

Music Hubs Investment Programme Digital Focus Group

17th January 2023

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:

Organisation type:

- Voice 1: I work for a further education setting or higher education institution
- Voice 2: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation

- Voice 3: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 4: I work for a further education setting or higher education institution
- Voice 5: I work for a youth or community organisation
- Voice 6: I work for a Local Authority
- Voice 7: I work for a school, multi-academy trust or other education provider
- Voice 8: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 9: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 10: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 11: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 12: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 13: I work for a school, multi-academy trust or other education provider
- Voice 14: I work for a Local Authority
- Voice 15: I work for a youth or community organisation
- Voice 16: I work for a Local Authority
- Voice 17: I work for a Local Authority
- Voice 18: I work for a school, multi-academy trust or other education provider
- Voice 19: I work for a Local Authority
- Voice 20: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 21: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 22: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 23: I work for a Local Authority
- Voice 24: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 25: I work for a Local Authority
- Voice 26: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 27: I work for a Combined Authority

- Voice 28: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 29: I work for a youth or community organisation
- Voice 30: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 31: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 32: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 33: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 34: I work for a national charity [redacted]
- Voice 35: Not for Profit education services provider
- Voice 36: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 37: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 38: I work for a Local Authority
- Voice 39: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 40: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 41: I work for a school, multi-academy trust or other education provider
- Voice 42: I work for a further education setting or higher education institution
- Voice 43: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 44: Company providing music education products & services
- Voice 45: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 46: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 47: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 48: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 49: I work for a Local Authority
- Voice 50: I work for a Local Authority
- Voice 51: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation

- Voice 52: I work for a music education organisation
- Voice 53: I work for a school, multi-academy trust or other education provider
- Voice 54: I work for a Local Authority
- Voice 55: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation
- Voice 56: I work for a Local Authority
- Voice 57: I work for a further education setting or higher education institution
- Voice 58: I work for a school, multi-academy trust or other education provider
- Voice 59: I work for a creative, arts and culture or heritage organisation

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. Arts Council England employees have not been anonymised for clarity. This focus group was also attended by a Speech to Text Reporter, who has been anonymised.

Beginning of transcription:

Hannah: Good afternoon. Welcome. My name is Hannah. I'm female and I use she/her and I've got medium length red hair and some brown glasses on today. Welcome. Thank you very much for putting yourselves forward to attend today's focus group. We really appreciate it and it is very exciting for us to be able to have the conversations that we're going to be having this afternoon. If you haven't already, please say hello in the chatbox and introduce yourself to the group with your name and if you represent an organisation, the organisation that you work at.

Please note we are recording today's session. So that we can create an anonymised transcript of the conversation that we're going to have and that's going to help our researchers analyse the feedback and we're planning to share an anonymised transcript so anybody who hasn't been able to attend can see what we have talked about. We won't be publishing the recording of the focus group or naming individuals in that transcript. Because we're doing the transcript, I have an odd request and I can assure you having done five focus groups already, this never becomes natural, but each time you speak, can you please try to remember to start by stating your name because that's going to improve our transcriptions and better aid our researchers thank you. We have live captions available throughout today's session and you can click the "CC" button to view them.

If you need to edit your name as it is currently appearing on Zoom, hover over your name, right click and the rename option. We recommend using the side-by-side speaker view button, which can be found at the top or bottom of your screen. To make sure that today's conversation can go as smoothly as possible, I just wanted to share a couple of ground rules. So, we're not planning to capture any views or opinions that you might be sharing in the chatbox. So, please only use the chatbox for technical queries and support only.

When we get to the exercises later, Melissa, our external facilitator, she has a ground rule that if isn't written on a sticky note, it never happened. We will keep reminding you what you're wanting to share with us to write on sticky notes. Keep your microphone muted when you're not speaking and you can use the raise hand option on your Zoom task bar and if you're invited to speak, please unmute your microphone then. I recommend keeping on

your camera and if you feel comfortable so there is better engagement with the session.

So, just going through the agenda for today. I'm going to start with some scene setting because I want to make sure that we all understand the same context so we're all on the same pages when going into the exercises later. Some of you might have heard me say this before or read it, but it is really important that we're all starting from the same point. You will see from the agenda, we have a lot to try to get through today and everything that we are talking about is really important. It is important to the Arts Council, to the Department for Education, to you and others working in the sector and to children and young people across the country.

The session will be interactive. So, I really encourage you to speak freely, to think innovatively and I'm sure that there will be lots of differing views and opinions that will be shared today. We really welcome those, but I do ask that you share and that you listen respectfully, please. So first of all, I'd like to just introduce our external facilitators, Melissa and Dougie who are here today. I'm not sure if they can say hello or turn on their cameras right now.

Melissa: Hi. My name is Melissa. I work across the arts and cultural sector focusing on arts for social impact and I have a strong background in music and music education having worked in youth music and having spent some time at the Arts Council on the children and young people.

Dougie: Hi everyone. I'm Dougie Lonie. I've been working with Melissa and with Arts Council colleagues to help facilitate the sessions and provide an additional set of eyes on all the data that's been generated by this process so I can feed that back to them. I am a social researcher and

worked with Melissa and I worked across the arts and cultural sector for a number of years.

