



London Councils, CLOA London and London Cultural Improvement Group joint response to ‘Cultural Metropolis’

Introduction

London Councils is delighted to submit our response to ‘Cultural Metropolis’.

This response has been developed in partnerships with the London boroughs and the City of London, the Chief Leisure and Cultural Officers Association of London (CLOA London) and the London Cultural Improvement Group (LCIG). This submission has been collated from written responses provided by London boroughs and sub-regional partnerships and supplemented by comments and issues raised at the Cultural Metropolis consultation event held at City Hall on Wednesday 28th January.

Through London Councils’ and CLOA London’s positions on the Cultural Strategy Group we look forward to working in partnership with the Mayor and other key stakeholders to explore ideas set out in this document and to playing a central role in the development of a comprehensive Cultural Strategy for London which delivers for all communities across the capital.

Overall comments

The London boroughs and the City of London welcome ‘Cultural Metropolis’ and the key priorities the Mayor has outlined to support culture within London.

The 32 boroughs and the City of London are vital to the delivery of cultural services, which in turn play a major role in contributing to London’s economy. The 33 authorities are major funders of cultural venues and activity with a combined annual spend on cultural services of over £500 million¹. London local authorities deliver a huge variety of programmes and events locally with a broad range of partners from small voluntary organisations to internationally renowned companies.

London local government is committed to working in partnership to deliver and improve cultural services. This is demonstrated by work of the London Cultural Improvement Group (LCIG), a partnerships of the 33 councils, London Councils, Arts

¹ CIPFA data 2008-2009, Service Expenditure (Outturn prices), Excluding Capital Charges: Cultural and Related Services - Total Cultural and Related Services for the 33 authorities is £509,847,000. This includes the CIPFA categories of Culture & Heritage, Recreation & Sport, Open Spaces, Tourism and Library Service.

Council England London, MLA London, Sport England London, English Heritage, Government Office for London and Capital Ambition.

We warmly welcome the spirit of collaboration with local government set forward in the document and look forward to a new era of partnership working between the GLA and London's councils.

We very much support proposals around strengthening joint working and welcome the additional resource and influence the Mayor can bring; this should build on the existing successful networks rather than create additional new ones.

We are delighted that the Mayor is strongly advocating the case for culture in 'Cultural Metropolis'. We recognise the key strategic lead the GLA has within the cultural sector and warmly welcome the influence, impact and profile the Mayor brings.

Those of us who work in cultural services are the converted – we believe in the intrinsic value of culture and the impact it has on people's lives. The difficulty can often be how to convince colleagues and stakeholders working in other sectors. At a local level we are addressing this through the Advocacy strand of LCIG to ensure that colleagues in borough cultural services have the tools and resources to demonstrate the importance of culture outside of the sector.

We believe the Mayor has a key role as champion for culture and welcome further information on how this vision for culture will be embedded into other Mayoral Strategies and plans. We hope this vision and the forthcoming strategy will be adopted by other Mayoral bodies, such as the LDA, to ensure a consistent approach to placing culture at the heart of Mayoral policy.

We welcome an emphasis on culture for its intrinsic value and recognise the importance of the Mayor showing this commitment to culture in the document. In the local government context however, we do need to be pragmatic in our approach and mindful of the vulnerability of non-statutory services, particularly during these challenging financial times. Within the context of Local Area Agreements and the move from Comprehensive Performance Assessment to Comprehensive Area Assessment, we need to demonstrate the importance of culture as a vehicle to deliver other outcomes and improve the lives of our communities.

We strongly believe that all Londoners should be able to access high quality culture and support the move to broaden cultural development across the capital. London boroughs have a key role to play in ensuring that this happens in all communities. We recognise the inequality of cultural funding across London and the 'neglected cultural gems' in the outer London boroughs. Our colleagues in those boroughs can provide many good examples in terms of text and images for inclusion in the final Cultural Strategy.

Whilst improving the cultural landscape in outer London is therefore a priority, we would also suggest it is important to highlight that many inner London communities are similarly unable to access cultural institutions for a variety of different reasons. We urge a sensitive approach to issues around the provision of funding which targets all communities without access to cultural institutions.

