Creative and Cultural Industries Workforce Survey*, Creative and Cultural Skills, 2009

It is interesting, however, to note that design related issues are increasingly situated within governmental strategy and research council foci as an area requiring particular support, alongside modern languages, presumably because of the perceived economic and innovation potential.

This data is also consistent with Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future's (ACSEF) own research, which found that the region has an above average concentration of employment in the creative industries, exceeding that in financial services, food and drink, life sciences, aerospace, defence, and marine and forest industries. It also identified the high growth rate of the creative industries in the region over the last 10 years⁵.

The same analysis reported the total GVA of the creative industries in Aberdeen City and Shire to be £2,200m in 2006, greater than that of life sciences at £1,400m, although less than food and drink at £3,000, tourism at £4,000m, and only energy is considerably more at £15.4 billion – which should come as no surprise to anyone around Aberdeen.

However, only four key sectors are identified for the region – energy, employing c 21,500 in 2007, food and drink employing circa 5,500 employees, life sciences with circa 1,900 employees, and tourism with 19,900 employees (ASCEF, 2010). Only two of these sectors are larger employers in the region than creative industries, energy and tourism.

Thus, there is a thinly-spread, unconsolidated, yet highly significant volume of more than 12,000 creative and cultural practitioners and small to medium enterprises (SMEs) across Northern Scotland and the Highlands & Islands, with high-impacts in revenue, GVA and employment contexts, who aren't currently being supported in business growth strategy, and this may well be impacting on wider retail, marketing and tourism contexts and opportunities.

The recent Creative Graduates Creative Futures report⁶ published by the Creative Graduates Creative Futures Higher Education Partnership and the Institute for Employment Studies, stated that 50% of creative graduates work in micro-organisations; 48% with a portfolio of work/employment, and 40% want to run their own businesses in the future.

If it were possible to retain and indeed attract more such graduates to start their businesses in the North East and support them post-graduation with appropriate skills and business interventions, then it should be possible to build a significant creative and cultural *economy*, and harness this in a strategic fashion, potentially as the region's second priority industrial sector, and as a growing and significant player in a post oil and gas economy.

⁵ SLIMS and Oxford Economics, *Aberdeen City & Shire Economic Review*, (report commissioned by Scottish Enterprise) Scottish Enterprise, March 2009

⁶ Ball L, Pollard E, Stanley N. *Creative Graduates Creative Futures*. Creative Graduates Creative Futures Higher Education Partnership and the Institute for Employment Studies, Jan 2010

If so, then could we benchmark and brand the region's arts, crafts and high-end creative outputs, for example textiles, in ways that have traction in both a domestic and an international market? Could we provide a narrative reflecting the best that Scotland has to offer in ways that attract not only cultural aficionados, but indeed the general public and tourists? In other words, by moving the emphasis, but not necessarily the expertise, from creative practice to retail and marketing, might we create growth as expansion through consolidation and aggregation? Might such a shift in scale change perceptions of individual artists and artisans, to the importance and benefits of more consistent quality? Across the hobbyist, skilled amateur and professional spectrum of production, we are currently offering products of very varied quality, which quite often makes it very difficult for an under-educated, under-confident audience to appreciate what is good from what is less so.

Might perceptions of quality also be applicable to artisan and specialist food production? This sector currently operates at very different scales of endeavour, from individual makers of chocolate, jam or cheese, and bespoke suppliers of natural produce, to mass, international whisky and food producers that vary in kind, complexity and in scale much like the mainstream creative and cultural industries. They face similar challenges and are similarly under-represented in strategy and policy. I wonder, what might be the implications of linking food production with the notion of *cultural tourism* within the North East of Scotland? Could a strategy be formed around a more holistic offering?

Indeed, the creative and cultural industries could have a significant role to play in achieving the wider economic objectives for the region. As the 2010 EU Green Paper on the creative and cultural industries, stated, "the challenge is to move towards a creative economy by catalyzing the spill-over effects of the CCIs on a wide range of economic and social contexts"⁷.

ACSEF's own *Economic Manifesto*⁸ identified eight key priorities for the region, and the CCIs could make a contribution to at least three of these priorities:

- maximise our intellection capital – people and expertise;
- deliver city centre redevelopment;
- and attract and develop skilled people.

While the creative industries are a powerful economic force in their own right, it is worth also noting the wider influence of creativity on economic success.

