

Music Hubs Investment Programme London Group

January 2023

McGowan transcribe + translate

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Note on transcription:

Between Monday 9 January – Tuesday 17 January 2023, Arts Council England conducted six focus groups with 140 participants from throughout the music, education, youth, creative and cultural communities as part of their consultation on the Music Hub Investment Programme. We recorded these focus groups in order to create and publish anonymised transcriptions so everyone can access the conversations.

Focus group participants were made aware of the plan to record before they confirmed their place at the focus group, and were reminded at the beginning of their session.

The audio recordings of the focus groups were independently transcribed by an external contractor. The transcription contractor has sometimes lightly edited the transcripts for clarity, and has noted where audio is not clear enough to transcribe. The contractor has not transcribed periods where focus group participants were doing individual tasks, or long periods of silence. This has been noted in the transcripts.

Arts Council England has subsequently anonymised these transcripts by removing the names of participants and their organisations, as well as all other identifying details, such as the location of their organisation.

The list below outlines the type of organisation each ‘Voice’ represents, as self-identified through our focus group expression of interest form:

How would you best describe the organisation you work for?

- I work for a Local Authority: Voice 1
- I work for a Local Authority: Voice 2
- I work for a youth or community organisation: Voice 3
- I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation: Voice 4
- I work for a Local Authority: Voice 5
- I work for a school, multi-academy trust or other education provider: Voice 6
- I work for a music education organisation: Voice 7
- I work for a Local Authority: Voice 8
- I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation: Voice 9
- I work for a music education organisation: Voice 10
- I work for a school, multi-academy trust or other education provider: Voice 11
- I work for a school, multi-academy trust or other education provider: Voice 12
- The ISM is the UK's largest representative non-union body for musicians and a nationally recognised subject association for music.: Voice 13
- I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation: Voice 14
- I work for a music education organisation: Voice 15
- I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation: Voice 16
- I work for a music education organisation: Voice 17
- I work for a music education organisation: Voice 18
- N/A: Voice 19
- A registered charity whose main activity is a community steelband: Voice 20
- N/A: Voice 21
- N/A: Voice 22

The focus groups were facilitated by Melissa Wong and Douglas Lonie, assisted by Arts Council England employees. Hannah Fouracre (Director, Music Education at Arts Council England) attended every focus group. This focus group was observed by representatives from the Department for Education, who have been anonymised in this transcript in line with Department for Education policy. Arts Council England employees have not been anonymised for clarity.

Beginning of transcription:

Hannah Fouracre: Right, I think we'll get started. Welcome! I am very aware of how hot it is in here; this is about our fourth hour in this room. All of the analogies in our last session always started to be about ice cream - which is saying something about the room temperature! Welcome. My name is Hannah Fouracre and I'm the director of music education at Arts Council England. I want to really start by saying thank you for coming and putting yourselves forward to attend today's focus group. We really do appreciate it. It's really exciting to be in a room with people face to face to talk about the things that we'll be talking about today. Starting with some housekeeping: tea and coffee and water are available at the back - plus biscuits; help yourself at any time. If you need the loo: you come out of the room, turning right behind this wall, going along the wall and you turn left and go past the lifts. There's a corridor with the toilets; again, go whenever you need to.

Apparently, no fire alarms planned so if it just goes off, we will just follow people and hope for the best - because I don't know where to go! We have a machine in the centre of the room; that is to record the session today. We are creating an anonymised transcript of our conversation. That will help the researchers analyse all of the feedback

from the focus groups. We're also planning to share an anonymised transcript publicly. So, people that weren't able to attend are able to read what we talked about. Now, what we're not doing is sharing publicly who has attended, and attributing the comments to people. But for the purpose of the session: if every time you speak, if you can try and remember to start by saying your name so that the transcriber can attribute it to the person X or number 1, or whatever it is they're going to do.

Here is our agenda for the session. We have a break at around 2:50 pm. We have a lot to get through, and everything that we're going to be talking about is important. It means a lot to us at the Arts Council. It means a lot to the Department for Education, it means a lot to you. It means a lot to your peers so please speak freely. Think innovatively and out of the box. We'll be exploring lots of ideas. I'm sure that there are going to be lots of differing opinions and views - and we really welcome those. I do ask that we try and share those and listen respectfully, please. This session will be quite interactive as well, so you should have all the equipment that you need. We'll be getting up and down a lot as well. I'd like to just briefly introduce our external facilitator.

Melissa Wong: Hello!

Hannah Fouracre: This is Melissa Wong. She was supposed to be joined today by Dougie Lonie, but unfortunately due to personal circumstances he has not been able to join us today, so apologies. Instead, Maria from the Arts Council is going to be helping do a little bit of capturing on Post-it notes and things just to help facilitate. So, let's start by just going round and letting - sharing with each of us your name and the organisation you represent also. Sam?

Sam Martin: Hello everyone, I'm Sam Martin, senior manager of music education at the Arts Council England.

Adam Jeanes: Hello, I'm Adam Jeanes, I'm the senior relationship manager for music and music education in the London Arts Council.

Voice 7: Hello, I'm [redacted], one of two joint artistic directors of [redacted], based in London.

Voice 19: Hello, [redacted], I'm head of grants at [redacted].

Voice 17: Hello [redacted], I'm director of musicianship at the [redacted].

Voice 3 Hello everyone, my name is [redacted] I'm a community lead at [redacted] We do project management work for the third sector, and we've been doing some creative projects with charities.

Voice 13: Hello, I'm [redacted]. I'm the research associate at the [redacted].

Voice 2: Hello, I'm [redacted] from the [redacted]; they're the organisation for music education down in [redacted].

Voice 4: I'm [redacted] from [redacted] It's a special South Asian arts organisation - and the leading organisation in the field.

Voice 21: I'm [redacted], I'm the music policy advisor at [redacted]. I'm also a cellist and my background is teaching in music clubs and various [?game 0:09:08.1] clubs.

Voice 10: I'm [redacted]. I'm the chief executive of the [redacted] , which is the [redacted] music education charity.

Voice 5: I'm [redacted] and I'm the [redacted]

Voice 8: Hello everyone, I'm [redacted], head of [redacted] , which looks after [redacted].

Voice 11: Hello everyone, I'm [redacted] from [redacted].

Voice 6: [redacted] from the [redacted].

Voice 14: [redacted]; now [redacted] of [redacted]. Ex-music [unclear word 0:09:40.2].

Voice 9: I'm [redacted], I'm with [redacted]. That's the Music Hub for the borough.

Voice 18: [redacted]from[redacted].

Voice 20: I'm [redacted] and I run [redacted], and our main work is running a steel band.

Melissa Wong: Do you want to say it?

Maria Turley: Oh, I've forgotten about me! I'm Maria Turley and I'm senior manager for music education and children and young people at the Arts Council.

Hannah Fouracre: Do you want me to do the register? I've a couple of stragglers who will get to introduce themselves when they do get to us.

Unknown: Can I just add in something? I'm really sorry about this, but I'm very hard of hearing and it really helps me when you project. Thanks so much. I know it's really annoying!

Hannah Fouracre: No, I'm happy to do so. Thank you. So, I'd like to start by just setting the scene to help us all be on

the same page when it comes to having a conversation about the geographies that we're going to have today. Some of you may have read some of it or heard me say some of this before - apologies - but I think it's really important that we're all starting from the same place. So, very briefly just an introduction to the Arts Council, if you don't know us that well: we're the national development agency for creativity and culture in England. We're sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. We invest public money from the government and the National Lottery. The Department for Education provides the funding for Music Education Hubs. We support it through other various funding programmes that we have, like National Lottery Project Grants and music educators through programmes like Developing your Creative Practice.

We've also got relationships with every local authority as well as many place-based partnerships that many Music Hubs are part of. Our investment in youth music of £9.6 million per year also supports many organisations and partners. Following the publication of the National Plan last June, the DfE confirmed that the Arts Council would continue as fundholder, and has asked us to run an investment programme for Hubs - which we're launching this year. I, for one - and I know that my colleagues at the Arts Council - are very excited about continuing our journey with everybody that is contributing to a fantastic and accessible music education for children and young people across England.

The National Plan for Music Education sets out the government's priorities until 2013 for music education for children and young people, including plans to strengthen Music Hubs. It articulates a refreshed vision, which is that all children and young people should be enabled to sing,

play an instrument, create music together, and that they should have the opportunity to progress their musical talents and interests - including into a professional creative career. It highlights the importance of Music Hubs, with meaningful engagement in collective action by a broad range of partners that are relevant to the musical lives of children and young people. That's based on an understanding that, by working together, we will best support young people to develop as musicians, providing real variety of reach and opportunity. So, because of Hubs' key role the National Plan outlines a refreshed strategy for them.

A Music Hub is a group of organisations that works together to create joined-up music education provision for children and young people under the leadership of a Hub Lead Organisation. The range of partners within a Music Hub will be determined at a local level. Every member of the partnership is expected to play a key role in supporting [?proactivity 0:13:30.5]. The National Plan for Music Education replaces the existing core and extension models of Music Hubs with a new refreshed strategy for Music Hubs that is expressed via the vision, three aims, and five strategic functions. The vision for Music Hubs aligns with the vision of the National Plan.

The three aims are on the slide here, so: to support schools and other education settings to deliver high-quality music education; to support all children and young people to engage with a range of musical opportunities in and out of school; and to support young people to develop their musical interests and talents further including into employment. So, I've mentioned the Hub Lead Organisation. Now, they're responsible for the coordination and facilitation of the Hub partnership and subsequently for the strategic development and oversight of a local plan

for music education. They are accountable for the effective use of the DfE's funding and for the development of high-quality music education in their local area that will be delivered through the partnership and expressed through the local Plan for Music Education. They will achieve that through the five strategic functions which are on the slide behind me, and also you have it in front of you for an exercise we'll be doing later.

In summary, the five strategic functions are: to facilitate the operations of an effective and sustainable partnership; connect with and respond to the needs of schools; implement a strategy to ensure that music education is inclusive for all children and young people; implement a strategy which will support equitable progression for all children and young people; and to ensure the strategic financial and operational sustainability of the Hub. As part of the Plan, I mentioned that the Department for Education also confirmed continued investment of £79 million per year into the Music Hub programme, including a grant of £76 million for the Hubs. The Arts Council will run an investment process for Music Hubs inviting organisations to apply for the role of the Lead Organisation of a Music Hub. Those Lead Organisations will receive government funding to coordinate music and partnerships from September '24. [Four additional late respondents enter the room] Welcome, please do come and find a seat. Hello!

Voice 15: Hello

Voice 12: Hello everyone.

Hannah Fouracre: Hello, so you want to sit here? There's a seat here. Thanks. Welcome! Before I go any further, do you want to just quickly introduce yourself and the organisation you're representing?

Voice 15: I'm [redacted] from [redacted]

Hannah Fouracre: Thank you.

Voice 12: I'm [redacted] from [redacted]

Hannah Fouracre: Thank you.

Voice 16: I'm [redacted] from [redacted] in London.

Hannah Fouracre: Thank you. We're asking...

Voice 1: [redacted] from London. Hello!

Hannah Fouracre: Sorry [redacted]! We're asking everybody to project so everybody can hear today's session, please. Thank you. So, I was just explaining that the Arts Council will be running an investment process for Music Hubs on behalf of government. Some key dates are that in spring '23, we're planning to share the Guidance for Applicants. Our online portal, Grantium, will then open for applications around the summer of 2023. After carefully considering every application against the criteria that were stated in the Guidance for Applicants, we'll let applicants know whether or not they will be invited to become a Lead Organisation in early 2024. The National Plan also set out the DfE's vision to fund fewer, more strategic Hubs through the Investment Programme. That will be achieved via prescribed geographic areas. We've published DfE's rationale for that on our website - which you can read if you haven't already.

The DfE has outlined some guiding principles that are outlined here, and that we are consulting on. We need to keep these guiding principles in mind as we talk today. So, new Hubs will cover multiple local authority areas and be

more consistent in terms of size, coverage and quality of provision. Geographic areas should be agreed or prescribed prior to the application process, which means that the prospective Lead Organisations will be making an application for a specific prescribed geographic area. The prescribed geographic areas will not be predetermined by the current arrangements that are in place within the current music education network, and will be informed by open and objective consultation and evaluation.

They are clear about the role of the Hub Lead Organisation being that strategic lead organisation. We are not anticipating that there should be any fewer organisations that are designing, developing or delivering provision and supporting the Hub area. The Hub Lead Organisations will be more strategic, overseeing, working with and funding partners to do that work locally. We want to, and we need to, draw on the experience and knowledge of everybody from the music, education, youth and cultural communities to help shape the Music Hub Investment Programme. In autumn '22 the Arts Council launched the sector conversation and consultation phase of the Music Investment Programme. To date that's included a range of stakeholder communications activities, stakeholder management and market engagement.