We are keen to work with the GLA to further research this issue and find practical solutions through partnerships and joint working. Several cross-borough partnerships are already focussing on ways of developing better relationships between inner and

outer London. We must remember that the issues are not always the same in all outer London boroughs and a blanket approach is not appropriate; we need to build on the sub-regional work that is already happening.

We welcome the range of pan-London initiatives the GLA leads on such as 'The Big Dance', 'Open Rehearsal' and the forthcoming 'Story of London'. We are pleased to see the recognition of the key role boroughs play in resourcing and staging events to contribute to these programmes. We want to build on this work to further develop the partnerships between the GLA and boroughs. As our joint work on the Handovers and the sub-regional structures for Big Dance demonstrate, through early and on-going dialogue and partnership we can bring the resource of boroughs to support these programmes and showcase the cultural offer across the city.

We need to ensure that contributing partners are acknowledged and supported to ensure a focus on new and innovative activity rather than simple 'rebadging'. And as 2012 approaches, we also need to be mindful of 'initiative-fatigue' which might weaken the overall impact of each programme and potentially create confusion around similarly named or focused programmes.

We strongly support pan-London initiatives that profile the culture sector, promote London's culture to visitors and residents alike and build strong media relations. We do also need, however, to address the 'less sexy' strategic issues that underpin how we develop and deliver culture, such as having the appropriate data to support our case in order that we can evidence the impact that participation in, and access to, cultural programmes can have on people's lives. Whilst the London Cultural Improvement Programme is working on many of these issues we would very much welcome the opportunity to work more closely with GLA on these strands of activity.

We are determined that the Cultural Olympiad and the wider cultural celebrations around London 2012 truly encompass the whole city and make sure that all Londoners can feel it genuinely is 'Everyone's Games'. Whilst only a relatively small number of Londoners will have the opportunity to be in the park for the sporting events, many more will engage with the cultural programme over the forthcoming years. The ways in which the boroughs engaged in the Olympic Handover, Paralympic Handover and the first Open Weekend demonstrate the huge resource, vitality and true diversity the boroughs can bring to the Olympiad. We were delighted to work with the GLA on promoting these events and look forward to working together more closely in the build up to the 2012 Games.

The Mayor holds the responsibility to 'maximise cultural benefits to Londoners from hosting the Games and the Cultural Olympiad' and the boroughs are committed to working with the GLA to make this legacy a reality across the capital. We would welcome the GLA's leadership in bringing together key partners to define the legacy we all want to see from the Cultural Olympiad and to create a delivery plan of how we can work together to achieve this. We very much welcome the idea put forward in the document of finding ways of coordinating and promoting all cultural activity in London linked to the Games, not only that of the official 2012 partners.

Issues of communication within the sector are vital. Boroughs can play a role in communication, both through cascading information to the networks of cultural and community organisations within their local area and as part of sub-regional and cross-borough partnerships. We are keen to work with the GLA to ensure better dialogue between boroughs, grassroots and local organisations and those working at a regional level.

Boroughs would of course be delighted to welcome Mayor Johnson to their cultural events and facilities to showcase the rich cultural offer across the city and to demonstrate how culture is delivered at a local level.

Further issues to consider

There are a number of key areas that we feel should be given a stronger profile within the document.

- **Detail on delivery – the ‘how’**

We recognise that ‘Cultural Metropolis’ is a direction of travel document rather than a full strategy. However, the first question that jumps out is, ‘how will these priorities be achieved?’, particularly in terms of resource. We very much look forward to seeing the action plan that will set out how these priorities will be practically delivered.

It is vital that the London Cultural Strategy Working Group is focused on delivery and can harness the power of existing initiatives. Boroughs are part of the solution and we look forward to working with other cultural stakeholders to develop actions and approaches to deliver these priorities.

- **The role of parks and green space**

We feel there should be a greater emphasis on the important role of parks, green spaces and waterways as part of the cultural makeup of our city.

These spaces often hold particular importance to the community and are an accessible resource that can host many forms of cultural offer including many of London’s wide range of festivals and events, public art and innovative outdoor art activities (such as those detailed in the Arts Council England’s ‘New Landscapes’ plan), community heritage, environmental and historic projects.

