

Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs visits UK (with photos)

The Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Mrs Carrie Yau, has visited various museums and cultural landmarks in London, Liverpool and Newcastle on the third leg of her visit to Europe.

Mrs Yau said, “In view of the changing economic development around the globe, these cultural projects and facilities in England, which are all cultural renewal initiatives, would be useful reference for Hong Kong as a contemporary city.”

“The experience of the three cities, which are all located along the water's edge like Hong Kong, provide direct references to the issues encountered and considerations taken in making use of the waterfront that is a great natural asset of the cities.”

The Liverpool Biennial, a British international festival of contemporary art, has been held in Liverpool since 1998. Liverpool was awarded the European Capital of Culture 2008 with its continuous regeneration of the city's waterfront docks.

The Sage Gateshead in Newcastle is a centre for musical education, performance and conferences. It is famous for its diversified programmes and its original approach towards music. The centre is also credited for the effect it has on the populace and for the great effort it takes to make high-end performances accessible to the general public.

“NewcastleGateshead” is a brand-name for joint promotion of culture, business and tourism. Large-scale regeneration completed includes the replacement of the former shipping premises with imposing new office developments, and major cultural developments like The Sage Gateshead music centre.

Mrs Yau took the opportunity to introduce the latest development of the West Kowloon Cultural District project to the English counterparts and share experience with them in developing an integrated district for cultural, residential and commercial uses.

Mrs Yau said, “Hong Kong, as a cosmopolitan city situated at the border of the Mainland, plays a key role in bridging between the East and the West.”

“Hong Kong enjoys the advantages with her people-oriented services, with the people’s proficiency in English and Putonghua, their efficiency in planning and delivery, as well as their attention to detail.”

“We believe that these qualities will enable the West Kowloon Cultural District project to be a platform for the showcase of the potential and the expression of the creative talent in Hong Kong and around the globe.”

During the past few days in England, Mrs Yau visited the South Bank Centre, the Tate Modern in London; the Tate Liverpool, the exhibits of the Liverpool Biennial in Liverpool; as well as the Sage Gateshead and the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead, Newcastle. She also met leaders of the related cultural agencies, including the Permanent Secretary of the UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport, the Chief Executive of the UK Arts Council, the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, and the Chief Executive of the NewcastleGateshead Initiative, exchanging views on the promotion of culture and the arts for reference by the West Kowloon Cultural District project.

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