Hannah: Thank you. We are leaning on some Arts Council colleagues to help out in the break-out sessions that we will be having later. They will be senior managers from my team. Usually, I'm the smug person who doesn't have IT problems, but I'm having terrible IT problems today with my kit and connection, but we have Plan Bs, but if I disappear, Maria is going to hop on and continue running my bits and hopefully I will be able to stay with you.

I'd like to move on to the setting the scene section. So, starting with who is the Arts Council, because some of you might not really know us. We are the national Development Agency for creativity and culture in England. We're a non-departmental body and we're sponsored by the department for digital, culture, media and sport. We invest public money to support the sector and to deliver our vision set out in our ten-year strategy, Let's Create.

Since 2012, we've worked really closely with the Department for Education to support the delivery of the Government's National Plan for Music Education and that's included the musical education programme for the DfE as well as co investing with them in a national network of youth ensembles. The Department for Education provides the funding for Music Hubs and in our role as a funder, we have been able to support hubs more broadly.

We fund many hub partners including music and music education organisations, venues and festivals. We enable hubs to apply for funding like National Lottery Project Grants and for music operators to apply for funds like developing your creative practice. We have relationships with every local authority as well as many place-based

partnerships. Our investment of £9.6 million a year provides funding for hub lead organisations and hub partners.

We were delighted that the DfE confirmed that the Arts Council will continue as the fundholder for Music Hubs and have asked us to run an investment process for Music Hubs which we will be launching this year. We're really excited about continuing our journey with everybody that contributes to a fantastic and accessible musical education for children and young people across England.

So, the national plan that was published last June builds on the vision that was outlined in the 2011 National Plan for Music Education, but it responds to the many changes that have since been navigated by the education, music education and music sectors and by children and young people themselves in the 11 years since it was published. The plan sets out the Government's priorities until 2030 for music education for children and young people including the plans to strengthen Music Hubs and build on success of Music Hubs to date.

It articulates a refreshed vision for the plan which is that all children and young people should be enabled to learn to sing, to play an instrument and create music together and that they should have the opportunity to progress their musical interests and talents including into a professional creative career. The plan also highlights the importance of Music Hubs with meaningful engagement and collection action by a broad range of partners that are relevant to the musical lives of children and young people and that's based on an understanding that by working together we can help young people develop as musicians and provide reach and opportunity pt of and because of their key role

the national plan outlines a refreshed strategy for Music Hubs and let's just talk about that briefly.

So, Music Hubs are groups of organisations that work 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 will continue to be determined at a local level and every membership of the partnership is expected to play a key role in supporting hub activity. And the operating and governance models for Music Hubs will be determined locally as well based on what is relevant and useful to those particular places.

The national plan replaces the current core and extension roles for music education hubs with a refreshed strategy for Music Hubs that is expressed by a revision, three aims and five strategic functions. The vision for Music Hubs aligns with the vision for the national plan and its three aims are highlighted on this slide here. They are 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, to support young people to develop their musical interests and talents further including into employment.

Underpinning and driving and facilitating the work of the Music Hub will be the responsibility of a Music Hub lead organisation. And thinking specifically about their role, they will be responsible for the co-ordination and facilitation of the Music Hub partnership and subsequently for the strategic development and oversight of a plan for music education. They will be accountable for the effective use of the Department for Education's funding, and for the development of high-quality music education in their hub

area that will be delivered through the partnership and expressed through that local plan for music education.

Hubs are going to achieve that through five strategic functions which are on the slide. They will 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 that will implement equitable progression for all children and young people and that the sustainability of the hub is excellent.

As part of the national plan, the Department for Education also confirmed continued investment of £79 million per year into the Music Hub programme including a grant of over £76 million per year directly to Music Hubs. As I said, the plan announced that the Arts Council will run an Investment Programme for Music Hubs and we will be inviting organisations to apply for that lead role in their area and those organisations will receive funding to co-ordinate.

In the spring we are planning to share the guidance. Grantium will open for applications in the summer and after carefully considering every application against the criteria that will be stated in that Guidance for Applicants, we will be letting applicants know whether or not they will be invited to become a lead organisation in early 2024, ready to start in the September that year.

The plan also set out the DFE's intention to support fewer more strategic Music Hubs through the Investment Programme. And they've also shared that should be achieved by prescribing geographic areas. We have published that on our website. Please go to the website to

read it at any time. But part of that rationale is here and I wanted to just share some headlines.

So, the DfE believes that hubs covering larger geographies will offer more strategic leadership and governance and improve the profile of Music Hub work, and improve provision, providing greater access to children and young people and to schools and supporting better consistency, but there will be greater access to resources, ideas, capacity and capability, to better support the workforce, and to encourage stronger and more sustainable partnerships including with schools and multi-academy trusts.

The DfE has given a rationale for the use of prescribed geographies which they believe will support a fair and open process for bidders of all types including the organisations which might already be leading a hub, but also for new entrants to the programme. The DfE has shared some guiding principles for its thinking around Music Hub geographies and they are outlined here, and I ask you all to try and keep these in mind as we have the conversations that we're going to be having today.

So new hubs will cover multiple local authority areas and be more consistent in terms of size, coverage and quality of provision. It is not intended that any top tier local authorities will be divided. Geographic areas should be agreed or prescribed prior to the application process and that means that applicants will be submitting an application to lead a Music Hub in a specific, prescribed geographic area.

