

London local government's support for arts and culture

summary report

Executive summary

London's local authorities make a major contribution to local arts and cultural provision, recognising the role that this provision plays in creating healthier, happier, more cohesive and more prosperous communities. Although direct spend on culture has declined in recent years due to rising service demand and falling budgets, boroughs are continuing to support and sustain arts and culture. This includes in-kind support, such as:

- Subsidised leases and hires of council properties.
- Free promotion of arts and cultural events.
- Business support services for cultural and creative businesses.
- Licensing, health and safety and other advice to enable cultural events.
- Brokerage support to help artists and culture organisations to access commissioners, landlords, information on funding opportunities, and potential delivery partners.

Drawing on research carried out with local authorities directly and with the arts and culture sector, this report makes twenty recommendations as to how departments across London's boroughs can contribute to supporting local arts and culture:

As commissioners of local services, London boroughs could consider:

- Helping arts and cultural organisations to meet local authority commissioners, to explore how they can contribute to the council's social and economic priorities.
- Making public sector commissioning more accessible to the arts and culture sector by reducing contract sizes, simplifying bidding and evaluation requirements, and not being prescriptive about service methods.

As landlords, London boroughs could consider:

- Providing arts and cultural organisations with free and subsidised hire and leases.
- Developing a database of spaces within each borough that the sector can access.
- Supporting pop up arts and cultural activities and meanwhile use of space using resources such as the Meanwhile Foundation.
- Granting discretionary and top up business rates relief to the arts and culture sector.

As planning authorities, London boroughs could consider:

- Ensuring cultural opportunities and strategic priorities are embedded in Local Plans.
- Including cultural infrastructure in Community Infrastructure Levy regulation 123 lists.
- Updating 123 lists as new cultural needs are identified and projects developed.
- Using planning conditions to secure cultural infrastructure and investment in cultural activities from developers where appropriate.

As strategic brokers, London boroughs could consider:

- Supporting existing local arts and culture networks or setting up their own, focussing on networking, training and information sharing.
- Including individual artists and smaller arts and cultural organisations in these networks, as well as more established organisations.
- Introducing artists and cultural organisations to potential partners and funders, such as local education, health and social care providers, housing and business associations.

- Having a dedicated arts and culture section on the council website with clear contact information for relevant officers and Members.
- Helping local artists and cultural organisations to make the contacts they need in departments across the council.

As champions of local arts and culture, London boroughs could consider:

- Providing artists and cultural organisations with free publicity via council channels.
- Supporting local artists and cultural organisations to raise awareness of their work through exposure at council events.
- Having a clear process for securing council support with publicity, including a dedicated contact officer.

As advisers and critical friends, London boroughs could consider:

- Joined up working between council culture and economic development teams to provide business support services to local arts and cultural organisations.
- Making this offer accessible to community arts groups and individual artists as well as more established cultural and creative businesses.

These recommendations are designed to help London boroughs to work with local, regional and national partners, such as the Arts Council, to continue to support and sustain arts and culture, even in the face of difficult financial circumstances.

Introduction

Local authorities make a major contribution to arts and cultural provision, and are seen by Arts Council England as their most important strategic and delivery partner¹. Councils' contribution is based on a recognition of the role that arts and culture can play in creating healthier, happier, more cohesive and more prosperous communities.

Councils in London are particularly active in supporting arts and culture, but like others across the country, have come under significant financial pressure in recent years. This has impacted on their direct spend on cultural services. With further challenges to come from rising service demand and falling budgets, London boroughs are looking at alternative ways of supporting arts and culture, which in turn bring social and economic benefits to the communities they serve.

Background

In the summer of 2014 London Councils published a document giving an overview of London local government's support for arts and culture across different service areas, and outlining the impact and value of this support. It summarised findings from three elements of research:

- analysis of local authority budgets and spend on arts and culture
- a survey of borough arts, culture and regeneration officers
- interviews with arts and culture officers.

Following this work, London Councils commissioned BOP Consulting to explore what arts and cultural organisations think of the different types of support that councils in London offer them, and make recommendations as to how this support could be targeted in the current economic climate. The work involved:

- a survey of cultural organisations, individual artists and creative professionals
- focus groups with arts organisations and artists
- case studies on the relationship between arts organisations and London boroughs.

Alongside this, London Councils also worked with officers in a small number of boroughs to quantify the value of some of the different types of support and investment they provided to local arts and culture in 2013/14. The data was shared with London Councils to use on an anonymised basis. We are grateful to those boroughs that participated in the research.

This report draws out the key points from all of these phases of work, providing a summary of different ways that London's local authorities can support arts and culture.

