



MINUTES LONDON AREA COUNCIL

Date	Tuesday 16 May 2023
Time	10:00-13:30
Location	Boardrooms 7 and 8, The Drum, Third Floor, Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, HA9

Area Council	David Bryan CBE, (Chair) Cllr Andreas Kirsch, Angie Bual, Lucy Kennedy, Thomas Ryalls, Imran Sanaullah, MBE, Justine Simons, OBE, Matt Steinberg, Cllr Emma Will
Apologies	Cllr Darren Rodwell, Shawab Iqbal, Stella Kanu, Victoria Dela Amedume, MBE, Paulette Long, OBE
Arts Council	Laura Dyer, Deputy CEO, OBE; Tonya Nelson, London Area Director; Cate Canniffe, Director, Neil Darlison, Director; Teresa Drew, minute-taker; Claire Mera-Nelson, Director; Megan Kelly, Operations Assistant, Jess Collins, Operations Officer
Apologies	Natalie Jones, Head of Advocacy and Comms; Heidi Mayhew, Senior Operations Manager; Sabine Unamun, Director, London

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 Declarations were noted. Everyone to keep their conflicts of interest up to date by contacting the PA to the Area Director with any changes.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING OF 2 MARCH 2023

- 3.1 The minutes were approved. There were no matters arising.

4. NPO UPDATE

The London Area Director informed the meeting that all those organisations that had applied for Transition funding (for organisations that left the Portfolio) were awarded. Some organisations were awarded Transform funding (for organisations that had received a reduction in funding).

Action: The Chair asked that Area Council be kept up to date on the Transform programme, particularly any learning from business transformation projects that could be helpful to other organisations.



London Area has hosted four welcome events for NPOs/IPSOs. The feedback from organisations attending was positive. People especially valued the opportunity to network. Feedback from the Transforming Governance section of the sessions revealed two key support needs: diversifying boards, and succession planning for boards.

At the meeting of 2 March, Area Council had asked for statistics showing how the current Portfolio was contributing against the Elements of the strategic plan outcomes. The meeting noted that the lowest contribution (27%) was being made to Element C – Providing high quality early years activities that reach families from a wider range of backgrounds. The largest contribution is being made to Element R (81%) – Ensuring people have the opportunity to sustain their careers and fulfil their potential.

Action: The meeting requested more data on the geographic (by London borough) breakdown of the Elements.

Area Council wanted to know how the Arts Council would know when organisations have achieved their objectives. The Deputy CEO advised that organisations are required to complete surveys and submit comprehensive reports on activity as part of their Funding Agreement with the Arts Council so we will have more of a picture in a year's time once all that data starts to come in. The meeting noted that there could be a gap between aspiration and delivery due to variables, such as the cost of living, and agreed on the importance of meaningful data to gauge impact and inform the next funding round.

5. PRIORITY PLACE PROGRESS REPORT

Barking and Dagenham.

Neil Darlison, Director, lead for Barking and Dagenham, took the meeting through the artform opportunities, the Area opportunities, and Arts Council England's strategic investment in the borough. The meeting noted with pleasure the growth in cultural provision in the borough due to the Arts Council's investment, and further growth/progression is expected in coming years along with more applications to join the National Portfolio.

Brent

Rachel Victor-Sampson, Senior Relationship Manager, took the meeting through an overview of arts and culture in the borough. The borough wants to situate itself as the reggae capital of Europe as a key tourist destination.



Croydon

Rachel Victor-Sampson took the meeting through a snap-shot of arts and culture provision in London borough of Croydon (London Borough of Culture 2023). The meeting noted the appetite for arts and culture in the borough, the Arts Council's strategic ongoing investment, and the vibrant grassroots sector.

Enfield

Rachel Victor Sampson updated the meeting on the situation in Enfield. The meeting noted the growth in cultural provision and the opportunities. Future hope is that more NPOs will be based in the borough (currently only two NPOs are based in Enfield).

Newham

Rachel Victor Sampson provided the meeting with an overview of arts provision in Newham. The meeting noted some parts of the borough were better served than others and there is a need for capacity to be spread more evenly.

The meeting commented that:

- We must learn from places where there is high investment yet low engagement.
- Make sure the cultural offer is what people want in any given area.
- We must gather qualitative and quantitative data to measure success, for which we will need some key indicators too.
- There is a need for investment in skills development.

6. DATA DIGEST

The Chair introduced this item by explaining that Area Council needs to be aware of changing and emerging trends in society, across a whole range of themes, to inform its decisions. The Chair wants this to be a regular, recurring agenda item.

The Area Director took the meeting through the five strands covered in the slides: audience data; night-time economy data; workforce data; TV/streaming data; consumer trends data.

The meeting held a wide-ranging conversation and commented:

Audiences

The meeting noted that the Arts Council is working with DCMS to get more up-to-date data in the autumn.



Night-time economy

People's concerns around safety at night; young professionals leaving London and UK as a whole; people like shorter shows; the need to save grassroots music venues; impact on revenue for venues given the reduction in consumption of alcohol; impact of leaving EU and pandemic.

Workforce

Growth area in London is in tech and AV; vacancies due to lack of skills needed especially at entry level; need for talent development, and need to consider all opportunities to engage with the under 16s; low wages mean people leave the arts/cultural sector, as well as many feeling under-employed too.

Action: possibility of commissioning a joint research project with GLA on workforce, perhaps aligning with a university. Jane Tarr, Director, Skills and Workforces, leads on this area of work for Arts Council England.

TV/Streaming

Split across older/younger generations in how they access TV/ films etc.; need for arts organisations to use YouTube effectively; noted that some NPOs already work with YouTube and Spotify.

Consumer behaviour

Cost of living impact on discretionary spending and the prioritisation of holidays.

The meeting agreed that this was important and necessary evidential work, and some thinking to be done around how this is shared and partnership working. This is likely to be discussed further at the joint National and Area Away Day later in the year.

7 **FREELANCE ARTISTS**

The Area Director reminded the meeting that there was a comprehensive summary in the Executive Director's and Area Director's Report of all the support the Arts Council has offered and continues to offer for individual artists.

It was noted that more information was needed about how organisations are supporting and working with freelancers so this year the Arts Council will be launching a survey and Michelle Dickson, Director, Strategy would be pleased to have input from Area Council members.



The meeting noted the distinction between an artist/creative practitioner, needing their own space and materials, and a freelancer going to work at a venue.

The meeting discussed the idea of a National Portfolio of Artists. It was felt that it could provide status and recognition, but that there was also potential for it to just replicate current power structures. Members felt robust conversations would be needed around deciding who artists are, who would benefit, and the administration involved in applying for funding. There was also concern around taking money from the NPO budget to fund this.

Action: Michelle Dickson to attend a future meeting of London Area Council to speak about her work on individuals, including any consideration of other models of funding for individuals.

[Justine Simons left the meeting.]

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S AND AREA DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The meeting noted the contents of the report.

9 RISK REGISTERS

The meeting noted the current risks.

[Huw Davies and Lisa Rodio joined the meeting.]

10 ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Huw and Lisa took the meeting through their interesting and innovative ongoing work with Brent residents, accompanied by slides. The Chair thanked Lisa and Huw, noting the engagement with new audiences, the different ways of working, and the positive impact of the RPO working in the borough and making a difference to people's lives.

[Huw Davies and Lisa Rodio left the meeting.]

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Urban Development: novation noted.

Mimosa House: novation noted.

The meeting closed at 13:30.