⁷ European Commission Green Paper, *Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries*, COM(2010) 183

⁸ Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF), *Building on Energy: The Economic Manifesto for Aberdeen City and Shire*, 2007

Creativity has a pervasive upgrading influence across the economy, as evident, for example, in the contribution of design to innovation and growth.

Creativity and creative people are the lifeblood of innovation and are key drivers of economic success. Globalisation and the rapid development of lower cost economies across the world have significantly increased global economic competition, and developed nations such as the UK, and indeed Scotland, must now innovate to maintain their position. Economic policy is seemingly increasingly focused on this goal.

Evidence shows that innovation increasingly occurs where science, technology and the arts meet. The UK Treasury's *Cox Review of Creativity in Business*⁹ provides a clear and often stark argument for the UK to invest in creativity and innovation as the basic building blocks of future economic competitiveness. Many significant economies, previously viewed as low cost competitors, are investing heavily in design and creativity and are increasingly competing on the basis of added value and innovation¹⁰. China and India are but two examples, with others catching up fast. For the UK, this means investing now in creativity and in the development of our creative talent. As argued in the *Cox Review*, this is not a cultural or artistic agenda, but an economic necessity.

The creative industries are a crucial part of this economic mix, as argued by the Scottish Government's, *Creative Industries, Key Sector Report, 2009*, with considerable potential to contribute to Scotland's recovery from the current recession. Although some parts of the creative industries have felt very acutely the impacts of the downturn, for example advertising and architecture, others such as interactive entertainment and computer games, have experienced more resilient demand, and NESTA forecasts that the creative industries in the UK will grow on average by 4% per annum over the next five years - more than double the rate of the rest of the economy¹¹.

As we of course know, the creative sectors are well-educated, employing a higher proportion of graduates than the economy as a whole. They are also multidisciplinary, bringing together creative and technical skills in a way that is now finding much wider relevance across the economy.

The typical pattern of large numbers of very small businesses, supported by self-employed freelancers is consistent with a high degree of entrepreneurialism. Many creative businesses opt to stay small, expanding and contracting as required through the use of short term contract labour and collaborative, network-based models of production. This allows flexibility and

⁹ Cox, G. *Cox Review of Creativity in Business: Building on the UK's strength*. HM Treasury, Dec 2005

¹⁰ see for example Leadbetter, C. *Britain's Creative Challenge*. Creative and Cultural Skills, 2005

¹¹ Chapain, C; Cooke, P; De Propriis, L; MacNeill, S; Mateos-Garcia, J. *Creative clusters and innovation: Putting creativity on the map*. NESTA, Nov 2010

agility, important characteristics when dealing with rapid change, and these characteristics are typically more pronounced in rural creative economies¹².

The creative industries have also been profoundly affected by rapid developments in digital technologies. Digitisation has transformed the content development process in many sub-sectors, reducing costs and barriers to entry. It has also disrupted existing business models and supply chains, driving innovations in business practice within and beyond the creative industries. These changes have prompted diversification and business model innovation in many creative industries, creating important learning for other industries.

It is clear that the creative industries are strategically important at regional and national levels for a number of reasons:

- they are economically important in their own right as a source of employment and wealth creation;
- creativity and the outputs of the creative industries are key drivers of innovation across the wider economy, even if this is not always recognised as such, for example, the role of the designer in offshore engineering;
- creative industries are often in the vanguard of multidisciplinary innovation with potential for important spill-over effects on the wider economy; and
- a vibrant and visible cultural scene adds to the attractiveness of our towns and cities, benefiting tourism, and is a factor in attracting and retaining talent.

Since the late 1980s there have been a number of challenges to the conventional understanding of traditional corporate and urban communities and economies, often driven by the human capital theories dating back to the work of Robert Park¹³ in the 1920s identifying that cities grow around human interactions, a theory itself evolved from the 19th century work of the seminal economist Alfred Marshall¹⁴.