The value of supporting arts and culture

Apart from libraries, arts and culture are not statutory services for local authorities. However, councils have a long history of supporting arts and cultural infrastructure and activities in recognition of the contribution they make to creating healthier, happier, more cohesive and more prosperous communities. There has long been an intuitive understanding of the

¹ *On with the Show*, 2014, New Local Government Network

instrumental as well as the intrinsic benefits of arts and culture, but recent analysis provides more rigorous evidence of the positive impact of cultural engagement and participation on social and economic agendas.

An evidence review by Arts Council England² found specific, statistically significant examples of arts and culture having a positive impact on:

- **Local economies** by revitalising places, drawing in visitors, attracting and retaining businesses, creating jobs, and developing skills and talent
- **Health and wellbeing** by improving subjective wellbeing, reducing loneliness, alleviating depression and anxiety, and having a positive impact on specific health conditions including dementia and Parkinson’s disease
- **Education** by increasing cognitive abilities, improving early language attainment, and improving attainment in literacy and maths
- **Civic society** by increasing volunteering, reducing social exclusion and increasing community cohesion.

Recent analysis commissioned by the Department for Culture Media and Sport also found statistically significant associations between cultural engagement and improved health, education, economic activity and civic participation³. A complementary piece of analysis considered the extent to which cultural engagement is associated with improved wellbeing (once other determinants of wellbeing are taken into account). It found that arts engagement and frequent library use were both associated with higher wellbeing, valued at £90 per person per month and £113 per person per month respectively⁴. A follow up study found that people who engage in the arts as an audience member, or visit heritage sites, libraries or museums are all more likely to report good health, and that this translates into annual savings to the NHS from reduced GP visits and reduced use of mental health (psychotherapy) services as follows⁵:

Activity	Type of impact	Estimated annual cost saving per person	Estimated population level annual NHS cost savings	Total potential NHS cost savings (GP visits + psychotherapy)
Arts	GP visits	£5.07	£168.8m	£396.6m
	Psychotherapy	£6.84	£227.8m	
Heritage	GP visits	£2.59	£82.2m	£193.2
	Psychotherapy	£3.50	£111.1m	
Library	GP visits	£1.05	£18.0m	£42.3m
	Psychotherapy	£1.42	£24.3m	
Museum	GP visits	£1.89	£44.7m	£105.1m
	Psychotherapy	£2.55	£60.3m	

² *The Value of Arts and Culture to People and Society*, 2014, Arts Council England

³ *Quantifying the Social Impacts of Culture and Sport*, 2014, D Fujiwara, L Kudrna and P Dolan for DCMS

⁴ *Quantifying and Valuing the Wellbeing Impacts of Culture and Sport*, 2014, D Fujiwara, L Kudrna and P Dolan for DCMS

⁵ *Further analysis to value the health and educational benefits of sport and culture*, 2015, D Fujiwara, L Kudrna, T Cornwall, K Laffan, P Dolan for DCMS

The evidence supports the case that culture participation helps to generate cost savings, but culture also has a role in generating jobs and economic growth. The Centre for Economics and Business Research found that arts and culture have a direct positive impact on the national economy in terms of gross value added, employment and household incomes. Culture also makes indirect contributions to economic growth, improving perceptions of the UK as a place to do business⁶, and generating spillover effects through tourism⁷.

The positive economic impact of arts and culture is also clear at a regional and local level. The Mayor's Cultural Tourism Vision for London found that four out of five tourists cite culture and heritage as their main reasons for visiting London, and that cultural tourism generates £3.2 billion a year for London's economy, and supports 80,000 jobs⁸. At the local level, the Local Government Association found that arts and culture have a positive economic impact through increased spending in the local area by visitors to cultural events and attractions, increased spending by the staff of arts and cultural organisations, and increased spending by arts and cultural organisations themselves, for example, buying supplies from local businesses. These impacts are then amplified through multiplier effects⁹.

Arts and culture also have an important role to play in place-making, improving the liveability of local areas, and their attractiveness to businesses, particularly those in the creative industries. These are playing an increasingly important role in London's economy, and the UK economy overall, with employment in the UK's creative industries increasing at more than twice the rate of the wider UK economy over the past year¹⁰. Cultural investment in the regeneration and reanimation of places such as the South Bank, Shoreditch, Old Street, Peckham, Deptford and Brixton Market has proven the importance of culture in creating distinctive, welcoming places to live and work. The value of culture-led regeneration is also evident in the emergence of new cultural developments across London from Vauxhall Nine Elms to Kings Cross, and from Ealing to Barking.

London local authority spend on culture

In 2013/14, the last financial year for which revenue outturn figures are available, London's local authorities spent £232 million on arts and culture, representing a significant collective investment. This includes spending on local authority museums and galleries, theatres, concert and dance halls, arts centres, arts and crafts fairs, festivals and other events, grants to amateur and professional arts and culture organisations, other arts development and support, and library services, including mobile and household library services.

Analysis of spend per head of population shows that London as a region and authority type spent more on arts and culture than most other areas. London as a region also made the highest investment in ACE National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) under the last round, as a proportion of its total revenue spend on arts and culture, excluding libraries (24 per cent).