To support the development of the Programme, we are also testing options for prescribing the geographies and making sure that we can understand, as far as we can, the implications in terms of transitioning and mobilising to those new arrangements. That means we'll be able to present the DfE with recommendations which are appropriate to the needs of the Programme, to the organisations that might apply - and most importantly; to children and young people themselves. To achieve that, we're running these focus groups and a supporting open

access survey that anybody can complete which mirrors the content of these focus groups. That is because we can't possibly talk to everybody in this format. So, the survey will help us ensure that everybody has got the opportunity to contribute should they wish to.

We'll be using the outcomes of this activity and the analysis offered by our external facilitators to make some final recommendations to the DfE about prescribed geographies. So, that is a whistle-stop tour through the policy context which we are at in order to have the conversations we need to today about the geographies. I am going to pause to take any pertinent questions that you have about any of that to help you move to a point where we can get you to the exercises that we'd like to do with you today. If you ask a question, a reminder to please say your name before you speak so the recording can be attributed to you. [redacted]

Voice 9: [redacted] I'm just thinking: I notice that the comms are stressing the success of the last ten years. If we're building on that success, we need to know what success looks like, so there are key figures out there, pupil numbers, schools, etc., progression. I'm just wondering where that would come into this process because we need to sort of, surely, look at a baseline expectation of what success - what we've reached already for this next phase.

Hannah Fouracre: Thank you, [redacted]. Can I just hand over to Sam, who might want to briefly say what we're doing and working with the DfE on in terms of data evaluation?

Sam Martin: Yes, very briefly. Sorry, Sam Martin, for the recording. We're, as DfE, working on an evaluation as well [unclear words 0:22:00.3] Treasury to really understand what's

the effectiveness of the Programme, what is the quality of the Programme? I think what we're looking at moving forwards is that the strategic functions actually provide a really helpful framework for understanding what does good performance look like, what are we looking for moving forwards, and where could there be improvements if there need to be? I think you make a good point that there's a lot of the - 90 per cent of schools that we work with currently, what does that work look like? Where is there engagement? Where can it be improved? The DfE are really keen to understand cold spots where there might not be a strong engagement. I think we don't want to lose the successes of the current Programme, but we want to know: where are the challenges and where can we make improvements?

Voice 14: [redacted] I wonder if you could give us a feel for any prior policy work that may or may not have taken place between the DCMS and the DfE? I think often, you can depending on where you're coming from - and orchestras are a good example - you can end up sort of trying to meet both agendas and they don't always appear to align. I just wondered whether you could give us any context regarding that from a policy alignment point of view.

Hannah Fouracre: Hannah. The only thing that I feel comfortable saying as a third party to that question, is what I know; how they worked together in terms of the development of the National Plan for Music Education. It was extremely closely and that work led to the strategy for Hubs that is within the National Plan. [redacted] gone so I don't feel comfortable saying more than that, but all of the feedback from the sessions and the questions get fed back to the DfE. So, they can perhaps [inaudible 0:23:51.8].

Voice 14: Obviously when we're thinking about geographies, there are some big issues around the DfE, DCMS policies.

Hannah Fouracre: I think that's a really important thing we need to feed in as we start talking about the geographies, and what you think the implications might be depending on the different department policies.

Voice 14: Yes.

Hannah Fouracre: Any other questions or reflections? Yes?

Voice 15: It seems really - maybe it's too much detail - but it seems to be really, really clear that what you can achieve in an urban environment is really different from what you can achieve in a rural environment.

Unknown: Please could you speak up?

Voice 15: Sorry! [redacted] What you achieve in a rural environment is very different from what you achieve in an urban environment, and whether there is a distinction in geographies or a... Just how that plays out in terms of travelling and distance and things. So, I don't really have - I don't really know what my question is; it's just an observation. That is like a really fundamental hurdle to being able to have a unified set of outcomes with achievements.

Hannah Fouracre: Yes, thank you, [redacted]. Hannah. Again, I think as we start to think about different options, that's a really important contribution to make because when I've talked about trying to be more consistent in terms of size, I think that's a really important thing to think about in terms of what...

Voice 15: Yes, it's run by young people.

Hannah Fouracre: The size of the place or the size of the children and young people. Well, without further ado then, Melissa, I'll hand over to you, please.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. Hello! So, I'm Melissa: I am a freelance researcher, evaluator in development. I work all across the arts and cultural sector - especially in work involving children and young people, learning and participation and social impact of the arts. I was meant to be here today with my colleague, Dougie Lonie - who I'm sure many of you will know. Dougie is cofounder and co-director of there is an alternative; a new agency that's developing new approaches to gathering evidence around the social impact of the arts. Dougie was called away on short notice due to personal circumstances. He's been very much involved in designing the approach that we're taking in today's focus group. He's very much going to be involved in analysing everything that we hear about from you today - and I know he wishes he could've been here.

So, just to fill you in a little bit about what Dougie and my role is. We've been commissioned by the Arts Council to lead this series of focus groups that we're running across the country. Our role is to facilitate these conversations, to ensure they run smoothly, and to ensure that we at the Arts Council are able to hear about a wide range of voices, all sorts of different stakeholders who have an impact on the musical lives of children and young people. We have no directive responsibility when it comes to the final decision on geographies. Our role is just to play back what we've heard and to summarise and analyse those conversations to the Arts Council and the DfE.

Hannah has already acknowledged that our focus group today is being recorded. So, just to provide additional assurance on these recordings: we are recording everything that's being said today, we are asking you to

identify yourselves before we speak. Your names, any identifying details will be stripped away in the published transcripts. In terms of the reporting that Dougie and I do at DfE and Arts Council, we're not going to be presenting individual comments or questions. Rather, we're going to be synthesising everything that's said at a regional level as well as on the national level. So, your anonymity will be preserved.

Just to tell you a little bit about the overall structure of this national consultation. So, this national consultation involves everyone who is involved in the musical lives of children and young people, and everyone who is going to be involved potentially in the new Music Hubs going forward, or who is already involved in the Music Hubs. The consultation comprises a few different exercises. This is the second of five in-person focus groups that we're delivering across the country this week; one in each of the Arts Council's five areas. We're also delivering a digital focus group which will be taking place next week. As I'm sure you're already aware, there's an open survey that's being circulated to the sector as well. We're encouraging everyone who is not able to come in person to connect via the open survey. Also if there's anything that you don't get a chance to say here today, or anything that you think of after you've left the room, then you are very welcome to submit in the survey as well.

It's worth saying - as Hannah already has - that the focus groups and the survey cover more or less the same content. There are slight tweaks in the way that the questions are presented - just to reflect the differences and the different formats. But if you only get to do one or the other, you're not missing out on anything. So, let's talk about how we're going to work together today. We have three aims in this session today. The first thing we're going to do is, we're going to look at three different

methodologies for prescribing geographic areas for the new Music Hub Lead Organisations. We'll also draw out and try to understand what the implications will be of these new geographies, thinking about that in terms of transition, mobilisation, as well as the long-term impact. We'll explore the guiding principles that Hannah's presented, that DfE have given us, about what the new Music Hub geographies might look like.

What we will not be doing is: we won't be agreeing an overall preferred geographic option. We're absolutely interested in understanding your preferences and rationales for those preferences, but we're not going to be making any decisions here today. The other thing that we're not going to be doing is: we're not going to be debating the use of prescribed geographies within the Investment Programme; this decision has already been made. The question is: what are those prescribed geographies going to look like? How can we choose the best option that's going to make the most impact for children and young people?

So, I believe you were set three example scenarios that you were asked to look at in preparation for this session. It's worth stressing that these are example scenarios only. They are drawn from real-world subdivisions of the country for service delivery in education-related sectors. We know that they're not an exact fit for music education - and they're not intended to be. They're intended to provide you some concrete examples to look at to help stimulate your thinking and your feedback about different approaches. So, the three different models, we're calling those: regional, sub-regional and a locally-nuanced structure. It's also worth noting - and I know this very well from having talked to Arts Council in preparation for today's focus group - that these three scenarios that we're looking at don't

necessarily reflect the views of Arts Council or DfE. No decisions have been made; they don't have an exact number of Hubs in mind.

This is very much an opportunity for you to feed in. They really do want to hear back from you about what the pros and cons of these different models would be, and what considerations they should be taking into account in making the final decision about the prescribed geographies. So, how are we going to use these three example geographies? What we're going to do is, we're going to use these three example methodologies and consider what the implications might be if we were to borrow these examples for delivering on the five strategic functions for a Music Hub Lead Organisation. I think everyone should have a printout with the five strategic functions on them. So, you'll be able to reference that throughout this conversation. If you don't have one, just raise your hand and we'll pass them along.

Adam Jeanes: Thanks for that.

Melissa Wong: So, just working through the sheet, the five strategic functions are: partnership; schools; professional musical development; inclusion; and sustainability. Hannah already talked about these five functions a little bit in her presentation, but you've got the full definitions - which you can reference as we're going through these exercises. In terms of the three scenarios we're looking at, I know that there's quite a lot of information that was on those links that you were sent. You don't need to understand the full details of each of these three different scenarios. You don't need to understand the work, the focus of these three different examples. You don't need to know what specific locations they use or what organisations are leading them. They're just examples of

three different approaches; the regional, sub-regional and locally nuanced.

The exact number and the exact structure of the Hubs are not likely to be [?borrowed wholesale 0:33:20.9] for Music Hubs. Rather, the purpose of this conversation is to test your responses to a rough number and a rough geographic structure for an equivalent Music Hub cohort. Finally, it's just worth emphasising that the final number and geographic structure will ensure that the national coverage is maintained and that organisations of all different kinds are able to contribute as active partners of the Music Hub.

So, let's talk a little bit about what tasks we're going to do for each of the three scenarios. For each scenario, I will give you a breakdown of what that scenario looks like, what the approach is. There will be an opportunity to ask any clarifying questions. Then we're going to curate a space for you to do some individual reflection on how effective the scenario would perform against each of the five strategic functions of the Music Hub Lead Organisations. So, this is just your time to do your own thinking about what this scenario means. I'm going to ask you to colour-code your responses. So, if you could use green sticky notes for opportunities, pink sticky notes for risks, and yellow sticky notes for don't know/not sure or a bit more nuanced. Just to help us to have a quick visual of where your opinions lie against each of the strategic functions.

Maria Turley: Melissa, we were running a little bit low on green!

Melissa Wong: There are lots of pros!

Maria Turley: Opportunities, yes, so we're using blue instead if you run out of green.

Melissa Wong: All right.

Hannah Fouracre: It's more like a coral or orange in place of pink as well.

Melissa Wong: All right, so green or blue for opportunities. Yellow, still, for neutral or not sure. Pink or orange for risks.

Hannah Fouracre: Pink/coral.

Melissa Wong: Once everyone has had a chance to put their individuals thoughts on the board, we'll take a look at the flipcharts together. We'll have a group discussion about the overall implications of the scenario for each of the five strategic functions. Then I'm also going to ask you to give an overall rating to each of these scenarios. On this side of the room you've got a table where you're asked to rate each of the three scenarios on a scale of one to five. I'm going to ask you to take a sticky dot - which there should be some of spread across the room - and put a sticky dot in the box that represents your ranking. Any questions about what you're being asked to do? [redacted]?

Voice 8: What's the scale order of one to five?

Melissa Wong: Great question! So, one is not at all effective. Five is extremely effective - and that mirrors what people are being asked to do in the online survey, so it's for comparability. Since this is meant to mirror what's happening in the online survey, I'm going to ask you to

make a decision. Try not to put things on the line; try to make a whole number, if you would.

Hannah Fouracre: Just one, please.

Melissa Wong: Yes, one rating. Any other questions that you have? [redacted]

Voice 16: Can I just check: so, we're the London focus group but you want us to think nationally, not just about the London scenario?

Melissa Wong: That's a really good question, so we are running five different focus groups across the country; one for each of the five parts - areas. Everyone in this group is from London or works in London in some way. So, what we're asking you to think about is what this means within your local area - because that is what you'll know best. You won't necessarily have the same level of specific knowledge about the East or the South West. So, think about it from a London context.

Voice 16: All right.

Melissa Wong: Any other questions? Great, so let's start working through... Oh yes, I'm going to talk through our ground rules for working together! So, because we all work in music education we're going to take an education approach and ask everyone to raise their hands and to be invited to speak. We just want to make sure that everyone is able to speak without interruption so just make sure you're giving people the space to do that. As Hannah's already mentioned, to help us with the transcription it would be incredibly helpful if you could state your name before you start speaking every time. That will be stripped out in the public transcript.