Prescribed geographies will not be pre-determined by the current arrangements that are in place, but be informed by open and objective consultation and evaluation. It is not

intended that funding fewer will mean that young people will have to travel further. There shouldn't be fewer organisations that are designing and developing provision, but the hub lead organisations will become more strategic funding delivery partners to do that work locally. We want to make sure that we're drawing on the experience and the knowledge of everybody from the music, education, youth, creative and cultural communities to help shape the Music Investment Programme.

In autumn last year, the Arts Council launched the consultation phase of the Music Hub Investment Programme and to date that's included a range of sector communications activity, stakeholder management and market engagement. To support the development of the programme further, we're testing options for prescribed geographies and to make sure that we understand as far as we can the implications in terms of transition and mobilisation. That means that we will be able to present the DfE with some recommendations that are appropriate to the needs of the programme, to the organisations that might apply, and most importantly, to children and young people themselves.

So, to achieve that we're running these focus groups and we had supporting open access survey that mirrors the contents of the focus groups and that was because we wouldn't have the capacity or capability to talk to everybody in focus groups so the survey is going to help ensure that everybody has had the opportunity to contribute. We will be using the outcomes of this activity and the analysis that's offered by our external facilitators to make some final recommendations to the DfE about prescribed geographies.

That's the scene setting that I wanted to do to get us all on the same page for the exercises that we're going to go into in a few minutes. I do want to pause to give you the chance to ask any questions or reflect on anything that I've shared so far. So, if you could please put up your hand, if you'd like to ask a question. I'm having to join on my phone. I can't see what's in the chat and I can't see who would like to come in. I can see a lady has appeared on screen. Were you hoping to ask a question?

I'm hoping a colleague might be able to help facilitate this for me, please.

Voice 2: Hi, I'm Voice 2. I've got a question about the boundaries. For instance, in Suffolk at the moment there is a big push for a Suffolk and Norfolk connection and it is being encouraged by the Culture Board in Suffolk and Norfolk. As far as I know there is a Suffolk and Norfolk Music Hub, I'm interested in the geographic divisions and how that's going to be appropriated.

Hannah: Thank you for the question. What we're going to be doing this afternoon is sharing examples, the way that current programmes have divided up geographies. We want to hear your views on those ways of breaking up the country and to get your feedback on the thing that you've outlined in terms of ways that geographies are being divided and that you think would be useful when we're trying to carve up the country into different geographies, we don't have an agreed way of doing that.

That's what we will be analysing when we have completed the conversation so we can determine a recommendation to share with the Department of Education,

Maria: I think next on our list is [redacted].

Voice 8: I wonder if you could define what you mean by top tier local authorities.

Hannah: At the moment the department has asked us to consult on the guiding principles that I've outlined. We're consulting on not having any top tier local authority hubs and putting them together into multi-local authority hubs. So, what we'd like today is your views on those guiding principles as well as the methodologies that we will be going through this afternoon. We won't be looking at how we can take a little bit of Medway off and join it with someone else. We are looking at top tier local authorities joining other top tier local authorities.

Voice 8: How can you have similarly sized hubs and not take apart local authorities and also have hubs that have more than one local authority. The key guiding principles of those, the rules that the DFE have put in place for creating those new geographies don't seem to add up particularly if you're saying top tier will not be divided. So, it is quite a confusing picture at the moment.

Hannah: I would say feed that in as we start to talk about the particular examples. In terms of how we get consistency, we're really hoping that you might be able to share with us today, what could we mean by consistency? Might we be thinking about the total population or might we be thinking about geography and the size of places.

Voice 8: Thank you.

Maria: We have Voice 23. Would you like to unmute?

Voice 23: I am from [redacted]. Thank you for the invitation. I was wondering Hannah, in terms of the rationale behind moving to larger hubs, there has been a lot of stuff around DFE

believes it will lead to this, but is there any empirical evidence about how larger hubs would provide a better service, I guess, than the current size of music education hubs and is there evidence that smaller music education hubs work less than the large ones? What's the rationale? That seems to be missing for a lot of us around this move or is it an ideological thing?

Hannah: Thanks, Voice 23. The rationale published by the DFE sets out a few different areas that they believe will be improved for the children and young people that they serve by having fewer more strategic hubs and what we, at the moment we have a collection of hubs that are already work in that way and others that are single local authority hubs and last year we published some research into those multiple local authority hubs that talked about the opportunities and the challenges of working in that way, but the DFE really does believe that by having fewer hubs they're going to be able to get excellent leadership, be able to attract a really high calibre of candidate for the governing bodies of the hub partnerships, that they would be able to leverage funding across a larger geography, get better consistency and be able to quickly extend provision that seems to be working really well into it the larger geographies and provide better progression routes for the workforce as well which I know can be an issue in smaller Music Hubs.

So, we really need to go by the rationale that the Department for Education set out at the moment and also that research that we published last year into those challenges and opportunities of working in that way, but I think what we'd really like to understand today is from your experience and knowledge of the work that you've been doing and the people that you serve, what you think the impact on those will be through the different lenses that we will be thinking about in your geographies today.

Maria: We have two more people who have questions, we have Voice 16 and Voice 55 from [redacted]. Voice 16, I'm going to come to you first. Can you unmute and ask your question?