⁶ *Trust Pays*, 2012, The British Council

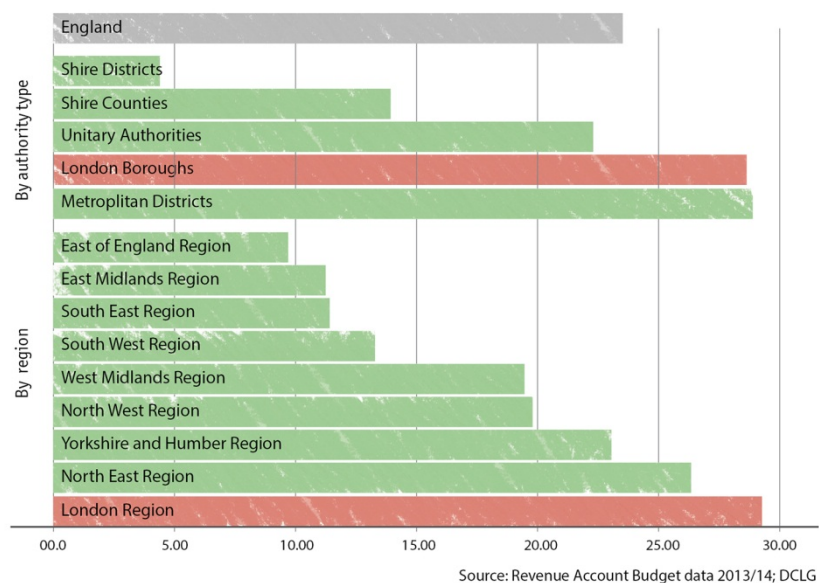
⁷ *The Contribution of the Arts and Culture to the National Economy*, 2013, CEBR

⁸ *Take a Closer Look, A Cultural Tourism Vision for London, 2015-17*, Mayor of London

⁹ *Driving growth through local government investment in the arts*, 2013, Local Government Association

¹⁰ Jobs in the creative industries increased by 5.5 per cent compared to the national 2.1 per cent rise in employment between 2013 and 2014. Source: *Creative Industries: Focus on Employment*, June 2015, DCMS

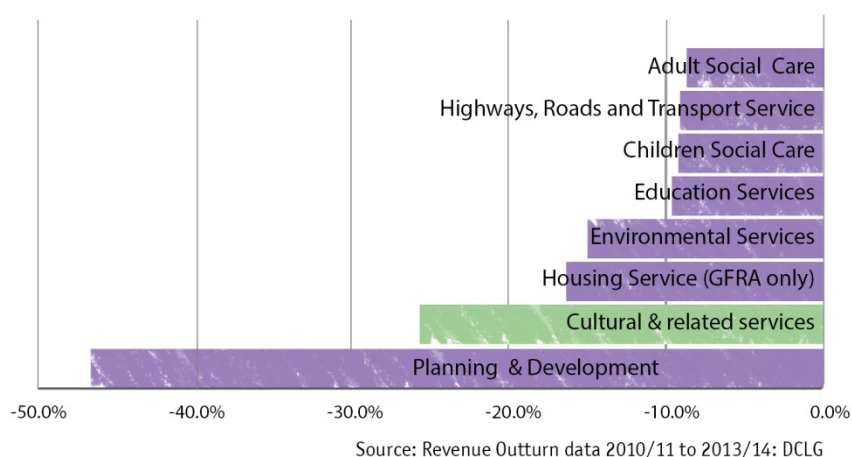
Local government spend on arts & culture per head – by authority type and region 2013/14



This is in the context of real financial pressures. By the end of the current financial year 2015/16, core local government funding will have reduced by 44 per cent in real terms since 2010/11. In London, inflation, population and demographic changes, and expected government cuts means councils are likely to face a funding gap of more than £2.4 billion by 2020. The boroughs have therefore faced difficult financial decisions in the last few years and will continue to do so. As most cultural services are non-statutory they have been hit harder than many other services.

On average, councils' spend on cultural services in London fell in real terms by 24 per cent between 2010/11 and 2013/14, while their investment in London-based NPOs fell by 23 per cent from 2010/11 to 2012/13. However, this does not represent the full picture of London local government's investment in arts and culture, or its efforts to continue to support and sustain local cultural infrastructure and activities.

Real terms % change in expenditure 2010/11 to 2013/14



As budgets continue to come under pressure, local authority arts and culture teams have been working to generate additional funds to support and sustain arts and culture activities and infrastructure. This includes:

- Winning grants from local, regional and national foundations and grant-giving bodies.
- Securing sponsorship and in-kind donations from local businesses to support arts events and activities.
- Earning income from the hire of space and equipment, from the sale of advertising space, from consultancy, workshop and event fees, and from bar and shop sales in local authority run arts venues.
- Generating donations from visitors to local authority-run arts events and venues.