Finally, we're going to ask you to observe the Chatham House Rule. What this means is: this is meant to be a safe space for people to talk openly and freely, and we ask you to respect the confidentiality of what's being shared in the room today. So, if you're going to go back to your organisations tomorrow and tell your colleagues about this focus group, you're welcome to tell them about overall themes that you've heard. But please don't identify any particular individuals or what they've done. Does that sound good? Great, so counterintuitively we're going to begin with Scenario 3. So, Scenario 3 is teaching school hubs. Teaching school hubs are a network of 87 centres of excellence for teacher training and development focussed on some of the best schools and multi-academy trusts across the country.

So, there are 87 of them. Just for reference there are currently 118 Music Hubs, so what we're talking about is a scale-down of approximately three-quarters of the number that we have. So, try to think about what this would mean within a London context. Because we're talking about 87 across the country, we're calling this the locally-nuanced option. So, there would be mergers between some local authorities. We expect that no single hub is going to just cover one local authority. So, there might be different approaches to [?moving 0:39:29.7] them. Some of the things you might want to consider, take into consideration, feed back on are: what might be the most helpful approaches to moving them into these 87 new Hub structures? Are there any clarifying questions about this scenario?

Voice 5: Hello. [redacted] Just how were they started off? Was it prescribed areas, or were schools able to bid for an area that they chose?

Melissa Wong: In terms of how the teaching school hubs were?

Voice 5: Yes.

Melissa Wong: I think that's probably a level of detail that we don't really need to get stuck into because that is very specific to the operations of how teaching school hubs emerged and how they work in practice. The main thing to focus on is looking at the teaching school hubs and looking at the rough way that the local authorities are grouped together and the overall size [inaudible 0:40:26.0] teaching school hubs.

Voice 5: [redacted] again. Yes, can I just ask a follow-up question then please?

Melissa Wong: Yes.

Voice 5: What is the average number of local authorities within a teaching hub?

Melissa Wong: I think that would be like two.

Unknown: I think it varies quite a lot as well.

Unknown: Yes, it varies on the size of the Hub.

Unknown: Yes, I'm sort of looking at DfE, probably...

Hannah Fouracre: Yes, I think it varies. There isn't a particular kind of thing in terms of...

Melissa Wong: Sorry, I'm trying to remember one thing here.

Unknown: Can I just, for clarification, ask? The network, are we talking about Music Hubs? It just confused me slightly, and of the teaching school hub programme, do you just mean - does that just mean Music Hubs? Or within Music Hubs are there some that are within schools that are cited as being for excellence that... I was just a bit confused about between schools that are excellent; are they a Hub, or are Music Hubs quite separate?

Melissa Wong: I think perhaps we've given a little bit too much detail about what teaching school hubs are in this example. The main thing I would focus on is, what we're creating in this scenario is a locally-nuanced option where there are approximately 87 Music Hubs across the country, and what that means in terms of how local authorities might be grouped together. We're not making any assumptions about what the involvement of schools might be in Music Hubs. We're not making any assumptions about whether schools might be the ones leading Music Hubs going forward. We are just thinking about breaking it down into 87 geographic areas. Does that make sense?

Unknown: Yes. It's just the school thing when it says about in partnership.

Melissa Wong: Oh, I see.

Unknown: With schools, with Early Years, with educational providers, community music organisations and other regional and national youth music. Sorry, I'm just still slightly confused. Are Hubs - is this making them the best schools and multi-academy trusts... I'm just confused about the fact, where they sit with community organisations within the 87 and is this a big... Is this a change? Sorry, probably a lot more people maybe know more than I do about this, but as a community organisation we've experienced being a partner with a Music

Hub. But I don't know about that from a school perspective. I know that the Music Hubs, their main work is the children and getting... So, it's just a little bit of clarification about that. I'm just...

Melissa Wong: That's really useful to understand that you're coming at this from a community music context and that your interaction with Music Hubs will be filtered through that context - which means you probably are focussed on that function of Music Hubs rather than the way that they connect with schools. So, when you're thinking about what the scenario would be for the five strategic functions, then I would focus on where your own experience and where your expertise lies, which is probably in terms of some of these other strategic functions rather than how Music Hubs are going to support all state-funded schools to deliver high-quality music education.

Voice 15: You're just wanting us to think about the number 87? Or are you wanting us to think about centres of excellence? Basically, we're just saying: what would it be like if there were 87?

Melissa Wong: Basically, yes.

Hannah Fouracre: Yes.

Voice 15: Okay, it's not a model?

Hannah Fouracre: Yes.

Melissa Wong: Yes, so I apologise for providing too much information! The question is: what would the world look like, what would the music education landscape look like if there were 87 Music Hubs? [redacted] and then [redacted]

Voice 18: Just two points. Your point about we're only focussing on London I think can be very useful, but also it would be - thinking about outside of London is really important. The thing is, if we're talking about Hubs, if you take into consideration the likes of Birmingham and Kent as opposed to Islington in terms of per capita head and the make-up of those, then I think there's a... So, I think that affects the overall numbers across the country. If you're looking back to Hannah's point, parity in terms of the size, whatever size looks like, number of pupils within that. So, I think that that's a key thing. In terms of the numbers and splitting it, my very poor maths - apologies to Rishi - but that works out at around 21 Hubs in London as opposed to the current 29. I'll leave others to do maths for the other two scenarios around that, but if we're thinking about London, that can be quite helpful perhaps just in terms of the way forwards. Just those two points I wanted to say there.

Melissa Wong: Thank you so much. [redacted]

Voice 8: [redacted]Sorry, my point is very similar to [redacted], which is to say that: almost to have clarity you want us... So, three-quarters max is around about 20/21; that's what you want us to focus on in this conversation, not outside London? That's what I just wanted to clarify.

Melissa Wong: Exactly, yes.

Voice 8: Okay.

Melissa Wong: As [redacted] has said, it might be useful to think about: this is what this specifically means for London. It might not be the same in a more rural area, but this is what I understand based on my experience in my local context. [redacted] then?

Voice 2: Yes, [redacted]. Just on the numbers: it is important to consider what happens outside London because as [redacted] said, places like Birmingham and Kent already have a much larger school population than Islington - or even Croydon. So, I'm not sure that if we're thinking about 87 across the country and then that'd be similar in size and scope. One way of thinking is, similar size is based on population of children and young people, in which case for London it would be rather fewer than 21 hubs.

Melissa Wong: Thank you for that. Can I ask that these comments from [redacted] and [redacted], you can show that you capture them on your sticky notes so we have a record of that. That would be absolutely perfect.

Maria Turley: General thoughts?

Melissa Wong: Yes, under general thoughts.

Hannah Fouracre: Yes.

Maria Turley: Can I just add something as well, which is just that I'm really mindful that there are some organisations in the room here who are national organisations as well. Where you are, there is the survey, too. So, if you want to contribute to the survey, you want to put some more national perspectives, something there as well, that's of course something that you can do.

Hannah Fouracre: [redacted]

Voice 7: Yes, just to kind of follow on from what - sorry, [redacted] What you were just saying, actually it really makes a big difference how one thinks about it if it's about geographic area or if it's talking about population and numbers of children

and young people. That makes a huge difference to how things might look.

Melissa Wong: Yes, absolutely, and again I would really encourage you to capture that under general thoughts so that we have a record of that thought. [redacted]

Voice 15: Sorry just to be picking up on that again because money goes differently when you've got a long way to travel. It's really, really important to recognise that Hubs in rural areas are spending a vast fortune on just getting people from A to B. Plus I'm just interested in how 87 relates to the division of potential Hubs. So, if you look at who's being funded in the national portfolio, who is out there to contribute to the work of the Hubs? How does that get divided across the geographies? So, it's about size resources, numbers of pupils, cost of travel and division of resources.

Melissa Wong: Yes, absolutely. It feels like we're starting to move towards lots of different thoughts about how Hubs would be able to deliver in terms of children and young people. There are all of these five functions, so can I encourage you all to start your individual thinking? Writing on these sticky notes and putting your sticky notes up against the five strategic functions, or against our general thoughts flipchart? I'll just give you eight minutes to do that thinking.

Maria Turley: Please shout if you don't have enough Post-it notes. I'm not saying that in an ironic way!

Melissa Wong: I'm also going to ask everyone to please use their best penmanship as they write their sticky notes!

Unknown: I don't take that approach!

Unknown: Clear, and I've decided to go with the...

Unknown: No, we're not allowed to do anything.

Unknown: Aren't you?

Unknown: No.

Hannah Fouracre: Pinks are more to the bottom and green is more to the top. It helps...

[Respondents continue with exercise 0:53:25.0 - 0:53:40.6]

Unknown: I've worked with quite a few MATs now and I would be worried if a certain MAT got the school centre of excellence; whether other MATs would turn up their nose and not value and see it as impartial. Tell me what to put down!

Unknown: I know, and it's kind of almost broader, isn't it, because you probably...

Unknown: Yes. They're not necessarily fixed to one geography, are they?

Unknown: No. Is it [?professional 0:54:14.4]? Well, I don't know.

Unknown: I suppose that could apply to anything, couldn't it?

Unknown: Do that centre anyway, couldn't they?

Unknown: Yes, they could.

Unknown: Then I suppose you'd be looking to appoint somebody who could demonstrate that.

Unknown: That impartiality, so maybe there's a particular thing with the party having trust.

Unknown: But they've got their brand, haven't they?

Unknown: They have. If you think about the [redacted] and I'm thinking nationally, which I shouldn't do - but do you know what I'm saying? They've got that tie-in.

Unknown: They want to be resourcing other - or getting the resource, yes.

Unknown: But then - I think I was just a bit worried, yes.

Unknown: A couple of bullets about how we then collaborate, being prepared to take on each other's expertise or...

Unknown: Yes, because it's very much a business model for them as well, isn't it, with the MAT - and that they're not thinking just music.

Melissa Wong: Two minutes to finish writing your individual reflections on this scenario.

Unknown: Would they collaborate?

Unknown: Yes, just the...

Melissa Wong: If you're already done with writing your sticky notes, you can put a dot up to tell us how you would rate this scenario on a scale of one to five.

[Respondents continue with exercise 0:55:55.9 - 0:56:57.0]

Melissa Wong: Right, can everyone please finish filling in their sticky notes on each of the five flipcharts? Can

everyone also please put up their sticker to tell us your rating for this scenario?

[Respondents continue with exercise 0:57:13.2 - 0:58:03.8]

Melissa Wong: Can everyone please, once you've put up all your sticky notes and once you've put up your dots...

Unknown: Have you changed your mind?

Hannah Fouracre: Everyone, can we have your attention for a minute?

Melissa Wong: Once you've put up all your sticky notes and your dots, what I'm going to ask you to do is just go and have a read through what everyone else has said. So, spread yourselves out, shuffle around the room and just make sure you've had an overview of what's on that board.

[Respondents continue with exercise 0:58:33.1 - 1:02:50.8]

Melissa Wong: One minute left to look at the flipcharts. When you're done, can you please sit down so that I know you've looked at all the flipcharts?

[Respondents continue with exercise 1:03:00.1 - 1:03:31.0]

Melissa Wong: Great, so can everyone please sit down when they've had a chance to look at all the flipcharts? Then we'll have a big discussion as a group.

Unknown: Now that I've read that, I feel like I've got a better understanding of actually what they want...

Melissa Wong: All right, I'm going to draw everyone's attention to this side of the room. Thank you to everyone.

[Respondents return to their seats 1:04:11.5 - 1:04:28.8]

Melissa Wong: All right, thank you everyone, so having had a chance to look through everything that your colleagues in the room have put up, what I want to do is, I just want to work through each of the strategic functions one by one and get a read of what the room is saying. So, under partnership I see a real range of different responses. Just having a quick scan of the colours, I see a lot of opportunities in green and blue, a few not sures, and also a few risks to take into consideration. What jumped out at you? What were the key themes that you picked up on?

Voice 10: I'll go, I'll give just my perspective. I think there were a number of people who felt that a wider geographical area could potentially offer increased partnerships with a variety of new partners. That was my thought.

Melissa Wong: Great, thank you, so some opportunities in terms of new collaborations that could take place. Any other key themes or trends that jumped out at you? [redacted]?

Voice 2: There has been a lot of talk in the introductions about local planning, so a locally-nuanced Hub structure would actually make the formulation of local plans easier.

Melissa Wong: So, that's a positive for you then in terms of how partnership working - what partnership working would look like under this scenario. [redacted]?

Voice 14: Yes, [redacted]. Just the opportunity for the nuancing, I think, was the major opportunity that could come through as opposed to a much broader strategic approach.

Melissa Wong: So, I'm hearing a lot of positive themes that jump out. What jumped out at you in terms of the risks for this scenario?

Voice 14: Sorry, I'll go again. One brilliant point that I saw that somebody said: is there the risk that the Hubs could divide into sub-Hubs, which would effectively mean that we end up with the same status quo - which I thought was brilliant point.