We recognise that this sector will be represented within the London Plan but would welcome a much stronger reference to the cultural importance of parks and green spaces in this document.

- **Links to museums, libraries and archives**

Several boroughs noted the lack of reference to libraries, museums and archives throughout the document.

The role of libraries is particularly important for local government. As every borough has a number of libraries, all performing a range of key functions (learning, creativity, ICT etc), perhaps the document should focus a more on these significant assets within the capital.

There is also a general lack of emphasis on literature and creative writing in the document. We believe the document should reflect London’s literacy importance (its publishing industry, historic significance and thriving contemporary scene) as well as the importance of local activity around literature and creative writing.

- **Environmental sustainability**

Although the economic and social areas of sustainability are highlighted within the document, we feel ‘Cultural Metropolis’ should also reflect on the role of culture in terms of environmental sustainability. Within local government, issues around climate change and environmental sustainability generally have been a concern for some time, but have recently become very high priorities.

Culture can have a positive role in this agenda. Through culture, be it museums, libraries, performing or visual arts, we can educate and challenge perceptions around waste, recycling, transport and building emissions, biodiversity and the significant impact climate change might have on the everyday lives of Londoners. We also need to consider how cultural services are delivered in order to reduce our negative impact on the environment, and also ensure that the aims and outcomes of cultural services do not unnecessarily conflict with environmental objectives (for example, in staging events that have an extraordinary and exciting impact but also publically demonstrate that this can be achieved in an environmentally sustainable way which doesn't generate excessive energy use, un-recyclable waste, etc).

- **Links to Further Education and Higher Education**

Several boroughs highlighted the need to put a stronger emphasis on the role of Further and Higher Education establishments within the document. This is not only in terms of teaching and graduates but also the broader ways in which these institutions contribute to the cultural life of the capital, such as through the work of the London Centre for Arts and Cultural Exchange.

- **Volunteering**

Using the catalyst of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, there is much work being undertaken at a local level to increase volunteering. There are many ways in which the cultural sector can contribute to this agenda and benefit from it.

Those who are inspired to volunteer through the Games for example, can be signposted to volunteering opportunities within the cultural sector, particularly in delivering 2012 cultural programmes. And volunteers drawn from all of London's communities can use their local knowledge to welcome and support London's visitors in the run up to 2012 as part of a City Volunteer workforce.

- **Culture and disabled Londoners**

We welcome the priority to address the barriers many disabled people face when accessing culture; whilst there is good practice in many cultural institutions, a lot of change needs to happen if we are ensure that our city truly is accessible and welcoming to all. There are often huge inequalities in terms of participation; the work of the Inclusive and Active Strategy on disabled people and sport has shown how partnership working across stakeholders can help address these issues.

There is nothing in the document about disability arts – and London is a world-leader in this sector. The Olympic and Paralympic Games gives us an opportunity to showcase to the world the work of all of our artists, and also to showcase the work museums, libraries and archives are doing to represent, often for the first time, the history of disabled Londoners. Last year London Councils held a seminar with Shape to examine at how disabled artists can engage with the Cultural Olympiad; we are keen to work with the GLA to take this work forward.

There are also several references within the document to the Olympics without reference to the Paralympics.

- **Opening up school facilities**

The document should reference the work of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme which offers enormous the potential to build cultural space for community use into the design and delivery of new/renovated schools.

There is also the need to engage in discussion with DCSF about opening up facilities in both state and independent schools for community use at a fair and reasonable cost.

- **International links**

Many boroughs have partnership arrangements with international colleagues through twinning arrangements, school partnerships and specific community links. Many are further developing these in light of the 2012 Games, and in terms of work being done around Pre-Training Camps. This is an area that could be utilised in the run up to 2012.

Detailed comments on each of the priorities

1. Maintain London's position as a world centre of cultural excellence

Cultural excellence is not only about big events and institutions; it is also delivered by the smallest grass roots organisation. Within the current economic climate it is vital that we work together to support the cultural sector.