In 2003, Richard Florida, in defence of his own creative capital theories argued that people don't make career decisions or geographic moves that standard theories dictate, "they were not slavishly following jobs to places. Instead it appeared that highly educated individuals were drawn to places

¹² EKOS. *Baseline Analysis of the Creative Industries Supply Chain in the Highlands and Islands*. 2009

¹³ Park, R. & Burgess, E. *The City: Suggestions for the Study of Human Nature in the Urban Environment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925

¹⁴ Marshall, A. *Principles of Economics*. London: Macmillan, 1890

that were inclusive and diverse”¹⁵ (p7). He asserts that the distinguishing characteristic of the creative class is that “its members engage in work whose function is to create meaningful new forms. The super creative core of this new class includes scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and novelists, artists, entertainers, actors, designers, and architects, as well as the thought leadership of modern society” (ibid p8).

Charles Landry in his text *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, also argues that within a creative city “it is not only artists and those involved in the creative economy who are creative, although they play an important role. Creativity can come from any source including anyone who addresses issues in an inventive way - whether a business person, a social worker, a scientist, an engineer or public administrator”¹⁶ (p21).

I would propose that based on these arguments, this region and the City of Aberdeen is creative, this is a *creative city*, but we don't seem to champion our prowess in tangible and definitive ways. Perhaps also, we are measuring our success in too narrow a way? The region is undoubtedly successful as demonstrated by its current economy. The region is also undoubtedly successful as demonstrated by its ability to constantly harness the economic benefits of its location and associated industries: the harbour, the North Sea, and the rich agricultural lands throughout recent history. But have we failed to harness enough success in other factors beyond the economy that make up our quality of life?

Scott (2006) looks at the “new economies” as he refers to post-industrial aggregations of people and businesses, by considering the change drivers and associated factors. “Nineteenth-century capitalism gave birth to the classical factory town, as found in Britain, France, and Germany. The rise of fordist mass production in the twentieth century was associated with the growth and spread of the large industrial metropolis, as epitomized most dramatically by Detroit in the United States. The peculiar forms of economic order that are in the ascendant today represent a marked shift away from the massified structures of production and the rigid labour markets that typified fordism, and they appear to be ushering in an altogether new style of urbanization that is posing many unprecedented challenges to policymakers around the world”¹⁷ (p3).

He explains that “numerous attempts have been made to characterize the essential features of this new economic order”, and presents his own characterisation in that “the leading edges of growth and innovation in the

¹⁵Florida, R. *Cities and the Creative Class*. City & Community 2:1, American Sociological Association, Mar 2003

¹⁶Landry, C. *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, Second Edition. London: Earthscan, 2008

¹⁷Scott, A. Creative cities: Conceptual issues and policy questions in *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Volume 28, Number 1, Pages 1-17. Los Angeles: University of California Press, Jan 2006

contemporary economy are made up of sectors such as high-technology industry, neo-artisanal manufacturing, business and financial services, cultural-products industries (including the media), and so on, and that these sectors in aggregate constitute a new economy" (ibid p4).

He describes the contributing factors of a new economy as being "extended networks of firms, dominated in many cases by large corporate entities but also incorporating a proliferation of many small firms", and that "the labour markets associated with these sectors tend to be extremely fluid and competitive, with many individuals being engaged in part-time, temporary, and freelance forms of work", and where the "working practices of the most creative fractions of the labour force are frequently coordinated within temporary project-oriented teams" (ibid).

In short, that represents a good description of the economy and workforce in the North East of Scotland. Large corporates acting as major stakeholders in the economic network; many small innovative and specialist companies serving or supplying the corporate demand; a flexible, creative workforce often employed on a project basis, and a well-resourced, creative and cultural sector both serving and benefitting from a buoyant economy.

So what's the problem? Why do many Gray's graduates leave Aberdeen and the region for perceivably more attractive cities? Why do even the big corporate players sometimes struggle to recruit to Aberdeen?

In an article for Washington Monthly in 2002, Florida ponders on the problems that the US city, Pittsburgh experiences in retaining talent, even though the city is recognised for its many successes. "Pittsburgh attracts hundreds of millions of dollars per year in university research funding and is the sixth-largest centre for college and university students on a per capita basis in the country. Moreover, this is hardly a cultural backwater. The city is home to three major sports franchises, renowned museums and cultural venues, a spectacular network of urban parks, fantastic industrial-age architecture, and.... in the 1986 Rand McNally survey, Pittsburgh was ranked as "America's Most Livable City"¹⁸.

He continues, "yet Pittsburgh's economy continues to putter along in a middling flat-line pattern. Both the core city and the surrounding metropolitan area lost population in the 2000 census. And those bright young university people keep leaving. Most of Carnegie Mellon's prominent alumni of recent years went elsewhere to make their marks" (ibid).