Melissa Wong: Really interesting point, thank you for bringing that out. Some interesting points that we picked up on in terms of partnerships in the teaching school hub scenario. What about in terms of the way that Hubs would work with schools? Again it's a very divided picture that I'm seeing. A lot of greens and a lot of pinks - and not much in the middle; does that mean that the room was quite divided on this issue?

Voice 12: from the [redacted]. Yes, I was quite interested in trying to remove - as you were talking about - existing relationships with what has gone before. But the relationship between music in schools and facing a reality of what actually is going on in schools in terms of music, it's not a sort of status quo. In fact the capacity of schools has been diminished in terms of music in the curriculum. I was quite interested in the relationship between Arts Council and the Department for Education in terms of what music education actually means in schools. There is no doubt about the power of getting into schools and working through them and the relationship they have with Hubs. But coming from a school where we specialise in music provision, we don't exist in a bubble. We are dependent on other schools providing as well and being a part of music education. So, I had a question around: what support is there for schools to encourage education in terms of music alongside this? It seems to be they can't exist in a vacuum.

Melissa Wong: Yes, absolutely, I think that's a really good question. Slightly beyond the scope of what we're able to talk about today - but I think Maria will capture that under general thoughts. Thank you for sharing that. Yes?

Unknown: I do sense there's an opportunity - but it's probably much too nuanced - to partnership and schools to kind of say, 'Okay, where are the brilliant resources? Has that been shared equally? Where are the schools that are doing great that could be role models or partners or mentors of the schools that want to do great?' Somehow there is one overlay and another overlay and another overlay and then suddenly we've got a perfect number of Hubs for London based on, 'Oh look, they've all got similar professional resources, arts organisations. They've all got similar social diversity, different types of role models, different types of opportunities for young people to travel into borough and meet each other' - which is such an important thing in London. So, that there is a kind of logic of people engaging with each other to build, to be stronger but it is so detailed, I would have no idea if that's achievable.

In a way, for me looking across the opportunity and all of it, it's that opportunity of sharing things out, matching the good, the strong and the weak, having a vision of everybody lifting everybody up. Everybody playing a role and not one place having more and another not.

Melissa Wong: I really liked some of the words that you used there; lifting each other up. Again I think that's a brilliant thought that Maria is capturing under our general thoughts. I think that's not just specific to schools, but thank you. Shall we move on to inclusion? What was interesting to you in terms of what your peers said about inclusion in this scenario? [Long pause] Nothing jumped out?

Voice 7: Sorry. [redacted]. Just to comment that there is an important comment about children travelling and areas. With all the scenarios that's going to be an issue because all the scenarios are looking at larger areas, so actually within whatever goes on going forward, that needs to be addressed.

Maria Turley: Yes, so it's been around barriers to access and all that sort of...

Voice 7: Yes.

Maria Turley: What that specifically means for the different...

Voice 7: Yes.

Melissa Wong: I think especially around transportation, is that right?

Voice 7: Yes.

Maria Turley: Yes.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. [redacted]?

Voice 16: Yes, I think maybe it's a [?good reason 1:11:43.5] because - sorry - in theory with more Hubs, people would be able to access more easier but it completely depends on the partnerships within those Hubs and whether or not... So, I feel like it's quite a difficult question to answer, in a way, if there were really good partnerships there'd be a really good geographical spread - but if not, then potentially you've got a lot more Hubs but not a lot of places to go.

Melissa Wong: So, it sounds like what you're saying is: it's less about the specific size of the Hub and more in terms of

how it manages those partnerships to support on-the-ground delivery?

Voice 16: Having things about geographical mapping, I guess, because then you could already have a huge Hub cluster in one specific area and nothing else.

Melissa Wong: Thank you for that.

Voice 8: Yes, [redacted], so I'm [redacted] of a multi-borough hub already and that exact same thing comes up. So, if we run an activity in one of our boroughs, it automatically is not in the [redacted] other boroughs. So, straightaway you will alienate [redacted] other local authorities in my current setup. That's a very real thing so that's just very much worth having awareness of. With inclusion, this is across all protected characteristics so I think it's a really good thing. You can definitely learn from a lot of colleagues and you can share best practice across large geographical areas as well, so that's a positive. But in terms of the geographical inclusion, it's a real consideration that has to be taken into account.

Melissa Wong: So, what we're saying is: Scenario 3 has different implications for different aspects of inclusion?

Voice 8: Yes.

Melissa Wong: Geographic as opposed to personal characteristics. Thank you for that. Let's move on to progression and musical development. The main thing I'm thinking of here is there aren't a lot of sticky notes! Any reflections on why that might be, or anything else interesting that jumped out at you?

Voice 1: I guess my mind loves to put things in boxes and under headings and so when I'm thinking about progression in musical

development, I've started to think about the beyond-school space a little bit as well and how we're building from school, beyond-school opportunities. I don't know whether that's what people have in mind, but maybe just having some clarity a little bit about... Of course different areas overlap, but maybe do we just need to dig in a little bit about exactly what's behind that statement, respond better? I don't know if that's the question.

Maria Turley: Shall I say something on it, Hannah?

Hannah Fouracre: Yes.

Maria Turley: I think it's twofold. I think there is something around supporting schools to understand progression and how you can support children to progress in school and share with them the way that they can progress to opportunities out of school. But then for the Hub Lead Organisation with its partners, to understand: what does progression across multiple genres and instruments and making, creating and more composing music, what does that look like? What are the progression routes that exist here and beyond our geographical boundaries so that we're thinking locally, regionally and nationally? So, perhaps it's more around the progression strategy.

Unknown: There might also be something you want to think about, which is kind of an additional layer to that, which is about the difference between progress and progression structures. So, progress in a teaching and learning sense, like how is a child getting better at what they do? How is the Hub supporting that? What are the opportunities that are available to them to take their journey on somewhere?

Melissa Wong: Definitely, thank you for that. [redacted]

Voice 10: Yes, I felt quite strongly about this; that actually a wider geographical area would open up more potential pathways for young people - not just in terms of advanced progression - but also in terms of genres and access to different kinds of ensembles, particularly as we know it gets very tricky for young people. There is a postcode lottery aspect to some musical opportunities across the country. I was interested to see that there were other people who have very opposing views about how progression pathways would not be increased through greater geographical...

Melissa Wong: The thing about contrast was really interesting.

Voice 10: Yes.

Melissa Wong: [redacted]

Voice 17: Yes, sorry, [redacted]. I was thinking about opportunities for the higher education environment that are around nationally. Could their involvement, or would their involvement, be expected and encouraged - especially in terms of teacher training and teacher training non-specialist teachers? Would this model encourage that more?

Melissa Wong: What about this model would encourage that?

Voice 17: Well, I suppose it very much depends on what higher education institution you've got in that geographical location and whether they do offer teacher training already. It's provoking things in me [laughs]! I like to think aloud, I'm sorry.

Melissa Wong: Can I ask you to put that on a sticky note and put this up on the flipchart as well so we capture that?

[1:17:03.2] Unknown: I think you might want to put something on partnership as well.

Voice 17: Yes.

Melissa Wong: Yes, good shout. Yes?

Unknown: Thinking about what [redacted] said, I was thinking about the shared resource that can happen in terms of advanced progression, because it's expensive, across genres and about young people's experiences. We're always talking about how music education is about unlocking potential across all types of skill area. Once young people can actually go beyond their local - go beyond their patch and meet other young people across London and be London musicians representing what London young people do, then that gets really exciting. But that means that somebody has got to have a London strategy. It actually means a certain level of progression, so they have got to work together to say, 'Okay, our job is to get this far and then we'll divide into six progression places. Then we'll divide into one progression place and then we'll link with the national organisation.' Young people need to build horizons. Young people need opportunities to build horizons, and if they're musical young people, music can unlock those horizons, but that requires national strategy. Local, regional and national around that. I do think that is what is exciting here; if it gets ranked as an opportunity, that is the opportunity.

Melissa Wong: Yes, I think that is a really interesting point around the opportunities that are opened up and how they might link up, too.

Unknown: Yes, lots of people are nodding. I think it's what we all want to see - and I'm not just talking about orchestral music. Across genre, young people want to meet each other and have

a [?massive life 1:18:36.1]. Very exciting as teenagers because they're [unclear word 1:18:40.1] and they want to get better. Other people are good; they need to meet them.

Melissa Wong: Have you captured that in a sticky note already? Can I ask you to? Thank you. The last strategic function around ensuring the sustainability of the Hub. I'm seeing a lot of risks here so I'm getting a read that people are slightly concerned about what this scenario means in terms of sustainability. What did we pick up on? [redacted]

Voice 16: I suppose one question is: how much funding is there and how long can you guarantee 87 Hubs [unclear words 1:19:32.9] maybe could we spend time rebuilding [unclear words 1:19:38.7] current Hub?

Melissa Wong: Yes, absolutely. I think Hannah, you're able to say something about this, right, in terms of the National Plan being for ten years and in terms of what this Investment Programme will be. I think it was for a slightly shorter period than that?

Hannah Fouracre: At the moment, we're working on a ten-year National Plan and hopefully a three-year funding agreement for Hubs.

Melissa Wong: So, that is what the Plan is currently, so thinking about that, it looks like people have picked up on some of the risks of moving towards this new Hub structure - particularly in a shorter time period.

Voice 1: Yes, I think having the luxury of being able to see - the interesting thing about the risk is, they seem to sit in three categories as well from the middle being nothing might really change in terms of sustainability, to there might be more admin and that we can do less. Or there might be duplication so we

can do less, so the risks seem to - three different areas, from just scanning.

Maria Turley: Yes, so it was no change. What was number 2?

Voice 1: Well, I guess they're being able to do less because there's more admin and more to do, or being able to do less because, still being quite small, there's duplication and everybody is doing a similar thing.

Maria Turley: Yes, thank you.

Melissa Wong: Yes, so a lot of the words that I'm picking up on here are: potential for duplication, increased admin, risk of lack of new ideas and investment, admin challenges, resourcing. What are some of the positives that this scenario might have in terms of sustainability?

Voice 5: Hello I wasn't going to... Sorry, I will come back to [unclear word 1:21:24.6] and I was very good and made sure I put something positive on there! I was just thinking about this particular function, this sustainability one. Actually I would be surprised if it isn't very similar across the three methodologies. I think the risks will be the same. As current Hub Lead Organisations we've been talking a lot about what the implications of change could be. Some of the things around not losing funding through top-slicing for other organisations, that reduces the funding for music education delivery on the ground. In any one of these sizes, if that is too much, that is going to negatively impact. Obviously there are various ways around that. I think just because I haven't said anything for all five - I've got the talking stick now - so what I'm feeling very much is about this whole kind of numbers game.

So, really we're looking at numbers, we're looking at a really small number of Hubs versus this is the biggest number of Hubs that is being put on the table. It is still about: how does that affect the local responding to need of children and young people we are working with? I was thinking about, the first thing would be inclusion. If you've got smaller Hubs or smaller numbers of Hubs, they're going to understand it better, the local picture and the local - and what actually those children... What are the barriers? What do they need to overcome those barriers? What does it look like if you are a child in that geographical area and what is that? The same, progression: if you are a child in that geographical area, whether there are three Hubs around you or ten Hubs around you, actually what do you need and how do you facilitate that? So, I think there is definitely going to be some commonality. I think it's really important that we still capture those key possible risks - but also key opportunities effectively across the board.

Melissa Wong: Brilliant, thank you for that. That feels like a really nice place to draw a line under that scenario.

Voice 5: Can I just ask - sorry, before you do about sustainability - but I don't know what amount of [redacted] for example is going into London Hubs, or indeed going in the Hubs across the nation and how... I just wondered what role does [?donor 1:23:49.9] research play in this game? How many of these strategic trusts and foundations want to contribute to less is more, or how many actually contribute because it's local? So, obviously if there are millions of pounds of Foundation money going into the sector that's going to be affected [unclear words 1:24:13.2] suss it out. The other thing is just about cost-effectiveness: is it going to cost more to have bigger Hubs or is it going to cost less? You always imagine that if we merge organisations, we have [?backdoor 1:24:26.2] savings, but sometimes we don't because actually things

become really hard to manage. You start to realise the scale of stuff you've got to process.

So, then you have to have CRM and you have to have a CRM manager and so it goes on. Suddenly you've got a lot more people, so I don't know if you're going to do any business modelling around cost-effectiveness, because obviously that's part of sustainability. That's like a new picture that needs to happen.

Melissa Wong: Yes, so two really important things to be taking into consideration? One around: what are the implications of these new geographic areas in terms of fundraising? Will it make it easier or will it make it more difficult? The second around: will this actually drive economies of scale if we have larger Hubs, or will it actually - will it just create more admin?