Boroughs received a tough settlement in the last Comprehensive Spending Review. Undoubtedly over the forthcoming years there will be difficult decisions for individual boroughs to make with regards to funding but through partnership and the continuing work of the Cultural Improvement Programme, we are committed to working with stakeholders to offer the best support to the sector.

We must also promote the role of creativity and the cultural sector in leading economic recovery.

We are very interested to hear more about the new cultural seasons celebrating the culture of other areas of the world, such as the Middle East or Latin America. Boroughs work in partnership with their diverse communities and would very much welcome the opportunity to have early discussions about how we can contribute to and help shape these programmes across London.

London Councils has played a role in shaping the London Legacy Trust bid for Big Dance and we are particularly supportive of the sub-regional 'bottom-up' model that will allow new work to be developed in response to local needs, resources and strengths.

2. World-class culture for 2012 and beyond

Earlier we outlined the importance we place on community involvement in the cultural programme of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Cultural Olympiad has already sparked many innovative ideas for cultural collaboration. The Creative Programmers in London have done an excellent job in harnessing this energy and in working closely with the borough. We need to continue to work with the Programmers, London 2012 and other partners to find meaningful ways of in which people can engage in the official programme through addressing initial teething problems with the Inspire Mark.

We whole-heartedly support the idea of finding ways for non official partners to contribute to the wider London celebrations around 2012; we are very keen to work with the GLA, Visit London and others to achieve this. There will be a wealth of cultural offer across the capital that is inspired by the values of the Cultural Olympiad but does not to apply for the Inspire Mark. Finding imaginative ways of coordinating and promoting this activity will mean that our residents and visitors can find out about

the great diversity of programmes of activity and events that are truly inspired by 2012; the GLA and its partners such as Visit London have a vital leadership role in delivering this.

We believe in order to deliver a true legacy we do need to articulate what we want to achieve from the Cultural Olympiad and the wider cultural programme. We shouldn't be so focused on delivering great one-off projects that we forget the ambition to leave our cultural sector in a stronger place as a result of hosting the Games. The GLA has a strategic role in achieving this and we look forward to working in partnership to deliver.

There are great opportunities of promoting the whole of London in the build up to 2012 through engagement with the non-accredited journalists. We will be delighted to work with Visit London and the GLA on this programme of work.

3. Strengthen arts and music education for young people

We are supportive of the recognition of music education as important in young people's lives. We are also keen to see the potential of other cultural forms to engage and inspire young people mentioned for example, the work around engaging young people through The Big Dance and MLA London's work around Young Cultural Creators. Whilst there is a need to improve service delivery around music education it currently remains relatively strong within the curriculum in comparison to other art forms.

It is vital that meaningful consultation is undertaken with young people in developing appropriate cultural provision for young people across the capital and in developing the full Cultural Strategy.

London Councils sits on the Advisory Group for Find Your Talent and are in discussions about the programme sitting with the London Cultural Improvement Programme and potentially being part of the new bid to Capital Ambition. We are supportive of the Group working more closely with the Cultural Strategy Group.

We are also bringing together Cultural and Children's Services as part of the Member Advocacy programme of LCIG to advocate the importance of culture in Children's Services.

4. Increase access and participation

The 32 boroughs and the City of London are committed to working towards increasing access and participation and run many innovative programmes across the City. It is important to learn from best practice across the capital.

We are very interested in the idea of the Cultural Pass. More details would be appreciated as would the opportunity to link its benefits to existing schemes offered by boroughs. London Connects is undertaking work on a pan-London smart card for use with a number of council services including leisure; it is important that we join up on this work and with work in individual boroughs.

In general, there is a great potential to use digital technologies to increase access and participation, and we would be delighted to work together to share best practice and work towards pan-London models.

We are delighted to see the London Cultural Improvement Group mentioned within this section and the offer from the GLA to help co-ordinate these groups. There are many boroughs networks that already exist that London councils coordinates; it is

vital that we do not duplicate but work together to bring more resource to support existing collaboration. For clarification on page 23, please note that the City of London is also part of LCIG.