Donation income from the borough art services that we studied ranged between £400 and £600¹¹ per year, whilst sponsorship for events was up to £15,000 per year with additional in-kind support from local businesses. The teams also generated substantial income from hires, fees and shop sales ranging between £102,900 and £150,200 a year, and secured grants totalling between £121,200¹² and £234,500¹³ per year. One of the councils calculated that for every £1 of base-line funding that the arts service receives, it generates £2 for its work.

Boroughs have also been investing in arts and culture through other departmental budgets as well as their dedicated cultural budgets. This includes:

- Adult, children and youth services funding workshops and performances.
- Regeneration and economic development teams funding cultural events, artists residencies and public art installations.
- Public health services commissioning exhibitions, workshops and art therapy sessions
- Central or corporate council services supporting festivals, concerts and other events.

In the boroughs we studied, departments across the council reported between £113,900 and £130,700 of spend on direct commissions of arts and culture organisations and practitioners to deliver projects and activities ranging from workshops and courses, to performances and pieces of public art. Data on spend was not available in all cases, so actual spend figures will be considerably higher than these reported figures. The boroughs also reported contributions from other departments of between £45,200 and £80,000 to arts and culture projects delivered in association with the council arts teams. This is roughly equivalent to a quarter of the arts service's core budget. This snapshot of collaboration between other departments and arts and culture teams is reinforced by responses to a London Councils survey of all the boroughs illustrated in the figure below¹⁴.

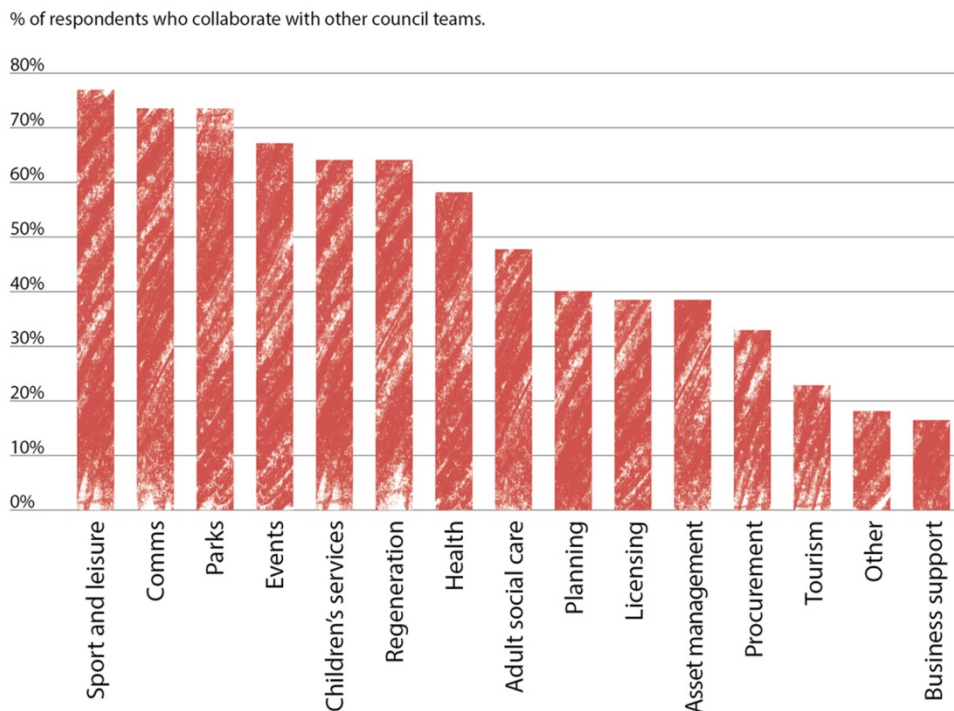
¹¹ All figures rounded to nearest hundred

¹² £92,200 less Arts Council grants

¹³ £129,600 less Arts Council grants

¹⁴ *London local government support for arts and culture, 2014*, London Councils

Council teams that arts and culture teams collaborate with



Source: London Councils survey of local government arts and culture

Departments across the councils also provide substantial in-kind support to arts and culture practitioners and organisations including:

- Subsidised leases and hires of council properties for rehearsals, performances and exhibitions.
- Free promotion of arts and cultural events through council publications and social media channels.
- Business support services for cultural and creative businesses.
- Licensing, health and safety and other advice to enable cultural events.
- Brokerage support, for example to help arts and culture organisations and practitioners to access commissioners, landlords, information on funding opportunities, and potential delivery partners.

The remainder of this report expands on some of these areas, outlining the ways that London boroughs can continue to support and sustain local arts and cultural activities across the council.