Voice 5: Yes. I'm sorry to be a bore, I've got one more thing which is just around: obviously it's so different for different local authorities and what happens if you jam together a local authority who wants to play their part and one who simply doesn't? How is that fair? Do you take the money from the local authority that wants to play a part, but you're effectively funding a local authority who doesn't? The skills of the Hub leaders in navigating that, it is a challenge, isn't it? It's a thing, so we need skills so I'm fascinated by that.

Melissa Wong: So, again there's another question mark around the challenges of managing larger Hubs and managing the politics of those relationships and the dynamics of those relationships.

Voice 5: Specifically, the local authorities need to... Are local authorities even in a position to make any forward-focussed financial commitments to culture and music education? So, are

people going to be working in the dark and are people - are some local authorities going to think, great! They're willing so we're off the hook; we're doing nothing? I don't know. Maybe there are already merged local authorities. I don't know, it's just one of those things playing on my mind.

Melissa Wong: That's something else to take into account - which I think Maria is doing a great job capturing under general thoughts on Scenario 1! Any other final general thoughts on Scenario 1 before we go to break? [Short pause] Great, so I'm going to give you a five-minute break. The loos are just around the corner and through the doors past the lifts. You can also top up your tea or coffee here. We'll regroup here everyone sitting down, ready to go by three o'clock. Thank you.

Hannah Fouracre: Thank you.

[Break 1:26:55.6 - 1:34:02.4]

Melissa Wong: Before we jump into the next scenario, I just want to observe that we've only got 16 dots under scenario 3. I know that there are plenty of us in the room. As you get the chance, please do put up a dot for scenario three if you haven't already. Let's start by just giving a brief introduction to scenario two, Maths Hubs. We've learnt from scenario three that it's a bit confusing to go through the detail of what these things are, so I'm not going to tell you what Maths Hubs are. Essentially, it's a national, England-wide network of 40 hubs, with national coverage across the country. Again, by way of comparison, there are currently 118 Music Hubs. Imagine, this is scaling down from 118 to 40, roughly a third of the number of hubs that we have now.

What we're calling this is the sub-regional option. Presumably, we're all familiar with the nine official regions of the country. A sub-regional model would be breaking down each of the nine regions into slightly smaller regions within that. It might be, for example, breaking them into quadrants or some other approach that makes sense given the geography of these individual regions. Does anyone have any questions about scenario two and what it means? [redacted]

Voice 16: I would just find it really useful to know if you have expectations about what would be different and what you are asking hubs to do, and how many of them there are. If there were four hubs, would you expect them to take more of a lead role in actually providing teaching then, or would you expect their role to always be strategic? Do you know what I mean?

Hannah Fouracre: Whatever the model, the hub lead organisation that we want to fund is the strategic organisation of a partnership. They may, coincidentally, be a delivery organisation in any of the models, but that isn't the reason that we're funding them. We're funding them to create the partnership, to develop the strategy, to where you see the delivery across their patch. It might be that they are commissioned to deliver some aspects of the work by [unclear word 1:36:16.8] but that's not what they're being funded to do as the lead organisation.

Unknown: All that really changes is their number in this scenario.

Hannah Fouracre: Yes, the size and the geography.

Melissa Wong: Okay, thank you for that. Any other questions about this scenario? [redacted], and then [redacted].

Voice 14: Could I just share what I said to you a few minutes earlier? Which isn't really a question, but just to say that I'm finding it quite difficult to engage with the task because it feels like we're doing an academic exercise, and not necessarily reflecting the experience that we're all bringing. I was just asking how we can do that, so that our responses are really rich. I don't know if other people are finding that as well, but it feels slightly strange to be engaging in what is, in some ways, a numbers game, an academic exercise, without the scenarios or the context or... Almost being asked to leave that experience, and the previous ten years of hub experience at the door because that's not going to influence how these decisions are made. I'm finding that slightly challenging. I don't know whether anybody else is. I thought I'd just share.

Melissa Wong: Thank you for that feedback, [redacted], that's really helpful to know how you're feeling and responding to these exercises. I think that for the purposes of today's conversation, I appreciate, it is a bit difficult to be having these conversations in the abstract because we don't have exact, defined geographic areas. As I said to you earlier, during the break, this is a very early stage of the conversation. This is helping Arts Council and DfE to think through what is the appropriate approach to prescribing geographic areas for Music Hubs. Then once that approach has been decided, there will still be a lot more work to do in terms defining what that means within each specific local area. This is a starting point. If there's anything that you don't feel that you've been able to say today within the parameters of the exercises that you're working through, we will have an opportunity just to catch any other ideas or thoughts for consideration at the end. Also, you're very welcome to respond to the survey. Anything that you think we've failed to ask you about, please do capture that within the survey.

Voice 2: A similar feeling, but from my perspective, I spoke to Melissa in the break about transition. Transition is how you change from one to another, where you have to consider what you have been doing for the last ten years, then what might you be doing in the future. Then it's, for me, it's actually thinking about that. I just wanted to check, Melissa, that we are actually talking about, we can think about transitions. I don't know if that helps you to talk about it in those terms, what might be different, how might things change? What can we do to make it move to a change?

Melissa Wong: Thank you so much for reminding me of that conversation. As I was saying to [redacted] during the break, when we're thinking about these five strategic functions, and how, what these scenarios would mean in terms of the delivery of these five strategic functions, we're thinking about it both like a short, medium, and long term. The immediate transition, what that will mean in terms of the mobilisation. Then what that might mean in terms of the longer-term impact. That might be a useful way of grounding this conversation in something a bit more concrete.

Voice 16: I don't know if this is a stupid question, but I just want a bit of context about the number 40. How does that relate, how many counties are there in the UK, in England? How many local authority areas are there? What else operates at, like what does 40 mean geographically?

Melissa Wong: Yes, that's a really interesting question. I can't recall the exact number of local authorities. It's 130...

Unknown: 151.

Unknown: You're looking at at least three local authorities per part of [unclear word 1:40:28.7] scenario, and then how many

counties are there? Do you know how many counties there are in this area? Forty is not as small as the South East, the South West, the Midlands, but it's still small. Yes.

Melissa Wong: It's worth saying that when we were looking at this scenario, there were a few other examples that you might be familiar with. Maths Hubs is the particular example that we decided to show for the purposes of this exercise. There was also Local Enterprise Partnerships, of which I think there are 38 across the country. We just chose to focus on Maths Hubs because this one does have comprehensive, national coverage, whereas Local Enterprise Partnerships, I believe there are a couple local authorities that aren't covered. If that's something that's familiar with you, you might look to that as a model as well.

Voice 6: There are six Maths Hubs in London if that's helpful to know.

Unknown: That's very helpful.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. [redacted]

Voice 8: Sorry, [redacted], do you want to go?

Voice 7: Yes. I take it that under this scenario and scenario one, there would need to be some kind of structure within that hub for localised thinking and strategy [?implementation 1:41:52.3]. I think it's really important to recognise that that would be necessary. Otherwise, when we start this discussion going forward of our comments, it's all going to focus on the local. That needs to be understood.

Hannah Fouracre: What we're specifically not doing is trying to suggest the models that you might want to deliver the different methods with. We want applicants to tell us,

whatever the arrangement we finalise, this is how we, this organisation, would deliver it. These are the partnerships that we would have in place. They will be assessed on that. We don't want to be specific about the models that have to be used in every place because we believe that the local context should share, should lead to different models that are selected. You're absolutely right that those are the things that will have to be considered. What we don't want to lose through this approach is the focus on local children and young people and schools. It might be as you write your Post-it notes, you're sharing the specific things that we need to be thinking about in terms of transitioning and mobilising to that methodology. Making sure that we've got that focus on local, but that there is that larger strategic function and also a larger geography.

Unknown: Quite a massive proposition to go from 130 people who are needing provision and action and strategy, to putting all of that in the hands of 40 people. Really, I'd have thought highly risky to be doing that, or highly brilliant. I don't know. It's a lot of talent going, potentially.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. Well, make sure to capture it on your sticky notes.

Voice 8: Yes, just following up from that conversation, so there's currently 30 Music Hubs in London. We're talking, in a scenario, going down to five or six. My question to you, Hannah, or Arts Council, is are you talking about the, you're looking to merge the local authorities that currently are the individual ones, or are you looking at they will all still remain as local entities, so to deliver the local expertise, but they come under the purview of one strategic lead organisation?

Hannah Fouracre: Again, that goes back to local partners deciding what will work best for them. For example, our

partnership research that Andrea Spain did, that we published in the autumn last year, that gave some examples of existing ways that some of our multiple local authorities could operate. What we're not going to do is say, 'We think that model is the best one, and we want you to do that in London.' You will work, once you know what the geographies are, you will have the time to start talking to partners, neighbouring or whatever structure it will be, potential partners, about what's going to work best for us? Will we, as a music service, for example, be able to stay as the delivery partner in this area, or how will this delivery organisation fit into that? You will determine that with the applicant for the lead organisation.

Unknown: If you go down to 40, that is a massive drop for someone to take on before they've even [?applied 1:45:17.0]?

Hannah Fouracre: Yes, and that's what we need to know about implications and transition and mobilising.

Voice 8: Can I say one more thing? Hannah, I'm really sorry, I know you've heard me say this plenty of times before. One of the big issues with the current situation has always been that there's no directive from DfE that they, as to a school, that a school must engage with their local music education hub, which is doing the job with one hand tied behind your back. Overnight, if the DfE, who fund schools and fund Music Hubs or music services and education were to say that, overnight, you'd have a complete change for the better of young people accessing music education. I will put it up here, but surely, the DfE, where we are today, should be trying to maximise the impact of their funding. Therefore, a directive should go to every school, they should actively engage with whoever the structure is, as a result of this whole outcome. Just an observation.

Melissa Wong: A really great observation, and again, something to capture in a sticky note please! It feels like we're starting to move into individual reflections and observations. I'm just going to give you, again, eight minutes to do your individual thinking and to put it up on the flipchart. If you could also take a sticky dot, and give a ranking to the scenario.

[Respondents complete exercise 1:46:42.1 - 1:55:00.5]

Melissa Wong: What we're going to do is I'll just read out some of the sticky notes. All right, everyone, let's take a look at what's up on the boards. Has everyone put up a dot for scenario two? Great. Everyone put up a dot for scenario three?

[Unknown: I haven't, could I ask somebody to just...?]

Melissa Wong: Thank you. Great. I accept it was difficult for everyone to read through everything that was up here. What I'll do is I'll just pick out a sample of a few of them. I'm afraid I won't get to read out every single one, just because of time, but just to give you a flavour of what's up here, and then we have a group discussion about each strategic function. Starting with partnership, some of the positives that people picked out is there's potential for greater partnerships and room for innovation. Someone says that it could be positive if the transition and agreement on areas is carried out in collaboration with London hubs. This has the potential for greatest impact by five to seven current HLOs working together. Opportunity for deployment, opportunity for better deployment of NPO resources, is that correct? Hopefully, I read that correctly. Partnerships open the way for more diverse partnership, if this is within a framework of strong localised strategy.

Some of the risks that people picked up are lots of localised impact, risk and fracture in, risk of fracture and infighting. Okay, all right. Rich versus poor partners. Smaller/weaker partners coast and leave it on to the big partner - that's interesting. Existing hubs will be turkeys voting for Christmas if they have to decide themselves whether the provision should continue. Okay, I'd really like an explanation of this expression, I've never heard of it before. Some of the unknown quantities are pros and cons of lead organisation only focusing on strategy. That sounds like it's relevant to all of the scenarios, not just this one. Scrabbling to find a partner/any partner to cover a cold spot equals poor quality, poor performance/quality, losing local partnerships. Opportunity for strategic leadership to be leading those with capacity and others to focus more on delivery. Interesting. What are the key themes that jumped out at you, just based on the sample of things I read out?

Voice 2: It's the tension between local and strategic. One of the ones I put up there, I think the way it all happens, and the transition, has to enhance that or it can destroy it.

Melissa Wong: The transition, and it sounds like whichever scenario we move towards, the transition will play a really important part in helping ultimately land within the sector, and what that means for children and young people. Any other reflections on partnerships?

Voice 17: I think that point about the smaller partners being lost to big partners is a big risk actually because then you really do miss that fine, local, and that local environment. We have micro centres of culture. If that was lost because Leeds didn't quite understand Grimsby, then it would - yes, I just wanted to point out that that is quite a big risk for those. Actually, some absolute

gems can come from those smaller, more local, specialist partnerships.

Voice 15: Does it create an opportunity though for that practice to be shared and, yes, for smaller partners to play a more significant role, so that you stop having all this ring-fenced knowledge?

Voice 17: I think, in some cases, absolutely, yes, but in a way, I just, I wanted to raise that importance of really localised culture getting lost because a big organisation might not understand the little nuances.

Voice 15: It's like the individual entrepreneur lost to the high street chain, we don't want to lose to the high street.

Voice 17: Yes, and we haven't got much cultural identity as it is. It would be heartbreaking to lose the ones that we've got.