5. Improve provision in outer boroughs

We support the recognition that all Londoners should be able to access high quality culture – both through partnerships between national cultural organisations and local organisations and also initiatives that address the inequalities in Londoners' access culture. The boroughs have a key role to play in ensuring that this happens.

As already mentioned, several cross-borough partnerships are already focussing on ways of developing better relationships between inner and outer London. There is research that already exists in this area. The issues are not always the same in all outer London boroughs and a blanket approach is not appropriate, we need to build on the sub-regional work that is already happening.

6. Develop pathways for new talent

Local authorities are at the frontline of dealing with communities and changing demographics. Through many front-line services, boroughs are key to servicing the needs of an ever changing demographic, and are a key to ensuring that communities' needs are met. As this work develops we are keen to discuss the role that boroughs can play within it and how it can link to existing initiatives.

7. Create a lively public realm

London Councils has been working with Borough Event Managers, led by Southwark Council, to establish a Borough Event Forum – initial meetings have been had with the GLA Event team and Events for London to discuss future partnership working, borough support for the pan-London event programme and ways of better supporting and promoting all of London's events.

Several boroughs have highlighted their strong support plans to extend central London events further along the Thames and are enthusiastic at the prospect of working with the GLA to deliver this, and to link to other initiatives such as the Lee Valley Festival.

We are very keen to broker conversations between boroughs, their local partners and the GLA and how organisations can get involved in or use their spaces to host elements of the GLA events programme.

8. Support grassroots culture

Boroughs work closely with voluntary and community sector organisations to support cultural activity in their localities. London Councils as a funder is committed to working with other agencies to provide the best support possible to the sector.

Many boroughs highlighted their thriving grass-roots cultural sector and the need to recognise their role in delivering cultural services for the community in the build up to 2012. There are many strong networks developed in boroughs in response to local variations between and within boroughs. And boroughs are also working together to support the grassroots sector - The Seer is a cross-borough partnership that is a free online directory and resource for all of London's creative individuals, organisations and venues to find, receive and promote arts and creative information in London.

The GLA could play a strategic role advocating at National Government level about pan-London issues to make it easier for artists and small groups to work – for example business rates, insurance and licensing.

There are issues of ensuring that grassroots organisations can find out about and engage with pan-London initiatives. The boroughs can play a vital role in facilitating dialogues to ensure that even the smallest community organisations can get involved in these initiatives. For clarification, the networks listed on page 30 are all facilitated by London Councils.

9. Promote London

We recognise the vital role culture plays in the visitor economy of London. London Councils funds Visit London to work with the boroughs to support tourism development. We have collaborated with Visit London on a number of campaigns to ensure that the whole of London is promoted. We are keen to share our learning from this funded programme and to work with partners to ensure sustainable tourism development across the city. We have brought the London Councils' 2012 Lead Officer and Tourism Officer Networks together to look at practical ways that we can make the most of the tourism impact of 2012 and we will continue this work.

In terms of events we must make cultural links to regular sporting events both regional events such as the London Youth Games and international events that come to the capital. We must also use the potential of the 2012 Pre-Training Camps and test events.

10. Develop targeted support for the creative industries

London Councils runs networks around economic development – we are keen to work with this network to ensure support for the creative industries across London.

In the current economic climate we particularly need to make sure that creative industries are fully supported and also need to make the case for 'supply chain' provision in terms of the number of industries that support a cultural facility.

11. Champion the role of culture in the built environment

London Councils is a member of the London Living Places Group in order to ensure that all boroughs can learn from the experiences in the Thames Gateway and that we can support the Partnership's aim to ensure that culture is at the heart of planning in London.

We are currently planning an event through the LCIG Advocacy programme to bring colleagues from planning, regeneration and culture together to discuss how culture can drive regeneration; we would be delighted to discuss this further with the GLA.

In terms of networks around issues such as transport, planning and design, London Councils runs many officer and elected member networks with representation across the 33 authorities – we are keen to use these groups to address cultural issues.

12. Improve government support for culture in London

Obviously we are very much in agreement on this issue.

Fair funding for London is a key priority of our work at London Councils and we are very keen to work with the GLA on ensuring central government support for culture in London.

For any questions on this response please contact:

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