Voice 16: There were lots of questions about hubs working in partnership and lots of hubs are working in partnership. I'm not sure how or if that's been captured properly at Arts Council or DFE level yet because it would be a shame to miss those existing partnerships and I think probably some of us have put that in the survey, but I just wonder if there was a mechanism where hubs could let you know who is working with one another because that may be a starting point or give you some indication that you could then ignore but at least you would know who is working effectively at the moment.

Hannah: Thank you, Voice 16. Hello. There is very high awareness actually of how well current Music Hubs are working collaboratively across hub boundaries. We know a lot about the way that is happening. What we're really having to try and keep in mind through this process is how we make sure that we're developing a really transparent and open process including any organisations, including the organisation that's leading them, but an organisation who wants to throw its hat into the ring to lead a Music Hub can do in a fair way and that's why we're trying not to design a process on what the current arrangements are currently.

So, it is a careful balance in building on the success and the strengths of Music Hubs and the partnerships that have evolved over the past decade, whilst making sure we have the process for any organisation to apply to lead the hub in that geographical area.

Hannah: Voice 55 from [redacted]. I know you put a question in the chat. Would you mind unmuting and asking your question here?

Voice 55: I'm trying to get an idea of the existing hubs. Might there be the scenario where those individual music services which often are LA, local authority wide might go and that is an idea where that geography boundary would go even though they're not the lead hub? Does that make sense? So, it could be completely so we're talking about the existing music services provision.

Hannah: So, what we will be doing through the investment process is selecting the organisations that will lead the hub partnerships. So those organisations are going to develop the strategy and build the partnerships and put the finances in place. What they will be asked to do in their applications to us is to set out who their delivery partners will be so they can deliver the breadth and quality. That might include the music services or a broader range of delivery partners.

So what we're really trying to do is to make that strategic role cover a broader geography but still have lots and lots of really great smaller delivery partners delivering on the ground. And also aversely to that, able to really build those national partnerships, so national organisations that might want to come and help deliver the local plan for music education in those places.

Maria: We have Voice 11. Do you want to unmute and ask your question? Voice 11, do you want to ask your question. If not, we have other options. Voice 11, if you are there, keep your hand up and I'll come back to you again. I'm going to come to Voice 27.

Voice 27: I guess my question is about the, what are the practical realities of working across different local authorities that have different political leadership? I just wondered how this worked elsewhere where that already is the case. I'm thinking about Manchester. I don't know if there are different political parties running different local authorities across Manchester or if they are all under the same political party, but perhaps in London, I think, there are three music services that work across an area that has different political leaderships. I'm just interested in are there difficulties with that model and who does the music services report to? Do they essentially report to the hub lead or do they report to the political leadership of their borough if they're still part of the borough or local authority?

Hannah: A great question. So, we will be investing in the lead organisations and as I said, they will be responsible for identifying their delivery partners which could be music services and they will be responsible for making sure that they are delivering what is expected. As you've identified, many music services are based within local authorities and many of those local authorities provide excellent support for those music services.

So, we hope they will continue too. And obviously, they are politics is a key consideration for us when we're thinking about all of this. Local Government is very important as are the various different types of place-based political and local and government arrangements that are coming through at the moment. So, I don't have a specific answer for you and that's not me trying to wriggle out of it.

What I'd like to encourage you to do is when we start to think about the different example methodologies that we could use is to think about that question. So, are there different methodologies that we could use to create hub

geographies that would make it easier or harder because of different Local Government arrangements?

Voice 27: That's down to democracy. Any arrangement now could be different in few years' time, I guess. Has there been difficulties working to different bosses essentially in the existing multi-authority hubs?

Hannah: In the research that we commissioned by Andrea she did highlight some of the challenges that there are with trying to create a multiple local authority hub and one of those was local politics and Local Government arrangements. So, but I would say, it isn't insurmountable.

Maria: I'm going to read out Voice 11's question because she is having audio problems and it would be good to hear from her. Her question is this "will local authority organisations be eligible to apply to be lead strategic partners?"

Hannah: In the applicant guidance, it will include the organisation who would have criteria. It would be very broad. For example, it will include local authorities, charities, education institutions, more or less anybody as long as they are properly governed.

Maria: We have Voice 34. Could you unmute and ask your question?

Voice 34: I have been reading through the plan and the proposed models and I have a question about inclusion and about the four lead hubs for inclusion, CPD, was it music technology and career progression were the four.

Hannah: Yes.

Voice 34: My understanding as well as there being a lead hub for inclusion, all hubs will have to appoint their lead for inclusion.

Hannah: Every hub will need an inclusion strategy.

Voice 34: I have two questions. Our experience at [redacted], provision for blind and visually impaired musicians is patchy and relies heavily on the charitable sector and on the [redacted] to produce resources, we can't meet the resources for blind musicians and because for so long it has been a reactive, access has been reactive for students or for young people wanting to access extra curriculums. There needs to be plans in place. How will hubs - no, sorry. The other three hubs, career progression, music technology and, what was the other one? Career progression, music technology and CPD, that was it. I won't quite work out in the plans, will they have their own inclusion leads and will inclusion be embedded through the plans or is inclusion being embedded out?