Local authorities as commissioners

Local authorities are increasingly focussing on outcomes-based commissioning as a way of ensuring that public services meet the needs of local communities. Arts and cultural organisations can be a valuable partner in this, both in terms of designing and delivering services that support a range of outcomes from economic development to social care. Their approach is often very successful in terms of engaging people and sustaining participation,

particularly in activities that contribute to the preventative agenda in areas such as health and well-being, crime, and social care.

Many arts and culture organisations already have a social as well as a cultural agenda and are keen to engage with public sector commissioning. According to research commissioned by London Councils, arts organisations in London working in the health and social care fields in particular see great potential in commissioning. Those that have already secured commissions report generally positive experiences, but only a minority have done so to date. Some of those who haven't are intimidated by the apparent complexity of the process, and concerned about the ways projects are evaluated¹⁵. They are also unsure how to engage with commissioning in the first place. When asked what general challenges they faced that London's local authorities could help them with, the third most popular response was help meeting potential commissioners¹⁶.

Similar issues were identified through the Arts Council England-funded Cultural Commissioning Programme, which aims to help the arts and cultural sector to better engage in public sector commissioning, and support public service commissioners to see the potential for arts and culture to deliver their outcomes. This has identified a number of ways that commissioners can benefit from what the arts and culture sector has to offer by making contracts and the bidding process more accessible to them. This includes:

- Streamlining the process.
- Offering smaller contracts.
- Specifying outcomes rather than ways of achieving them.
- Ensuring evidence requested is proportionate to the size of the contract and the outcomes sought.
- Engaging in dialogue about ways of measuring success before tenders are issued¹⁷.

Recommendations

London boroughs could consider:

- Helping arts and cultural organisations to meet local authority commissioners through marketing engagement and networking events.
- Making commissioning processes more accessible to arts and cultural organisations by reducing contract sizes, simplifying bidding requirements, not stipulating service methods, and keeping evidence requirements as simple as possible.

Local authorities as landlords

Arts and culture organisations and professionals identified access to appropriate and affordable rehearsal or studio space, and performance or exhibition space as key challenges that they wanted London local government support with (37 per cent and 31 per cent

¹⁵ *Understanding arts and culture organisations place on support from local authorities*, 2014 by Bop Consulting for London Councils

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ *Opportunities for Alignment*, 2014, produced by New Philanthropy Capital

respectively)¹⁸. London boroughs have a significant collective property estate. More than 90 per cent make some of this space available as free or subsidised space for arts and culture organisations for exhibitions (85 per cent), performances (65 per cent), rehearsals (44 per cent) and administration (29 per cent)¹⁹. This includes subsidised short term hires of galleries, theatres, studios, halls, offices and storage space, as well as long term property leases at peppercorn rents. Some also offer space to arts and culture organisations for free, particularly when their activities support local priorities and social outcomes.

The boroughs we studied forfeited between £3,000 and £6,700 worth of income per venue in 2013/14 to offer free space to arts and culture organisations. This calculation is based on the councils' charitable rates, so the organisations would have had to pay considerably more to hire the equivalent space at commercial rates. The councils also offer rent grants or rent-free leases to museums worth between £40,000 and £200,000 a year, and to arts centres worth between £52,000 and £154,000 a year. Arrangements include full repairing leases which are mutually beneficial.

In 2008 Battersea Arts Centre (BAC) was granted a 125 year lease by the London Borough of Wandsworth on the former council office building where the centre is based. As part of the lease, BAC was obliged to keep the building in good repair and carry out certain refurbishment works. Through its fundraising activities, BAC was offered an 'in principle' grant of £500,000 by the Big Lottery Fund on the condition that its existing 10 year rent-free period from the council be extended to 20 years. The council granted the extended rent-free period, forgoing £710,000 in rent in exchange for BAC carrying out the works and meeting on going upkeep costs. BAC secured the Lottery grant, along with other sources of funding including grant funding from the council's Town Centre Improvement Scheme to help with the restoration of the building's Grand Hall. The arrangement between Wandsworth Council and BAC was recognised with an award for excellence for a Public Sector Partnership by Third Sector Magazine.

As well as giving arts and cultural organisations access to their own spaces, boroughs also support them to negotiate access to properties owned by other public and private sector landlords. At least a third have policies in place to support pop up arts and culture activities or meanwhile use of unoccupied third party space by arts and culture organisations²⁰. This can work very successfully alongside major regeneration projects, where properties are scheduled for demolition or redevelopment, or in town centres where there are vacant shop units. The presence of arts and cultural organisations in these spaces helps to animate them, increasing footfall, encouraging community engagement, and revitalising high streets and neighbourhoods. Facilitating meanwhile use of space is therefore an effective form of in-kind support that benefits both the arts and culture sector, and the boroughs.