Unknown: Would they be lost, or would they just go it alone?

Voice 17: Well, they would go it alone, but then there's a lot of danger in that as well, isn't there, yes.

Unknown: The go-it-alone issue is so fascinating - sorry, didn't put my hand up - in relation to the National Plan for Music Education, just touched on that whole section really. There's just so many localised organisations, people who have created them because they're passionate. People who are giving their time. You can't insist that everybody give a single strategy because that's not why they're there, they're there to share their really deeply personal thing.

Melissa Wong: I'm just going to take control of the conversation and remind everyone to please raise their hands because I'm aware that it could be very easy to get

side-tracked into, there's so much to talk about, but I'm just trying to get as much of a spread as possible. [redacted], just one last response, and then [redacted].

Voice 17: That one last response also is that it's that progression. I know we're jumping over to different aspects, but then that local area can provide employment and opportunities for that child as well. We don't want them all to move to London. We want to keep some there. It's the employability and opportunities too.

[Redacted]: Two things. One is partnerships take a lot of time. They take a lot of time and management, and it has to be equitable, a 50/50 approach. That takes some serious time and care intention. Then picking up from [redacted] perspective about transition, there's two aspects to this. There's transition from when you announce the details of what the funding bid needs to be and what the time frame is to get that bid in, so how much time is there then, whoever is then successful to then transition to actually do it? Those things all revolve around partnerships and that takes time.

Melissa Wong: Yes, really important point, thank you.

Voice 9: Yes, I think this localised context point, I think is very important. I do think it can be addressed in the structural set-up in the larger group and it's just, I'd say that's where you need to look, ensuring each local area has strong representation at the top table if you like. The other point I'd say is when you've got slightly more, bigger numbers, you've got much more opportunity for excellence. I'm a big one for racing towards excellence with partners who are doing something brilliant, rather than going from an average. I think there's something strong about slightly larger numbers.

Melissa Wong: Some of that opportunity around raising aspirations, striving for excellence.

Voice 9: Yes.

Melissa Wong: Let's move on to talking about schools. Some of the positives that people have picked out, schools, stronger standpoint for sharing, consolidate good-quality curriculum. I love this person's handwriting, thank you.

Unknown: Obviously a teacher!

Melissa Wong: Include collaboration with wider network of schools. Size that's still manageable for schools to relate to HLO, just about. Schools could be done effectively if there was a local framework. There's also a lot of risk that people have picked up. Risk is that hubs could be excellent or not good. Who monitors their qualities? Is impact gathered from partners? Significant distance in understanding local culture. Lack of local knowledge and need. Even neighbouring local authorities can have different cultures, needs, partners, community organisations, which risk being lost with future lead organisations. What are we picking out from these comments on the board?

Voice 10: It's about local knowledge, isn't it. It's about how you attain local knowledge and local expertise - it's [redacted] by the way - while having a strategic organisation at the top.

Melissa Wong: Some risks around what could be lost in terms of local knowledge in a larger size hub.

Voice 7: Something I've got on the general, which is that the whole framework of - it's [redacted], sorry - the whole

framework of local authorities with schools has been broken down anyway over the last 10, 15 years with academy trusts, and the whole way that education has changed. That framework does not exist in the same way that it did previously.

Melissa Wong: Thank you, really useful context to keep in mind.

Voice 18: I think the importance of local knowledge is crucial, and that it has to underpin the governance of any slightly larger hub lead organisation. If I could use an example with, let's say South West and London come together as a group of hubs, with one of those - forgive me [redacted], but I'm just using it as an existing alliance - that one of those organisations would be the hub lead organisation, but the other music services, who could be hub partners, have that local knowledge. The rules of governance or the good governance that that thread is passed through and managed carefully, so that the local knowledge is not lost. I think it goes back to, all the time, local partnerships are constantly emphasised. It's got to do with governance.

Melissa Wong: I think it's a really good point, [redacted] because what I'm hearing from you is, yes, there's a risk that local knowledge can be lost, but it really depends on the structure of the hub and what provisions are made for that local knowledge to rise to the strategic level. If you could capture that on a sticky note for me and put that up on the board...

Voice 5: It's really interesting, as we were talking about schools, I'm thinking really of schools as partners, and I'm thinking this local knowledge is really, really key, but actually, it's not just local knowledge and understanding, it's, there's something about trust. Actually, in a climate where schools are really under pressure with budgets, whatever, it's about who do they trust to work with? I think there's something around the local

partnerships that have been built up, where people have personal - we were just, [redacted] and I, before we came to the meeting, met up briefly. We were talking about going into, how much we go into schools. We both go into schools because that's really important about the building these, maintaining these relationships, so that schools can trust in what we do. Then we can connect with the partners that they will trust because we trust them because we've built up those relationships.

I think, it's only just really occurring to me, I'm like, who was saying they're thinking out loud, is it you, [redacted]? That's me as well. I'm thinking through it as I just waffle. It did occur to me that for schools, they like a partner, a particular type of partner, but they need to believe in us as a hub or a hub lead organisation, to be able to make the right judgements for them when they're so under pressure, in whatever size.

Melissa Wong: Yes, I think that really ties in with what [redacted] was saying earlier as well about the partnership development, the time it takes and the relationships.

Voice 5: Absolutely, it takes time.

Melissa Wong: Let's move on to inclusion. Just pick up on a few of the comments here. On the opportunities side, wider, more diverse opportunities of quality. Interesting. I'd be interested to hear a little bit more about why. Inclusion could drive best practice across provision and increase opportunities. Set up regional standards. Interesting. On the yellows, pool expertise across the region. Too thinly stretched. Some of the risks that people have picked out, lack of local engagement, where cold areas risk falling through the gaps in provision even more. Across London, having five to six HLOs will set up barriers for low-income families. Interesting. I'd be interested to hear a bit more

about the rationale for that as well. Focus of hub is on flagship cultural centres. Much more likely to create postcode lottery scenario. Just a flavour of what people have written here. What things are we picking up on? Anyone who wants to clarify the comments that I've read out, please do jump in as well. I'll start with [redacted]

Voice 9: It just seems to me I'm hearing the localised again, that's the key theme coming across in the risk aspect.

Melissa Wong: Yes, definitely a key word that's popped out a lot.

Voice 5: Yes, I was going to say same sort of thing, the more we move away from current structure, the more we're anxious about losing that local offer and that local knowledge, and undoing some of the work that's been built from the ground up. The real variety of work that hubs are currently doing, that is sometimes in quite infant states, of real nurturing these little shoots of possible work that you could do locally. Where does that fit? As soon as you start going, great, hubs are strategic organisations, overlooking all these whatever, just making sure that we're not losing that. The importance of that responsive offer, and that understanding of need and building relationships that meet those needs in a really holistic, real way. Rather than just we're going to do this project and it's going to meet these needs. Strategically, that all looks lovely, but it's like, well, if you don't know those, you haven't had a conversation with that child who's coming to that, or not coming to it - and that's why you need a conversation. I think that's where there's anxiety around losing...

M: Yes, thanks for picking up on that.

Voice 17: I've got quite a specific comment about inclusion and the positive side of having larger, a larger bank of opportunities.

That is that, in some cases, if you were going to think about a disabled, autistic person, who is an absolute fab instrumentalist, but could not cope in a typical orchestral set-up, but maybe there would be an opportunity for an open orchestra, where certain things are really taken into account and were able to be adapted, and celebrated. It's just a bigger bank of expertise and knowledge that could be shared. I think the best thing for inclusion is the sharing and magpie-ing [sic] of ideas. I think having a larger area would have a positive impact on that. Can you tell I come from a really small, local hub, where we're all very small?! Yes, I think that there is, that's a positive.

Melissa Wong: I just want to pick up on that because there are two very contrasting comments here. There's one comment that says that this scenario will be for wider, more diverse opportunities of quality, and this other one that says that having five or six HLOs will set up barriers for low-income families. Those are very opposing comments. Just wondering if either of the people who wrote those comments want to identify themselves and tell us a little bit more about the rationale.

Voice 11: Yes, it's [redacted], so mine was the one about low-income families. It goes back to an earlier point, which is that London is a series of villages. If we're only talking about London, people don't leave their villages. You go to your local provision, your local school, your local shop, etc. Having to travel, my God, across the river, would be unheard of - I'm talking about my personal experience, I never go to North London. I'm struggling a bit with how you would - it goes back to the local partnership doesn't it - how you would solve those problems. Particularly, it's about cost. If you're going to, I don't know, maybe it's [redacted] point about if you set up something in one borough, you automatically don't have it in other boroughs. If you then have a partnership of six or seven local authorities or charities, or whoever the hubs are, and you have

a hub lead organisation that covers all of those areas, and you set up a steel band, and your steel band is only in [redacted], that automatically stops them being somewhere else, and I now don't go because I can't afford to get there.

Melissa Wong: Okay, thank you, that's super-helpful. Basically, there's an access issue around access to transportation, access to finance to go, travel...

Voice 11: Yes, and opportunity, your parents can't get you there because they're at work. There are many, many barriers.

Melissa Wong: Can I ask you to just add a little clarification? If you could pass that along please, that would be... Okay, so [redacted] and then [redacted] and then I'm going to move us on.

Voice 11: Can I just quickly - I agree completely with what you're saying, but are we making assumptions that we may or may not be at licence to make, about the levels of provision? Are we assuming that it will mean less? We're assuming things about what the lead organisation might be, which could be completely wrong because they haven't been designed yet. It's for us to design them. I wonder because I think we do have a sense of threat, but we're, can't help but be affected by our current perceptions of what a hub is, and this is not that. I wonder whether we're just assuming levels of provision will go down, and that may or may not be the case because it's in our gift to...

Melissa Wong: Yes, because we don't know yet what these new hubs are going to look like, we don't know yet how the strategy is going to develop, what the governance structures will look like, how the delivery will be parcelled out and facilitated. Those are all things to be decided.

Voice 11: Just to add to that, I think it is quite difficult to not make assumptions when we don't have any guidance at all about potential governance structures, and that's a deliberate policy. I get it, I get why it's saying that, yes, so there's a lot of variables. We're probably making assumptions.

Melissa Wong: Yes, absolutely, a lot of it is still up in the air. [redacted]

Voice 15: Hi, I just had a thought actually, from that whole discussion, which is just about culture and ethos. I think when you talk about these hubs, they're responsible for strategy partnership mechanisms, they're actually responsible for establishing a culture and ethos that respects local, but also requires everybody to participate in lifting up to a certain standard. It's a culture of support and enablement when it comes to something like a young person travelling across the river, but that has to be built into that culture, so that it is, you're not just running a strategy in which people are panicking, holding on very tightly. I'm being a bit waffly, but I'm absolutely sure that whoever is, whoever has this strategic direction must set culture and ethos because nothing will happen without that sense of what we're all trying to do together. That, and building trust, and being able to share specific, being able to respond means you've got more resources.

I think the other, just one final point, it's just about this bigger set-up, is that young people really need role models. They talk about it all the time. We talk about it all the time, about diversity and inclusion. We talk about it in terms of progression. We talk about it in terms of genre and experimenting and developing new practice. Young people need to meet other young people and meet role models, and so travelling across the borough is actually a really important part of that. There's a massive opportunity to increase the impact that young people have on

each other if they actually meet other young people that they haven't met before.

Melissa Wong: A really interesting point. Have you captured that in a sticky note?

Voice 15: No, not yet.

Melissa Wong: Brilliant, thank you.

Maria Turley: I just shifted the slides back because I just thought, as we were listening, everyone was listening to you all talk, it just felt useful to refer us back to the guiding principles and to that last guiding principle, from the DfE, which is around this change not necessarily meaning less organisations delivering. It is that connection back to exactly what [redacted] was saying, which is around who is actually delivering? What does the local, it look like? It's not necessarily a dip in provision.

Melissa Wong: Thank you, Maria. I'm going to move us on to progression and musical development. I also just want to observe, I'm hearing from some people who have spoken up quite a few times now, and I'm absolutely chuffed that you feel so comfortable sharing. I want to challenge those who haven't spoken up yet to make your voices heard. I want to challenge those who have spoken up a lot to create space for others to make their voices heard.

Unknown: It's really embarrassing to have to ask this, but I can't hear a lot of what you're saying, especially when you're talking while facing the other way. That would really help - thank you.

Melissa Wong: Great, thank you so much for letting me know. I'll make sure to project and to be facing towards the

room when I speak. All right. Just to pick up on some of the opportunities for progression and musical development. The pros are it's easier to control strategy and approach centrally with fewer organisations. Musical opportunity and progression pathways in greater range or quality. Potential to support a broader range of pathways, needs, and interests. Open pathways to engagement or opportunities on a more regional basis. Some of the risks that people have picked out, lack of local knowledge and need. Something that people have said a few times now, and again, we will go back to the comments earlier around ways that local knowledge and need provides to the strategic level. There's also risk, talent might struggle to be recognised. That's interesting. Right. Any reflections? Yes.