Hannah: Some children and young people are missing out on a broad, diverse inclusive music education and it is not fair. It is not right. I hope that everybody is committed to trying to address that and the national plan certainly is trying to address that and one of the ways it is doing that is through hubs in terms of the requirements going forward to have a lead for inclusion, a strategy for inclusion and having the support through the inclusion hub centre of excellence to provide support and training and resources and guidance for hub lead organisations and the hub partnerships across the country so that we can try and address some of the issues that you've outlined in your question.

I think again, coming back to a hub being a partnership is really important here. Making sure that we've got the right

partners within Music Hubs that understand the broad range of needs that children and young people have and they we've got experts that are able to deliver the work that's needed and the support that's needed and that we are talking to children and young people themselves about what they want and need as well.

I also wanted to flag that as well as those centres for excellence, which the Department for Education is still working out exactly how that's going to work and the process that there will be and I don't have an answer yet to your question yet about where inclusion will sit across those. I expect it will be everybody leading a centre of excellence will need to be thinking about inclusion even within their area of expertise, but that's being worked out at the moment.

The department has since publishing the national plan confirmed an investment for music instruments and technology which again I hope is going to address some of the things that you've outlined in making sure that we've got the instruments and the tech and the equipment that children with visual impairments and who are blind will be able to access music.

Voice 34: I will flag on that point. Accessible instruments is less of a concern for the demographic that I support and accessible formats and access to teachers who can teach Braille music and can understand how Braille music works and if the fund is specifically for music instruments, is there space for that for understanding what might be needed for one demographic isn't an adapted saxophone, it is Braille music for when they want to join a choir.

Hannah: Yes, thank you.

Maria: The last person is Voice 50. Voice 50, do you want to unmute and ask your question?

Voice 50: Good afternoon, everybody. It is a question about the current structure in terms of the actual funding means. There is a per local authority allocation driven on by pupil, head count and are waiting for free school meals. With larger hubs is it anticipated that a lead organisation would be required to evidence an equitable grant spend in each of the local authority areas it represents and if it is not, i.e., if it is now treated as one larger hub area with the discretion to deploy funding as required, e.g. for cold spots, how would that be balanced against the expectation that will be an equitable grant provision across all existing, not necessarily local authority areas in a ring-fenced way, but in terms of at the minimum we know at the moment there was an equitable amount of Arts Council grant spent in each area. Is that intended to be continued even though strategically it will look wider or will the areas themselves be treated as larger areas? Sorry, that was a bit rambly.

Hannah: I get the gist, Voice 50. The Department for Education will be thinking about the funding formula for Music Hubs. I'm anticipating it will be based on the number of pupils in each area and issues like the number of children eligible for pupil premium. And they will be thinking about the current expectation around 80% being spent on delivery of the hub grants and the 20% on administration. So, they are all kind of being considered at the moment. So, I don't have an answer at the moment of what the expectation will be in terms of spend across the whole area.

You know, I am anticipating there will be a strategy for a place, for geography and the local plan for music education that the grant will be supporting in addition to any other

funding that's leveraged against that, but I don't know at the moment what the requirements will be around the spend. What I would, we've captured that question by you asking it out loud so we can take that forwards in the feedback to the DFE and if it becomes more or less relevant in any of the methodologies, if you could put that on a sticky note as something that we need to be thinking about in any of the different methodologies that would be really helpful, please.

Voice 50: It is about ensuring trying to address a model for example, to address cold spots doesn't create a mechanism that produces other cold spots because of the way the amount of money is now representing a larger population and it is harder to track, but thank you, that makes sense.

Hannah: Thanks, Voice 50. Thank you for those well considered questions and reflections. All of this is being captured so that we can consider it all and feedback to the Department for Education. But what I'd like to do now is hand-over to Melissa and Dougie to start with the exercises that we're going to be undertaking for the rest of the afternoon.

Melissa: Great. Thank you so much, Hannah. Just to re-introduce ourselves. Dougie and I the independent researchers who have been commissioned by Arts Council to lead these conversations that is we're having across the sector we everyone involved in the musical lives of children and young people. The job is to ensure the smooth running of the consultation process and to ensure a range of voices have been heard.

Dougie and I have designed a framework for the conversation today which we hope will facilitate that. I want to emphasise that neither Dougie or I have any

responsibility on the final decision. Our role is to provide summaries of the discussion to the Arts Council and to ensure your views are fairly and accurately represented and that they can be considered as part of that decision-making process.

Hannah mentioned earlier that this focus group is being recorded. But as she has already said, the recording, when it is transcribed, it will be anonymised. Your name won't be attached to anything that you said and any identifying details will also be removed in the publicly released transcription. And just to provide additional reassurance, when Dougie and I reporting to the Arts Council and DFE about what we have heard here together today, we won't be identifying any individual comments. Rather what we will be aiming to do is to prevent the views at an Arts Council area level and also at a national level. I hope that provides some reassurance for the conversation we have today. Let's go on to the next slide.

As I've already said, we're carrying out a national consultation and there are a few different components of this consultation. Last week we ran already five stakeholder focus groups. We've spoken to 100 of your colleagues, 20 in each Arts Council area. It is amazing to be able to speak to so many people, to be able to visit so many places and to see the communities where work is happening across the country. It is also brilliant that we're able to have this digital stakeholder focus group as well where we're joined by approximately 60 to 70 of you so we can continue corralling the views of people involved in music education.