¹⁸ London Councils survey of arts and culture organisations and professionals reported in *Understanding arts and culture organisations place on support from local authorities*, 2014 by Bop Consulting for London Councils

¹⁹ *London local government support for arts and culture*, 2014, London Councils

²⁰ *London local government support for arts and culture*, 2014, London Councils

The London Borough of Brent and Locality co-funded the Meanwhile Foundation to champion meanwhile use of space and help address barriers to delivery. The foundation takes over the tenancies of empty properties, which it secures in return for relieving landlords of their business rates obligations. It is able to do this because its charitable status means it qualifies for business rate relief. The Meanwhile Brent Partnership has supported a number of cultural and creative temporary use projects sitting alongside major regeneration programmes in South Kilburn, Wembley and Willesden Green. South Kilburn Studios provide studio space for creative professionals who, in lieu of rent payments, have pledged to train young people from the local area and deliver a public programme of free creative events. The tenants include a composer, a milliner, film makers, photographers, music producers and garment, graphic and interior designers. As an example of success, Clean Bandit, who operate from South Kilburn Studios reached number one in the official music charts in January and February 2014.

Some boroughs further support arts and cultural organisations to access the space they need by offering up to 80 per cent discretionary business rate relief to organisations that are established or conducted not for profit. This is distinct from the mandatory 80 per cent relief which organisations with charitable status qualify for. In some cases councils also offer 20 per cent top up relief to those who qualify for mandatory or discretionary relief, meaning the organisations, including galleries, theatres, arts centres and music trusts, pay no business rates at all. The boroughs we studied granted discretionary business rate relief to between five and ten arts and culture organisations, ranging between £130 and £11,200 worth of relief for the beneficiaries, totalling between £26,700 and £39,300 of relief from each council in 2013/14.

Recommendations

London boroughs could consider:

- Making use of property estates to support arts and cultural organisations through free and subsidised hires and leases.
- Having a systematic approach to this, including joining up property, regeneration and arts and culture teams to develop a shared database of spaces that the arts and culture sector can access.
- Supporting pop up arts and cultural activities and meanwhile use of space using resources such as the Meanwhile Foundation.²¹
- Granting discretionary and top up business rates relief to local arts and cultural organisations that support and enrich the local community.

Local authorities as planning authorities

As pressure on land use in London grows, there is a need to ensure adequate provision of spaces to support arts and cultural activities. A recent study of artists' workspace in London found that 28 per cent of artists' studios are under threat within the next five years as

²¹ The Meanwhile Foundation (www.meanwhile.org.uk) is a registered charity that secures subsidised access to vacant properties by relieving landlords of their business rates obligations.

operators do not expect to be able to renew leasehold or rental agreements to secure their premises²². There are also pressures on gallery, performance and other arts spaces. As planning authorities, local authorities have a range of tools at their disposal to help to tackle some of these issues. This includes ensuring that cultural provision is addressed in the Local Plan, which local authorities are required to produce to set the strategic direction for the development and use of land over 15 to 20 years. The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 requires planners to 'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all'²³ and advises them to set strategic priorities for the provision of 'community and cultural infrastructure' in local plans²⁴. Guidance from the Town and Country Planning Association says that local plans should be informed by robust evidence and by a vision for arts and culture that also feeds into, and is influenced by, the council's corporate priorities²⁵.

The London Borough of Croydon has a strategic priority around the provision of new studios and creative incubators in its local plan. The plan states that: "The council will promote the growth and expansion of the cultural and creative industries to make Croydon a better place to live and to act as a driver of growth and enterprise in the local economy. The focus for accommodating cultural and creative industries will be a network of Enterprise Centres".

As well as reflecting cultural priorities in local plans, councils can also use planning gains to support the 'provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance'²⁶ of new and existing cultural infrastructure. Where new developments are taking place, the resulting need for additional infrastructure and facilities of all kinds, including culture, can be met by contributions from developers, either through Section 106 agreements (S106) or through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Changes to legislation mean the use of S106 agreements has been restricted to the mitigation of site-specific development impacts from since 2015.

CIL is a discretionary charge on new development, which is charged per square metre according to a published tariff schedule. It can be used to fund new infrastructure or to repair or extend existing infrastructure anywhere across the local area. As well as publishing a charging schedule, the charging authority is required to compile a 'regulation 123 list' of the types of infrastructure that it intends to spend CIL proceeds on. This list should be based on an evidence base of the quantity and type of infrastructure needed to support local growth and sustainability.

All London boroughs have either adopted a CIL charging schedule or are in the process of doing so. There is therefore a real opportunity to ensure that cultural infrastructure is included in regulation 123 lists. Of the 31 London boroughs that have published draft or formally adopted 123 lists, 23 have mentioned cultural infrastructure or specific forms of cultural provision. Libraries are the most frequently cited form of cultural provision (18), followed by public art (4). A further four boroughs have referenced community infrastructure or facilities, which

²² *Artists' Workspace Study*, 2014, produced by We Made That for the Greater London Authority

²³ *National Planning Policy Framework*, 2012 paragraph 17

²⁴ *National Planning Policy Framework*, 2012, paragraph 156

²⁵ *Improving culture, arts and sporting opportunities through planning*, 2013, produced by the Town and Country Planning Association

²⁶ Localism Act 2011

could be considered to include cultural provision, although no further detail is given to confirm this. Only four have not mentioned cultural (or relevant community) infrastructure at all.