Florida then cites a conversation with a young graduate who had been hired by a company in Austin, Texas. When challenged about moving to a job away from Pittsburgh he apparently replied, "It's in Austin! There are lots of young

¹⁸ Florida, R. *The Rise of the Creative Class: Why cities without gays and rock bands are losing the economic development race.* Washington Monthly, 2002. [<http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2001/0205.florida.html>] accessed 11 May 2011

people, and a tremendous amount to do: a thriving music scene, ethnic and cultural diversity, fabulous outdoor recreation, and great nightlife" (ibid).

Florida goes on to explain that although the graduate had received several good job offers from Pittsburgh high-tech firms and knew the city well, he said he felt the city lacked the lifestyle options, cultural diversity, and tolerant attitude that would make it attractive to him. The graduate summed up his feelings with the pithy comment: "*how would I fit in here?*" (ibid).

In essence, and even in such a successful city as Pittsburgh, the young graduate seemed unable to associate the city with the lifestyle that *he* desired. He wasn't looking for a company per se, not even a particular job. He was looking for a *specific* lifestyle.

I personally have heard many people comment that the creative and cultural sector in this region is less extensive and less well developed than elsewhere, particularly compared to the Central Belt of Scotland. It would seem that even though there is a vibrant cultural and creative landscape in the region, it is certainly less visible, and to our graduates from all disciplines, possibly not attractive enough or prominent enough to associate their future lives with?

In the year that I have been here, it has been difficult to gain an accurate sense of the level of priority attached to arts, culture and creativity in North East Scotland in a strategic sense. I do not intend that comment to be indicative of a lack of passion, merely a lack of *visible* strategic leadership and reputation.

However, both Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire have cultural strategies, but each quite different in their focus and ambition. Perhaps there is some opportunity to build on both of these strategies in a more consolidated regional focus?

The strategy for Aberdeen, *Vibrant Aberdeen*¹⁹, acknowledges past failures to prioritise culture, leading to a perception of the city as primarily industrial rather than cultural. The perception of Aberdeen as Europe's Capital of Oil and Gas has become synonymous with the region's dominant identity. As a result, it could be argued that the city has lost its other cultural identities. At the very least, we don't celebrate the creativity either associated with or potentially empowered by this international reputation.

The research that informed the development of *Vibrant Aberdeen* identified a number of cultural strengths in the city, including:

- active communities and schools;

¹⁹ Aberdeen Cultural Forum. *Vibrant Aberdeen, A Cultural Strategy for Aberdeen*. April 2010.

[http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/community_life_leisure/arts/culture/art_vibrant_aberdeen.asp] accessed 10 May 2011

- an active voluntary sector;
- prestigious educational establishments, including Gray's;
- high quality cultural venues - such as Aberdeen Art Gallery, His Majesty's Theatre, The Music Hall, Aberdeen Arts Centre;
- significant collections and archives - Aberdeen Art Gallery hosts one of the finest art collections in Britain with paintings, sculpture and graphics from the 15th century through to the present day, while the Aberdeen Maritime Museum spans the complete history of Aberdeen's trading dynamic through to the current energy economy, and the Gordon Highlanders and Tolbooth Museums are home to unique collections relating to the city and its culture. The University of Aberdeen possesses archives of unparalleled quality and significance including the oldest and most complete set of Burgh records in Scotland, and RGU has an extensive collection of artworks spanning the 19th, 20th and 21st Centuries;
- a diverse cultural programme - the city has a range of festivals including the *International Youth* and *sound* Festivals, events, venues, activities and heritage sites which are both distinct and of high quality;
- a unique cultural heritage - the city's history, its role in military conflicts, industry, medical science and art has shaped a distinct and unique cultural heritage. This heritage can be sensed in the values, beliefs and customs of its residents and through the distinct Doric dialect which is still widely spoken across the North East of Scotland. The city is also home to numerous archaeological and historical sites ranging in date from 8000 BC to the 1960's AD which, along with its significant archives, illustrate Aberdeen's distinct heritage and rich contribution to all the great fields of human endeavour.

However, it also identified challenges in relation to low average levels of cultural participation; difficulty in retaining creative skills in the region, including graduates from Gray's School of Art; the lack of a collective voice for the sector; relatively low levels of investment in culture; limited cultural ambitions; the persistent perception of the city as industrial, and an over-reliance on existing infrastructure.