I noticed there were comments earlier about the survey. Thank you to everyone who completed the survey already. That's something that he will with be considering as well

alongside everything that's said in this focus group. If you've completed the survey, you'll know the questions that were asked and the scenarios presented. Those are the same as the scenarios that you were e-mailed in preparation for this focus group today. There are some slight amendments to support the different formats. So, if there is anything that you didn't already get the chance to say in the focus group then this is your opportunity to feed that in. Anything you didn't get to say in the survey, this is your opportunity to feed it in within our focus group discussions. I'll just hand over to Dougie now to tell you a little bit about the session aims and the way that we'll carry out the exercises.

Dougie: Thanks, Melissa. Today we're really trying to focus on hypotheticals, what would different methodologies imply for your group? We'll go through three different methodologies and have a discussion around what the implications of those geographical methodologies would be. It is drawing out the implication. Particularly from the transition from one model into a different model, what the mobilisation of what that would look like and what the impact of the different models would be.

As Hannah has already discussed we've gone through some of the guiding principles that DFE has already published around new music education hub geographies. We're very much trying to have the conversation within the context recognising that a great deal of work has been done in terms of the plan being published and getting us to this point today.

We're not aiming today to agree collectively and recommend an overall geographic option, but we are going to, Melissa and I have taken responsibility for trying to collect these views and provide them back to the Arts

Council and DFE so the prospectives are independently presented as much as possible from what we can provide and we're not here to debate the use of prescribed geographies in the Investment Programme. It just means we want constructive conversations about what potential options can be for the future, not just get stuck on the point of whether things will be kind of, whether a new model will be introduced or not. On to the next slide, please.

Yes, as I've already suggested, we're going to talk about three different example scenarios for the prescribed geographies. These are scenarios which are drawn from real world examples. These are models that currently exist which are not relevant for music education, but are useful for giving us a sense of scale for hypothetical conversations about what the geographies could be.

So the three examples that we're going to discuss are there to stimulate feedback and they are there to think about different implications to the work that's going to be taking place within the hubs and they're more or less kind of arranged around a regional kind of model with around ten regions, a sub-regional model or something that's locally nuanced although that's alongside that sub-regional model. Just to say they're not being presented as preferences of Arts Council or DFE and the precise number of Music Hubs has not been decided and it is not aligned with any of the examples at this point in time. The conversations that we're having today are really aimed at identifying what these different kind of hypothetical numbers would imply for the work. On to the next slide.

Yes, so we're going to explore the implications of the three different methodologies and we're going to go in sub-groups at Arts Council regional level across the five

facilitated sub-groups that we're going to discuss and move into break-out groups to talk these through. As I've suggested on the last slide, you don't need to understand the precise detail of the example, geographic structures that we're going to discuss. One of them is about maths hubs, and one is about teaching hubs, the function of the hubs isn't what we're here to discuss and debate, it is about the size and shape and the scale of the geographic models that we're going to discuss.

On the last slide, the numbers of the hubs are not going to be geographically replicated. The final number and geographic structure will ensure the national coverage is sustained. That's another key principle that is worth reminding us in this discussion.

Melissa: The framework through which we're going to be having these conversations when we look at each of the three scenarios, we're going to be talking about each scenario in terms of how effective we think it will be in delivering against the five strategic functions of Music Hub lead organisations as outlined in the new National Plan for Music Education. Those are partnerships, schools, progression and musical development, inclusion, and sustainability. When you go into your break-outs there will be full descriptions of those available to you as well. Sorry, Dougie.

Dougie: I think what Melissa was just discussing will become clear when we go into the break-out groups. There are slides which we mind us of those strategic functions and position the conversation in relation to those. If we can go on to the next slide.

So, when we go into the break-out groups and into the regional groups, we can start with a bit of discussion

around any clarification questions in relation to the scenario. Actually, we're going to do that as a whole group before we go into the break-out rooms. When we go into the break-out rooms, we're going to use a website called Jamboard where we can put sticky notes and ideas on to a discussion board which we can share together. As Hannah mentioned, that's really, we, as the researchers for this consultation, can have as much information written down as possible so that we can, you know, have things on paper and make sure people's specific views are corrected and noted.

So, we will have a moment to add individual reflections. It is aimed around coloured sticky notes. Green would be useful for opportunities. What are the opportunities that are brought by that example methodology? Yellow for neutral points or things we're into the sure of. Pink sticky notes for risks and that replicates the approach that was taken in the in-person focus group. Then we will move into a group discussion been the break-out rooms and share the key points that people put on to those boards and then we're going to have another process where we just rate what we think the overall effectiveness of that scenario would be from one, not effective, to five, extremely effective. That's being able to achieve the strategic functions of the Music Hubs that the conversation has just been couched within.

Just to give you an indication of what that Jamboard space will look like, each of the facilitators in each of the break-out rooms will share a link to the Jamboard which you can access directly through your device. If anyone has got any problems with that then the facilitator is there to ensure that your prospectives can still be captured so we can find a way to add them on to the Jamboard if you're having any technical difficulties or if it is not an environment that's appropriate for you to be working in.