Voice 6: Thinking about the last one, about talent, I'm thinking in multi-academy trusts, when you start working at scale, you can amplify talent because you can start to share expertise across schools. You might take someone who's a deputy head in one school, great, you might be a brilliant leader in another school, which are recognised. There's a real strength for teachers to amplify talent at scale. Also, I think, all the instrumental staff don't have a great deal of progression within a Music Hub. I guess at a larger Music Hub, you're going to create more layers within your staffing structure, so people might be able to take on ways of developing that they can't have in smaller structures. You might have somebody who's a head of strings at a bigger scale or whatever, so it could be quite exciting to have much tighter, strategic HLOs.

Melissa Wong: The professional opportunities that arise within larger structures.

Voice 6: And growth, yes.

Melissa Wong: Can you capture that within a sticky?

Voice 6: Sure.

M: Thank you. [redacted].

Voice 7: Sorry, I have spoken a few times. Just to quickly mention, [redacted] here, [redacted] actually has done some really interesting strategic work across London, addressing exactly some of those things. Do tap into her knowledge about that.

Melissa Wong: Thank you!

Unknown: Go [redacted]

Melissa Wong: Anything else that people have picked up on? Okay. Let's move to sustainability then. A couple of comments. If based on local partnerships existing, this would provide opportunity for more joined-up working. Workforce development opportunities, shared workforce in specific areas. Depending on top slice, this could be efficient in terms of back-office functions, but depends on level for central reporting. Better strategic approaches. Whatever the numbers are, quality of hub needs to be monitored, scrutinised, and feedback collected to ensure quality. I'd like to feel sure this is put in place. Could improve and could be similar. Okay. Commercial or swooping in and offering off-the-shelf delivery model to a region.

Then finally, some of the risks. Lead hub just becomes commissioning body? Not necessarily good. Does not engage with quality, etc. Local authorities don't want to put resource into provision outside their area. Another risk. Greater top-slicing, less money for delivery. Larger geographic areas, local knowledge lost. Thank you. Right. What are our reflections on this?

Voice 6: I wonder if you'd have more money for, if you reduce your back-office functions, you're going to have more money for delivery. I guess some of the local delivery partners will not have to worry about HR functions, they can just focus on the music because that has been pushed to your more strategic HLO.

Melissa Wong: Yes, so that's a potential opportunity. Have you already captured that here?

Voice 6: No.

Melissa Wong: Great, thank you. [redacted]

Voice 2: Yes, I've actually got to just disagree with that because if local delivery partners do have HR issues and if, for me, if in education the, once you get to a two-form entry primary school, you get an economy of scale, but when it's bigger, it doesn't really make a lot of difference. Bi-form-entry primary schools often find it really hard to [unclear words 2:23:38.7] so I'm not sure that there would be any back-office gains to be made if you actually amalgamated a number of local organisations...

Melissa Wong: Some differing views here. It sounds like it might also be partly dependent on your specific organisational context as well and the way things work there. Just something to be mindful of. Any other reflections on sustainability? Yes.

Unknown: I think just on the idea of whether the hub or the organisation delivers or just focuses on strategy is interesting. I had a conversation, I think it's Wiltshire, correct me if I'm wrong, but I think Wiltshire are 100 per cent commissioning. That really helped me open up my thinking about, well, what might the hub lead organisation be? Then whenever I started to visualise it, I always seemed to think that there's these entities underneath

that are looking after geographical regions to make sure that nothing gets lost. I guess that also might not be the case. It's just thinking about if you are, when you start to grow, and you've got the strategic function, where are, do you need some slightly bigger substructures, to make sure there is oversight, and you're not just working so many small parts that things get lost? Just a reflection.

Melissa Wong: I think that reflection will be interesting to pick up on as we move into our next scenario as well. Just to point out that we've been capturing an incredible number of overall thoughts and reflections, which I won't go through in detail. Maria has been writing everything that you've thrown out there down, and we'll be reading all of that in detail as we work through all of your input in today's session. Is it okay if I move us on to the last scenario? Great.

Scenario one is we're looking at bridge organisations. Again, the specifics of this don't really matter so much. Essentially what we're looking at is an England-wide regional network. Within bridge organisations, there are ten bridge organisations because one of the regions of the country has them split into two. I think, broadly speaking, we're all familiar with the nine official regions of England. That might be another way of looking at it, especially since that's got the five for London within the bridge scenario as well. This is what we're calling the regional option, where we have nine, ten, around that number of Music Hub lead organisations. Again, it doesn't necessarily mean that there will be a smaller number of organisations working within the hubs that deliver activity on the ground. It's just about how many leads there will be, and how large the geographical patch that they cover and take strategic oversight of will be.

Are there any questions about this scenario? Okay, great. If there are no questions, then again, I'll just give you eight minutes for that individual reflection time, to put your thoughts on Post-its and just put a dot up to tell us how you would rank the scenario on a scale of one to five.

[Respondents complete exercise 2:27:11.4 - 2:34:40.9]

Melissa Wong: We're just running a little bit behind, so I'm just going to keep moving us ahead. I want to check before we start this discussion, are we okay if we go ten minutes over? Is there anyone who needs to run off to catch a train? Okay, great, thank you so much, that will just give us a little bit more breathing room to get through this.

Unknown: A train? If there is one!

Melissa Wong: Again, let's start off with partnerships. I'll just pick out a sample of comments to give you a flavour of what's on the board. We have greater opportunity for sector and thought leadership. High level of connection across hubs. Amplifies all the opportunities and risks of scenario two - so more good and more bad. Overly reliant on set models of practice. Interesting. Be interested to hear a bit more about this one. Is this about ten HLOs or a different model of strategic framework? Right, so what are the implications in terms of the strategic framework that hubs might use for working together? London has 3000 schools is a risk. How would one single hub effectively engage so many schools? Too far removed from delivery/impact. Unwieldy. In this situation, the new HLO would have the role, scenario to Arts Council, with regard to the delivery organisation, with less money to the...

Unknown: ...front line.

Melissa Wong: My reading skills could use some work.

Unknown: No, it's my writing skills.

Melissa Wong: Thank you. Right, so what's our...?

Unknown: I'll type it in the survey.

Melissa Wong: This is the benefit of the survey, I don't have to read everyone's handwriting. Right, so what are your reflections on what I've read out loud?

Voice 10: I think the larger you get in terms of hub lead organisations, the more you run the risk of having a purely strategic organisation, who does nothing but strategy, and then the delivery is so far down the supply chain that nothing is joined up.

Melissa Wong: It just creates too much of a divide.

Voice 10: Yes, or that they just end up doing strategy, and you can do strategy till the cows come home, but how is the delivery happening in the locality?

Melissa Wong: A really interesting point.

Unknown: I don't know if I'm going to be able to articulate this very well, but if there's nothing that holds schools accountable to joining in, and there's nothing that holds NPO and arts organisations accountable to holding [sic] in, there's nothing holding anybody accountable to joining in, then you've got this massive strategic organisation trying to get everyone to join in, the strategic organisation is held accountable to the Arts Council, but they can't hold anybody to account. It sounds like a nightmare of actually how you just get everybody to join in. You can't form all those relationships at a personal level, so you

can't actually get your hands round it. I think you would really take a huge risk in losing so much leadership knowledge in reducing down to ten leaders. How could that possibly be diverse? It won't be. You've got ten leaders, and they've got to represent brilliance in music education, relevant experience, and be a diverse group of people?

Melissa Wong: A brilliant summary, thank you. Goes back to some of the comments from [redacted] and [redacted] earlier, again, around how long it takes to build partnerships and how it's very reliant on relationships within individual organisations. Shall we move on to looking at schools and how hubs would contract with schools? Just to give you a flavour, on the positive side, schools, more power to have a bigger impact. Potential to grow some solid and vibrant networks. Yellow, amplifies all the opportunities and risks of scenario...

Unknown: Sorry, I don't mean to keep repeating that but...

Melissa Wong: Okay, so this is going to be a repeated comment, good to know. Stronger strategic delivery. Risks. No difference, probably less effective. Schools will not receive a cohesive offer. Again, the reference to 3000 schools. Schools unable to get resources. Again, 3000 schools. I didn't know that before today, that is really useful to know.

Unknown: There was a discussion...

Melissa Wong: Okay, got it. Again, 3000 schools, okay. Right.

Unknown: Are we all clear that there are 3000 schools?

Unknown: Well, we just took your word for it.

Unknown: It's true.

Unknown: I think it's 3400.

Unknown: Three-thousand-four-hundred. Underestimated...

Melissa Wong: A lot of the comments seem to align with what people were saying in regards to this scenario under the partnership side of things as well. Schools are also partners in Music Hubs, aren't they. Anything else that you picked up on from these comments, or anything else to add to them? Okay. Moving on to inclusion, not a lot of to say here, interestingly. I'll read all of them. Regional strategies for disabled children and young people and other marginalised groups can be powerful. This is a positive note. Improve strategic focus on - vocations?

Unknown: Weakness.

Melissa Wong: Weakness. Improve strategic focus on weakness areas, e.g. disability/SEND. It sounds like we're seeing some opportunities for better inclusion. Amplifies all the - right, yes, I've read it. Cannot be a no. This is very interesting. Two very strong positive responses, and two very strong negative responses. Why do we think that there is such a divide in terms of the scenario and inclusion?

Voice 10: Can I speak?

Melissa Wong: Sorry, [redacted]

Voice 10: No, don't worry, I've said quite a lot about this. I think this gives you the absolute difference between strategy and the delivery. I think you can have an absolutely fantastic inclusion strategy if you've got a massive London-wide music education

hub, but whether or not that that will actually be inclusive on the ground is - it's probably impossible, I think.

Melissa Wong: Do you think that's why we're seeing some of these really strong opportunities around how this could lead to greater strategic development around how to reach disabled children and people, marginalised young people, but it won't necessarily translate in practice?

Voice 10: Yes.

Melissa Wong: Would others agree with that?

Unknown: I think, in community organisations, if you put on a show, a music show, the hub might be interested in visiting it. If you're a small organisation, and you're maybe doing really effective work, but you haven't got that kind of a loud voice, then there is a risk that your work is being, is giving a tick-box to the hub. Actually, in reality, there's no contact or there's a risk of no contact, or a risk of even - a lot of small music organisations operate outside of the working day. Maybe evening, when children and adults have finished school and finished the working day. It's very hard, it could be very hard to engage with the strategy.

Melissa Wong: Yes, it sounds like what I'm hearing is something very similar to what [redacted] was saying earlier around the risk for smaller community organisations and how they might get lost within a larger hub.

Maria Turley: Is there something as well, just so I've written this down properly, there's something about being clear about how, in this larger scenario, that smaller organisations can practically benefit, so when they are part of the partnership, but what is it that they are getting by being part of that partnership? Am I understanding that?

Unknown: I think it could be a benefit if that was to happen, indeed, but it would be down to monitoring that it's happening. If the hub is monitoring it, then you could be in a catch-22. How would it be monitored? Who would be checking? A hub can look as if it's doing great work if it's connected to really effective schools, with really effective, inspired music teaching, if it's a music scenario, but that can be happening in lots of organisations, and they may be partnering to, they may be doing work with, say, with more diversity. That might be enabling the hub to look as if it's doing the work. Actually, the practical way of, those real, effective channels for getting an exchange and support and information and, can just be broken so easily.

Melissa Wong: Yes, really interesting point, thanks for that. I think it also links back to, there was some Post-it here about accountability for how HLOs will develop those partnerships within, with their local partners. I see some tie-in there. I'm going to move us on to...

Voice 12: Can I just say, just something?

Melissa Wong: Sorry.

Voice 12: Well, I just wanted to come back slightly to, it's the point of inclusion, but slightly to schools and there was a previous point about the realities of schools being very divided, by the nature of multi-academy trusts, single-academy trusts, some in local boroughs. Knowing that, I was just reflecting that hubs do, they serve so much the purpose of being able to deliver in very different contexts. It's struggling to see it from the view of having those distant strategic hubs that aren't actually able to deliver. I work in [redacted], but [redacted] has a proliferation of different circumstances for different schools, like all boroughs. It was difficult enough during COVID to have a single strategy. In fact, it wasn't possible.

Knowing that that's the framework, and the Schools Bill has been dropped in terms of pushing some of that forward at this current stage, but it does seem breaking some of that specificity. Knowing that that's what the national structure is, knowing this is a national vision for power and changing lives, I don't understand how we would want to move too far away from that very special relationship with hubs and schools working together, knowing that there can't be that, there isn't that national strategy for schools to access, so how could there be for the way the hubs work?