Aberdeenshire's *Cultural Strategy*²⁰ is more focused on the activities of Aberdeenshire Council's Cultural Services department, and identifies actions relating to:

- developing the physical infrastructure in the region;
- providing opportunities for culture and creativity within school education;
- ensuring access to opportunity for under-represented groups;
- building capacity in the voluntary sector;
- supporting artists to develop their practice; and
- growing the arts and creative industries in the region.

However, it also recognises issues with regard to low levels of cultural participation. Aberdeenshire covers a very large and diverse land mass, which itself supports a diverse array of communities and cultures, with many creative practitioners living and working in the region, but no particular foci of cultural activities. Deveron Arts in Huntly, the Scottish Sculpture Workshop in Lumsden, and Woodend Barn in Banchory are each valuable and innovative providers of cultural and creative activities, recognised far beyond their geographic locations, as are Aberdeenshire's many heritage sites and the *sound* Festival of New Music, but the region as a whole is not currently known for creativity and culture, more for agriculture and particularly energy.

So, what solutions do I suggest regarding all of this?

Firstly, there is a vibrant and valuable CCI sector in Aberdeen City & Shire, which has grown rapidly in recent years. However, the sector needs to be consolidated and given a more prominent profile through mechanisms such as branding, advocacy and business support, and thus potentially grown even further.

The region offers good lifestyle potential for creative practitioners and other professionals, but is lacking a visible, cultural profile and heart.

The cultural strategies of both City & Shire offer significant potential for building a thriving cultural life for the region, which could play an invaluable part in the growth, identity and visibility of the creative and cultural industries, and the diversification of the economy.

²⁰ Aberdeenshire Council, *Cultural Strategy (Draft)*.

[[http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/committees/files_meta/802572870061668E802576E9004E7059%5C\(09\)%20Sport%20and%20Culture-App2.pdf](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/committees/files_meta/802572870061668E802576E9004E7059%5C(09)%20Sport%20and%20Culture-App2.pdf)] accessed 10 May 2011

Although the region does not currently need industrial regeneration, it might be argued that it is in need of diversification and future contingency, and an international identity beyond that of just 'energy', however successful that sector currently is. It might also be argued that the city does need cultural regeneration as the cultural profile of the city is not distinctive. That identity will play a growing future role in retaining graduate talent, attracting talent to the region to support the prowess of our current successful economy, and potentially becoming an alternative success story with its associated alternative economies in creativity, the arts, culture, food and tourism in a post-oil era.

I think you would agree with me that the creative industries are hugely valuable to our regional economy, the vibrancy of our city and region, and our visibility as a community, both nationally and internationally, so why don't we exploit our success some more? There's an immense amount to celebrate already, and a fabulous story to be told!

....and it's on that note that I'd like to lay down a challenge for you:

How can *we* grow our creative and cultural sectors even more?

How can we become known internationally as a *creative city and region*?

How can we capitalise on the V&A being in Dundee, not in sour grapes, as a loss to Aberdeen, but by harnessing the international audience that it will attract? How do we get *those visitors* a few miles further up the road?

How can *we* help develop and drive a consolidated strategy for visibility, impact and growth for the creative and cultural industries, within our city, our region, our country and in the eyes of the world?

How can we turn our existing reputation and identity for oil and gas into the synonomous representation of creativity – through culturally celebrating energy perhaps, or through greater celebration of our wider natural resources over and above oil and gas, including our regional reputation for high quality, well provenanced food, drink, agriculture and fishing?

Regardless of which part of the creative or cultural industries we might come from, can we develop and agree a *shared vision* with *common ambitions* for the future of the creative and cultural industries of North East Scotland?

If we can, then perhaps we might establish a powerful driving force that can change the international perception of the region and enhance further its attractiveness as a place to both live and work?

Today won't solve the myriad of issues we all face. Today won't deliver a complete vision or master-plan,but if we can all agree to work together for

a common cause - we might be able to sow some simple seeds for even greater, future success?

I'll now pass over to Nina Eggens, the Project Manager of Growing Audiences North East, to introduce our first guest speaker of the day.

Thank you all for coming, my thanks to our other speakers today, and I hope you have an interesting and stimulating day...