For those who are happy to work in this way, it is a relatively simple grid that relates to the different strategic functions of the Music Hubs and to add a sticky note, you just click on that, the element here on the left which has got a red circle around it and then you can write your prospectives in the box in the middle and when you click "save" it pops the note on to the board which you can then move around as you wish.

There will be facilitators in each group who can support on any issues that come up. The next slide, reiterating the points that were made earlier in the session. We really want the tasks, the conversations and tasks that we are focusing on today to think about what are the implications for your work or for your practise, if you're representing an organisation what would be the implications of these different scenarios.

In order to ensure that everyone gets a chance to speak, we are going to continue to use the raised hand function in Zoom so that people can just raise their hand and indicate that they would like to say something. And that we would like people to have the opportunity to speak without interruption so that we're not talking over each other and the process can be as clearly heard as possible.

As indicated, we're going to transcribe each of the sub-groups, each of the break-out rooms as well and purely so the person that's transcribing it can indicate who the different speakers are, we would like each person to say their name. The transcripts will be anonymised before they're published so any identifying information will be taken out, not just names, if you're talking about something that would identify you as a speaker, that would be removed from the transcript as well.

We'd like to have Chatham House Rules. We want to respect the confidentiality of what's said in these rooms and these discussions. We might not all agree with each other, but we've got to respect the fact that people are able to share their views and have their views recorded through this process. We wouldn't like things that are said in the rooms to be repeated outside of those rooms. We'd appreciate your assistance with that. I think there is one more. Yes, I think Melissa, were you going to describe.

Melissa: Yes, I'll start telling you about scenario one and then I'll just open up the space in case there are any clarifying questions about the tasks in general or about the specific scenario. When we go into the first break out, we will be talking about the scenario of bridge organisations.

Bridge organisations are England-wide network of ten organisations working at a regional level. The regions are based on the official government regions. It happens in the case of bridge organisations there are ten because one of the regions has been sub-divided, but it is the rough size of geography that we're asking you to think about for a Music Hub and the rough number of hub lead organisations that we would imagine within the new Music Hub network. And we're asking you to think about what that mean if it was applied to Music Hubs in the future Investment Programme?

I'll just open up the space now to check if there are any clarifying questions about what is meant by this scenario or what you're meant to do within your break-out rooms. All right, well, I hope they means that everything is clear. But if you do have any questions, there will be the facilitator in your break-out room to assist you as well. I think we'll just break everyone up into their Arts Council area-based break-outs. Becky?

Becky: You should all have been invited now and you should all start moving into your relevant space.

Hannah: Thank you.

Breakout room 1

South East

Becky: Now the lucky south-east area, you don't have to move at all. You stay right here with us in the Main Room. Lucky you! Before we begin, I'd just like to check that [redacted] is still in this space? Over to you Melissa.

Melissa: I want to check that everyone is in the Arts Council the south-east area and that you just haven't, I don't have anyone who hasn't moved into another break-out that they were meant to be in instead. Are you all from the South East? I see a hand up.

Voice 19: I'm in the south-west.

Melissa: Where is your office base?

Voice 10: Our PO box is south-east.

Becky: Who else is in the wrong room?

Voice 9: It is Voice 9.

Melissa: Voice 10, I'm not sure where you're meant to be. If you are a national organisation, I imagine you could just be in any break-out room and it would be fine. So if you'd like

to stay here, I'm happy to keep you here. Brilliant. Thank you so much everyone for joining. Can I just encourage everybody, I would love to see your brilliant faces. So if you want to turn your camera on, that would be lovely so I know I'm not sitting alone in the world staring at a screen with no one on the other end! I don't think, because we have a lot to get through in the session, I don't think we will have time to introduce ourselves verbally. It would be great if you could pop in a brief introduction of who you are and what organisation you represent in the chat. The final thing is to draw your attention to the link that I posted in the chat. That's the link to the Jamboard that we will be working in today.

I'll just talk you through what we will be doing. On the Jamboard, we have a few slides, but for now, I just need you to focus on the first few slides. The first slide tell us about what the strategic functions of Music Hub lead organisations are. These are the five strategic functions that Hannah introduced and we will be talking about each scenario through the lens of these five functions. On slide 2, I've got the definition of this first scenario that we will be working through in case you need to reference that. Slide 3 is the main thing that I want you to be focusing on.

We have got a matrix as well as any general thoughts. I want to open you the space for you to do your own individual thinking about scenario 1. If this scenario were applied to Music Hubs, what would that mean in terms of how effective they would be delivering against these five strategic functions? I will just give you a few moments to do that. If you have got any questions, pop up your hand.

"What exactly is this scenario again?" What we are imagining is if instead of the approximately, I think it is 118 Music Hubs that we have currently. Instead of having this

many Music Hubs, we're imagining a scenario where there are only approximately ten Music Hubs across the country, each working on a regional level. So that would mean north-west, north-east, Yorkshire, and the Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, the South East and London and the South West. We're imagining quite large geographical area that they would be covering as opposed to the very local where the Music Hubs work right now and we're imagining instead of having a very large number of organisations having a very small number of organisations that are taking that lead strategic responsibility. Is that helpful? I want to check, I'm not seeing anything come up. If you want to know how to use Jamboard, I can talk you through that again. Okay, I'll just give you some time to think then. Oh, Voice 3 is saying she can see sticky notes. Can other people see sticking notes as well.

Voice 3: I can see six sticky notes appearing on my screen.