The City of Westminster used S106 to commission a project called Traceurs by the artist Layla Curtis. Using thermal imaging cameras, Layla filmed local young people doing 'parkour' through a variety of locations in the City of Westminster. She produced a collection of 20 black and white films which capture the glowing white heat residue transferred from the hands and feet of the participants onto the surfaces of the buildings, trees and street furniture that they leap onto, run across and jump off. The films, designed to be screened simultaneously as part of a multi-channel video installation, were shown in a gallery in Westminster that was also supported by S106.

Local authorities in London have a clear track record of using planning gains to support cultural activity and deliver cultural infrastructure. Just over 80 per cent of local authority officers responding to a London Councils survey said their council had used S106 to support arts and culture, with 85 per cent of those saying it had been used for public art, and 52 per cent saying it had been used to provide new cultural facilities²⁷. The funding amounts can be significant. The boroughs that we studied in detail put up to £123,000 of developer contributions towards meanwhile events and public realm improvements in one year to support cultural activity in the local area.

As well as securing planning gains through S106 and CIL, local authorities can also grant planning permission for new developments subject to 'such conditions as they see fit'²⁸. This power to impose conditions is meant to enhance the quality of developments, or enable otherwise unviable developments to go ahead, by securing provisions from developers that mitigate any adverse development effects. The mechanism enables councils to engage developers in dialogue about what to provide or invest in, which can include cultural infrastructure and activities. The local authorities we studied have secured subsidised cultural space, public art and community engagement through planning conditions.

Recommendations

London boroughs could consider:

- Engaging with community and cultural stakeholders early in the process of developing a Local Plan to ensure cultural opportunities and strategic priorities are embedded in the document. This should include analysing projected arts and cultural needs against existing provision.
- Incorporating cultural infrastructure into the Community Infrastructure Levy regulation 123 list. Ideally specific kinds of cultural infrastructure should be listed separately (e.g. libraries, archives, arts facilities and museums) based on broadly costed projects related to future growth.
- Updating regulation 123 lists as new cultural infrastructure needs are identified and viable projects are developed²⁹.
- Using planning conditions to secure cultural infrastructure and investment in cultural activities from developers where appropriate.

²⁷ *London local government support for arts and culture*, 2014, London Councils

²⁸ Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, Section 70(1)(a)

²⁹ *The Community Infrastructure Levy: advice note*, 2012 produced by Arts Council is a useful source

Local authorities as strategic brokers

One of the most valuable assets that London's local authorities have is their relationship with a diverse range of groups and organisations across the local area including community groups, cultural organisations, local businesses, town centre management organisations, schools, colleges and universities, health care providers, leisure centres, housing associations, landlords, private developers, transport and environmental agencies. They are therefore in a position to convene networks and broker relationships which can unlock project opportunities for local arts and cultural organisations, and lead to productive funding, development and delivery partnerships.

Several boroughs already run or support local arts and culture networks, where practitioners can meet one another, as well as potential funders and partners from outside the sector. These opportunities are particularly valuable to arts and culture organisations. In the research commissioned by London Councils, arts and cultural organisations in London cited meeting potential funding partners, and meeting potential delivery partners, as among the biggest challenges they face, that local authorities could support them with³⁰.

Apart from securing funding, what are the biggest challenges you face that local authorities might be able to help you with?

Publicising your activities to a new audience	63%
Meeting potential funding partners	63%
Meeting potential commissioners	40%
Finding appropriate/affordable rehearsal or studio space	37%
Finding appropriate/affordable exhibition space	31%
Meeting potential delivery partners	29%
Securing the local authority licences that you need	28%
Finding appropriate/affordable storage space	28%
Finding appropriate/affordable office space	23%
Getting advice on how to develop/grow	22%

As well as helping arts and culture practitioners to network with one another and meet groups external to the council, boroughs can also help them to make useful connections within the council. Support and advice from a range of departments (not just arts and culture) can help arts and culture practitioners to develop and deliver projects, from advice on road closures for outdoor arts projects, to council re-use and recycling centres helping artists to access materials for their work.

Cultural organisations and individual artists often find it difficult to navigate council structures, and to understand who the right people to speak to are, particularly given the structural changes that many councils have put in place in recent years in response to budget cuts³¹. Having a dedicated team, or officer, who acts as a gateway in this respect, is therefore

³⁰ London Councils survey of arts and culture organisations and professionals reported in *Understanding arts and culture organisations place on support from local authorities*, 2014 by Bop Consulting for London Councils

³¹ *Understanding arts and culture organisations place on support from local authorities*, 2014 by Bop Consulting for London Councils

very useful. It is also useful for artists and cultural organisations to be able to easily identify who the lead portfolio holder for arts and culture is within the council.

