

Dear Colleague,

Today I'd like to share with you our thinking about how we might shape our investment activity from 2018. I'd like you to read these proposals, and give your responses. We're listening.



Last November's Spending Review was an important moment for all of us. We can now face the future with more certainty, sure that the importance of what we do – and the potential for what more we might do – has been recognised in our settlement from government. Now is the right time to look ahead and determine how we should shape our future investment, understanding that there is constant pressure on public funding, in particular, at local authority level.

The future we want to see for art and culture in England is set out in [Great Art and Culture for Everyone](#), the 10-year strategy we created with you. In thinking about our next investment approach, we've considered our collective achievements as a sector - and what challenges and opportunities remain.

In this complex and changing context, it is paramount that our funding processes and decisions are transparent and demonstrate best value. Whether the source is Lottery or Grant in Aid, we are always investing the public's money, and this privilege brings considerable responsibility. We must ensure that our investment benefits communities right across England, with a particular focus on the least engaged. We have already increased the proportion of Grant-in-aid that we invest outside London, and we are also committed to increasing the share of Lottery funds that we invest outside London by at least a further 5%. By the end of 2018, we will invest at least 75% of our Lottery revenue outside London.

We must achieve this without damaging the organisations and artists that are based in London. They make our capital city the world's leading cultural destination, have an international and national impact and are a vital resource for the whole sector.

We see the greatest potential for progress where two factors converge. Firstly, outstanding leadership in publicly funded arts and culture organisations. We already benefit from excellent leadership in many of our organisations, where amazing work is matched by a commitment to engage the widest possible community. Such vision and drive should be the rule - and our leadership must reflect better the society in which we live. The world continues to change, and we need outstanding leaders with the appetite to respond to that change.

Secondly, collaboration, both artistic and based around specific places, is producing exciting results – we're seeing it produce new kinds of work, new business models, and new audiences. We need to develop and support more and better collaboration across and beyond the sector.

All this must be accomplished without any loss in quality. Over the last few years, our best artists and organisations have responded to the financial climate with ambition and innovation, and a determination to engage new audiences. We want the Arts Council's future investment to reaffirm that spirit of adventure. Help us to shape it and realise the ambitions that we all share.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Darren Henley  
**Chief Executive, Arts Council England**