Melissa Wong: I think that's really useful context for us to be thinking about in terms of what the situation looks like for schools, and what that might mean in terms of how it maps on to the hub structure. Thank you for sharing that. Let's talk about progression and musical development. To pick out a few comments, provide a much bigger, diverse, progressive journeys. Risk. Difficult to achieve a diverse leadership. Yellow, amplify... For children and young people, does it matter that there's a lead organisation? Do they just relate to their local band/music centre/youth club? Interesting question. Opportunity for past poor London group/events. Anybody recall writing this one? What does it say? Peer? Pan? Pan-London group/event. Opportunity for pan-London group/events and lack of local knowledge and need. Any reflections on what we've just heard about progression and musical development? Yes.

Unknown: Just put those pan-London groups could be achieved by a strategy for that, it's not necessarily to reduce down to London being one hub. Some of the things that can be rationalised, can be rationalised by a group of us deciding to come, well, contracting together.

Melissa Wong: Great, yes, so some of these things could happen independently of whatever the hub structure looks

like going forward. Interesting point. Any other thoughts on musical progression and development? All right. Just moving to the final strategic function then, which is sustainability. Again, for a flavour of the comments, easier to push same model approach. Could have an impact on research and data collection. Love research and data collection. Opportunity for clear responsibility and accountability. Not sustainable unless sub-hubs are set up. Interesting. The central admin to manage an HLO of this size would be enormous. Sounds like that's an unknown, whether that's a pro or a con.

Not sure there would be significant gains over the 40-hub model. Interesting. Would lead organisation, have to find even more funding in order to cover all the partnership organisations rather than a smaller number in other scenarios? Interesting point about what fundraising would look like in this structure. How to fairly distribute funding? Really interesting question as well. Negative impact! Smaller organisations may find themselves in more competition for contracts, commissioning, and funding. Interesting. Any reflections on what's been said about sustainability?

Unknown: Doesn't sound very sustainable.

Melissa Wong: Sounds like there are a lot of risks in terms of fundraising, in terms of allocation of funding, in terms of how delivery, contracts or commissions would be allocated.

Voice 15: Slightly undermines that idea in the plan about some hubs being centres of excellence. You've only got ten hubs - you see what I mean? You would lose that learning opportunity and practice and approach...

Melissa Wong: Interesting point, yes.

Voice 5: Just sitting here, looking, maybe it's the time of day, I'm just looking at the colour, and I'm thinking, okay, so this one has a lot of the pink and very few of the green. Whereas we started with, first, and I'm just thinking back to when we spoke earlier, [redacted] you mentioned about the transition. This idea about how, it's not even just about what we do and, it's about how we get there and how we do it. It feels to me that this one is the most far away from what we're currently doing. Therefore, there's a lot more anxiety around it. A more sustainable, I guess, approach, is to go a bit more organically and a bit more step-by-step, to get to the different models that we might want to see.

The other thing I was thinking was a lot of the issues are the same issues with all of them. They're the same issues we've got as hub leads at the moment in terms of, okay, there's 3400 schools in London. I've got 88 schools, I'm not in all, connecting all of them is still a battle and still something that I'm working on. Any of those areas, you could pick the challenges that we're already experiencing, or we're working to open a hub are still there. Actually, it's more about what's the change and that transition, and how, if we're going somewhere, what else is going to help us get there and how does that look? That was a bit waffly, wasn't it, sorry!

Melissa Wong: That was brilliantly said. Everything that you said around the challenges of transition and mobilisation, I think, would be great to capture on a sticky note here. I think that's a really good place to draw a line under this. The observation that you had as well, that there's a lot of pink on this, for this scenario, in comparison to other colours, that's telling as well, what the overall feel in the room is. I'm going to move us on to just some final reflections. We've talked about three scenarios

in detail. We've worked through the implications of the scenarios in terms of the five strategic functions, through transition, mobilisation, and ongoing impact. What I want you to do now is just to reflect on two final questions.

The first question is, overall, given these three scenarios, what is your most preferred scenario and why? We've got a flipchart page there - thank you Maria - so if you could just write one sticky note, where you try to succinctly capture your overall rationale for your first scenario, stick it under scenario one, scenario two, or scenario three.

Unknown: Does it matter what colour?!

Melissa Wong: It doesn't matter what colour, but one sticky note... Then the other thing I want you to be thinking about, as part of your final reflection, is just, it's been said already that this is a framework that we've chosen for this conversation, to help structure and guide our conversation today, but there are lots of questions that we haven't had the opportunity to ask and we haven't had the time to talk about. Just let us know, is there anything else that DfE should be taking into consideration in making its decision about the strategy for Music Hubs? You can put that up on the anything else page beside Maria. I'll just give you five minutes to do that thinking and put up your sticky notes.

Voice 3: It's [redacted] here, hello. I find the first question really hard to answer. I think part of the reason is that I'm not in the education sector, but I think from today's session, all we've been given are the abstract numbers of 87, 40, and 10. Actually, everything everyone has said is perfectly valid, from their own experiences. It's really hard to know, without any rough thinking as to how the structures may be, to actually to find what the pros and cons can be. I think people are not pro to change, and that's a perfectly valid reason. I think, unless, at

least from my point of view, of how the structure, the organisation is going to be different, what the pros and cons can be is quite hard to imagine, what the differences are. All the evidence we've been given is the 87, 40, and 10. Perhaps the 10 could be, maybe you'll still have 113 Music Hubs, but maybe answering to 10 super-hubs or... We don't know what that picture looks like, so it's really hard to make an informed decision. That's my point.

Melissa Wong: Yes, completely appreciate that it is still a bit of an abstract question because we aren't giving you the exact geography of what the overall division might look like within the three scenarios. I think, if I were you, what I would be thinking about is given the context of my role within my organisation, and what our relationship with our Music Hub is, what would be the most effective structure, in terms of the way that we work with the hub, to support delivery of their strategy?

Voice 3: Can I please ask one question then? There must be a reason why the Arts Council wants to change the existing structure, cutting down the 113 to 87, 40, or 10. What are the reasons, why are we changing this? I think it's hard to know, to select 87, 40, or 10, unless I know what the reasons are. What are the reasons for changing?

Hannah Fouracre: The Department for Education has published, or we've just published, on our website, a rationale from the DfE for why they think having fewer hubs will be better. That includes things like it would lead to more strategic leadership and governance, and increased profile of music education and other place-based partnerships. Greater consistency of provision, and ability to scale-up good practice. Improved provision, both in terms of opportunities, teachers, instruments, etc. Greater access to resources. Better progression routes for the

workforce, which came up earlier, through Steve, and stronger partnerships with schools and multi-academy trusts. They're some of the elements that the Department believes will be improved by moving towards fewer, more strategic hubs.

Now, what that rationale doesn't go into is how those things will be affected by the different numbers that we've been thinking about today, which is kind of the purpose of the exercise, is to understand how would those be affected by having different numbers of hubs?

Voice 3: Okay, right. I think, yes, I think perhaps it would help me to understand what's currently not working very well with the number of 113, to compare with the other numbers. It's just very, very abstract, from my personal point of view, but thank you, thanks Hannah.

Unknown: [redacted] you look lost.

Voice 18: No, I'm done, I'm just skiving.

[Respondents complete task 2:59:16.7 - 2:59:32.4]

Maria Turley: As you're putting your Post-it notes, if you haven't put a dot against each of these scenarios, it would be really great if you could. All three of them have got missing people. If you know you haven't added your dot, please come and do it now.

Melissa Wong: Right, let's get all those sticky notes up. Lots of other things to think about.

Unknown: Sorry, can I grab another dot?

Unknown: Of course you can, you can have all the dots you want.

Unknown: I'm only allowed one.

Unknown: That's a shame.

Unknown: It is a shame.

Voice 18: I was thinking, it's a good one for left-handers...

Maria Turley: That's because all the best people are left-handers, [redacted], clearly.

Melissa Wong: I agree.

Maria Turley: Are you a left-hander as well? [redacted] was just saying, yes, there's an above-average number of us.

[Respondents complete task 3:00:22.5 - 3:01:12.7]

Melissa Wong: Can everyone please put their Post-it notes under most preferred scenario and anything else? Then we'll start just recapping what everyone said. Anyone else still need to put up their sticky notes? All right, so let's look at the scores literally on the door. Bridge organisations was only preferred by one person in this room. I'm not going to make them out themselves, so I'll read it out loud. They say - what's their rationale? Potentially, this could be the most exciting way forward, with potential for the biggest impact. Joined-up, strategic thinking, pooling resources and knowledge, less project-based working, and repetition of work that has already been done elsewhere in terms of innovation. Avoid reinventing the wheel. It needs to be done in the right way. Clear and democratic partnership-working, and enough

time to develop, bed in, and change when things need to change. Time is the key.

Unknown: Must be very small writing.

Melissa Wong: Very small handwriting, very detailed rationale. Thank you for whoever shared that. Scenario two seems to be the most popular. I won't read all of them out loud, but just a flavour. Scenarios two and three could both work well if well implemented. Perhaps less distance to travel with scenario three. More radical change with two? Strong opportunities for partnerships. Shared back-office function. Improved progression pathways. This is the option with most scope for driving improvements through peer support. However, the risks do need to be acknowledged, understood, and mitigated. Balance the scale with local and sub-regional. A flavour of what people said about scenario two.

Then finally, there were a few people who preferred scenario three, the locally-nuanced version. A few of their comments. We need minimal change in order to keep local focus. Given the time frame, this is the least risk-heavy. Local knowledge retained, local partnerships easier to manage/develop. More visible support for young people and schools. Scenario three would still allow for local knowledge, etc., and preserve most of the relationships between partner organisations and schools which have already been established. Is there anything to stop a lead organisation still working together on progression routes, etc.? Great, thank you everyone so much for taking the time to share your preferences and your rationale for those preferences. This is incredibly useful just to get a sense of how you're feeling about things right now.

I'm going to move us over to this anything else board. There are a lot of other things that we haven't had the time to consider here today. I'm not going to read them all out loud. I'm sure many of these sticky notes will capture things that have already been raised, and I'm sure that there's lots more that we haven't even touched on. Just rest assured that I will be reading all of these individually, and we'll be feeding them back to the Arts Council and the DfE. With all of that said, I'm just going to take a few moments to talk you through what's next for this consultation process. Like I said, we're running focus groups in person across the country for the rest of this week. Then we're also going to be running a digital focus group on next Tuesday 17th. I believe, overall, we'll have the opportunity to talk, either in person or virtually, to around 175 people across the country. This is quite a large exercise that we're doing.

There's also the survey, which closes midday on next Sunday 15th. You don't have to do that survey because you have already fed into this process via the focus group, but if you do want to, and if you do feel that there's anything else we haven't had the chance to capture here today, then that link is open to you, so do take advantage of it. Please also, each organisation is only able to submit one response each, but do encourage other organisations that you work with, other hub partners, to be feeding back as well. The Arts Council wants to hear from as wide a range of stakeholders as possible. Once all of the focus groups are done and once the survey closes, Dougie and I will be looking through, reading through all your responses, digesting them, ruminating on them, and analysing and reporting on them to the Arts Council. I'll hand it over to Hannah to talk about what's next from there.

Hannah Fouracre: Thank you. After the focus groups, we'll be publishing how many of each type of organisation has taken part in a focus group, alongside the anonymised transcripts for each of the sessions, so that everybody can see and reflect on the conversations that we've had. All of the ideas and feedback that we've collated through the conversation and consultation phase will be analysed by our independent facilitators, and that research is going to assist the decision-making process for the new geographies for Music Hubs. As I said earlier, in spring 2023 we're sharing these new geographies, and how your feedback has helped to shape them. The guidance for applicants will be published in the spring, ahead of the portal opening in the summer. They're the next key steps of the process.

Which brings us to the end, and I would just like to thank you all so much for your really well-considered contributions to today's session. We've been in this very hot room for a very long time. What we've been trying to talk about and think about today is difficult. It's difficult for a lot of reasons. It's been ten years since we last had an open application process with the music programme, which brings its own challenges for all of us to deal with. Trying to turn a vision and a strategy into a reality and a policy that can deliver it is really difficult. It affects us all in many different ways. Thank you very much for all of your contributions. We will be thinking about them really carefully. I can assure you, the Arts Council doesn't have a golden envelope with the number of hubs we want and the model that we want people to use. This is, we really are listening to what you think to make that decision. Yes, thank you very much for coming today.

Melissa Wong: Now just to say thank you from me as well, thank you for being so engaged with this process. It's been

lovely to see everyone, to hear all your responses, how each of these different scenarios might affect the children and young people in your local area. It's just incredibly useful to be gathering such rich detail and knowledge from everyone in this room, so thank you.

Maria Turley: Can I just say something really practical? Which is if any of you have got rogue Post-it notes on your tables that you still want to post, they're kind of layered, so you should be able to find a space underneath. Please do add them.

[End of Transcript]

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