Recommendations

London boroughs could consider:

- Supporting existing local arts and culture networks or setting up their own focussing on networking, training and information sharing
- Extending invitations to these networks to individual artists and smaller arts and cultural organisations, as well as more established organisations
- Introducing artists and cultural organisations to potential partners and funders, including education, health and social care providers, and housing/business associations
- Having a dedicated arts and culture section on the council website with contact information for relevant officers and Members (name, phone number and email address) so artists and cultural organisations know where to direct their enquiries
- Helping local artists and cultural organisations to make the contacts they need in departments across the council.

Local authorities as champions of local arts and culture

Boroughs have well established communication channels that reach a broad range of local residents and businesses, as well as the local press. These channels, including magazines, newsletters, websites, social media and press releases, can be a valuable way of supporting local artists and cultural organisations. Councils also organise events throughout the year that can provide another valuable opportunity for artists and cultural organisations to raise awareness of what they do, for example through performances, exhibitions, and information stands at these events.

According to the research commissioned by London Councils, many arts organisations would welcome councils' help in raising awareness of their events and activities, especially to new audiences. Just under two thirds said that publicising their work was the biggest challenge they faced that local authorities could help them with.

The boroughs we studied are already supporting local artists and cultural organisations through their communications teams. One is offering free listings and editorial pages in the council magazine to local arts and cultural organisations worth £27,600, as well as officer time to develop the copy. It also supported local dance groups and schools by giving them a free platform at a local festival, with approximately £25,000 worth of in-kind support in the form of staging and related promotional activity.

Recommendations

London boroughs could consider:

- Providing local artists and cultural organisations with free publicity in the form of listings and coverage in council publications and online channels.
- Supporting local artists and cultural organisations to raise awareness of their work through exposure at council events in the community .
- Having a clear process for securing council support with publicity, including a dedicated contact officer.

Local authorities as advisers and critical friends

Boroughs also have the connections and in-house expertise to provide arts and culture organisations and practitioners with advisory and business support services to help them grow and become more financially sustainable. Arts and culture teams, and economic development teams in councils across London, provide cultural organisations with a range of support including business planning advice, capacity building support, and help developing project ideas and drafting funding applications.

As part of a wider public art programme Ilford this Way, the London Borough of Redbridge secured funding through a Section 106 Agreement to develop a business hub at Redbridge Central Library to support local creative businesses and other start-ups through a programme of high quality business support. The programme will include advice sessions, networking opportunities, workshops and training programmes, as well as access to facilities and other resources. The project will enable Central Library to use its role as a community hub to help spark local economic growth and improve social mobility across the borough.

Just under half of respondents to the London Councils survey said that their council offers business support services directly to arts and culture organisations and creative businesses. This includes support developing projects ideas (88 per cent) and doing business planning (65 per cent)³². Research commissioned by London Councils confirms that arts and culture organisations and practitioners value such support, and are concerned to ensure that small and community arts groups and individual artists benefit from it too, as well as more established cultural organisations.

Recommendations

London boroughs could consider:

- Joined up working between council culture and economic development teams to provide business support services to local arts and cultural organisations and practitioners on a more systematic basis.
- Ensuring that this offer is accessible to community arts groups and individual artists as well as more established cultural and creative businesses.

³² *London local government support for arts and culture, 2014, London Councils*

Conclusions

Despite the budgetary pressures they are facing, London's local authorities are continuing to invest in arts and culture through dedicated culture budgets and other departmental budgets. They are securing additional funding for arts and culture from grants, sponsorship and income generated from fees, hires and sales. They are also providing significant in-kind support to the sector including subsidised space, marketing and publicity, support and advisory services, and brokerage support.

This support is valuable to, and valued by, the arts and culture sector. It also benefits councils themselves and the communities they serve. Having a vibrant and varied local arts and culture offer helps to create healthier, happier, more cohesive and more prosperous communities, whilst cultural commissioning enables arts and cultural organisations to deliver directly on councils' social and economic priorities.

As financial pressures continue to bite, boroughs can continue to support and sustain arts and culture locally. Embedding arts and culture across council departments' strategic plans, strengthening partnership working between the sector and the council, and joining up councils' own cultural and other services will ensure that local authority support for the sector is as strategic, systematic and effective as possible. The twenty recommendations in this report are intended to support this, and help boroughs to work with local, regional and national partners, such as the Arts Council, to support arts and culture, even in the face of difficult financial circumstances.



London Councils
59½ Southwark Street
London SE1 0AL
www.londoncouncils.gov.uk
020 7934 9813

publication date: July 2015