Melissa: Oh, maybe I need to refresh. Thanks for letting me know.

Voice 2: I'm just speaking on to the sticky notes now because I can't see anyone again. Just to say, the bridge organisations, so are we just looking at risks at the moment? Are we just looking at the pink sticky notes?

Melissa: I'm having technical difficulties and I'm only seeing two sticky notes at the moment. I'm not sure what's on the screen, but what we're asking you to do is to reflect on scenario 1 in terms of the five strategic functions and to use colour coded sticky notes to say, to add any comments against each strategic function. So green for positives. Yellow for neutrals or not sure and pink for challenges or risks. So you can, when you create a sticky note, you can also change what colour it shows up as.

Voice 2: Okay. I'm really sorry to ask, sorry, I'm really sorry to ask if you could please reiterate the scenario 1 with the bridge organisations.

Melissa: Yes, absolutely. What we're imagining in this scenario is that the current network of 118 Music Hubs across the country no longer exist. Instead moving forward, we have a network of approximately nine or ten organisations, nine or ten Music Hubs, each with one hub lead organisation and this Music Hub is delivering on a regional level. So, if you're in the South East then I think that maps clearly on to the south-east or the east of England. Is that helpful.

Voice 8: Melissa, the link takes you straight to slide 4 which is maybe the overall rating.

Melissa: Okay.

Voice 8: I think a few people have managed to get back to slide number 3. If everyone goes back to slide 3. Is that the one we're supposed to be doing first.

Melissa: I don't know why it took you to slide 4. That explains some of the questions now. Thank you. What we're meant to be doing as well, looking at slide 3 and we're putting colour coded sticky notes to say how well we think the scenario would perform against these five strategic functions. Thank you so much, Voice 8 for bringing my attention to that. So, if you have added a sticky note already to slide 4, could I ask you to delete that and to move it to slide 3 and you can just double click and copy and paste it into a new sticky on slide 3. Voice 1 has asked can you give us the PowerPoint with the sticky note colours? Yes, this is on slide 2. On slide 2, you will see it says we're using green for opportunities, yellow for neutral

or not sure, and pink for risks. I think there is one remaining sticky note on slide 4, so I'm going to move it to slide 3 if that's okay. It is great to see lots of comments coming up on the board. I notice there is not a lot under progression and musical development.

I will give you another minute or two to finish putting on your own individual facts and then bring everyone together for a bit of a discussion. This is brilliant. It is good to see that there are a lot of things that are coming out in response to this scenario. So, feel free to keep on adding sticky notes as we speak, but I just want to bring everyone's attention together now to have a discussion about what we're noticing on the board. I'll just give you a minute to take a look at what everyone else has been saying and my question to you as you're reading through all the stickies is, what are the key themes that are coming across in all of these comments? What are the commonalities across what people are saying or perhaps what are the tensions between different perspectives on this scenario? Does anyone want to jump in?

Voice 6: I'm sorry I have got my camera on. I have got a fault, but I'm just noticing a lot of consideration about schools and partnerships, about the distance and the size of these hubs therefore creating a challenge in terms of the relationship with schools, the distance between schools and the delivery partners and hubs are not being seen visibly by schools and that relationship sitting more closely with the delivering partners and how that would inform, whether that's intelligence around school needs and for the hub to respond to that. I'm just seeing that in terms of the schools and the partnerships and the size becoming quite a challenge for the delivery of that work across such a vast area.

Melissa: Thank you, Voice 6 for being the first to chip in. I have seen a comment in the chat as well from Voice 7. Voice 7 said something that's jumping out is the impact on relationships. Is there anything you want to add to that Voice 7?

Voice 7: I was just thinking if they're managing a lot more hubs, they're not going to have those relationships that they have now with the schools because it is bigger. You're not going to have the time to build those relationships with the different relationships and with the different staff members at the school.

Melissa: Yes, absolutely. It seems like there is a common theme here around the size of the geography and the number of relationships within that being a concern. I see a hand from Voice 1.

Voice 1: It is not [redacted], it is [redacted]. [redacted] is my colleague. Following on from what Voice 7 said, if it is any bigger than it is now, we just wouldn't bother working with them at all because unless there is a personal relationship with the lead person in the hub, I will go out and I would find my own suppliers and my own facilitators rather than go with what the hub recommends because if I've got to go through four layers of management to get to the lead person at the Hub, I'm going to have four sets of e-mails going out and I'll just go direct to the person I want. So it is a waste of time and it is a fallacy that it would save any money because you would need so many more managers to manage the multiple staff you've got anyway so you might just as well stick with the small hubs that know their communities that, know their geography. For example, I work in [redacted]. To get from one side of [redacted] to the other side of [redacted] is a two-hour drive. If a manager has to go to the other side of the county to sort out an issue, that's an entire day wasted on potentially a half-hour meeting. If it is necessary to be face-to-face. I will not have Zoom meetings for anything

other than this now. If I'm employing you and I want to work with you, you come into my [redacted] and work with me on site. It just wouldn't work. The area is too big.

Melissa: Those are really powerful statements. Thank you so much for that. Can I just check that's been captured in a sticky note. What you're saying around bureaucracy and logistics of travel are really important to capture and I think that it resonated with some others as well. I saw thumbs-up from Voice 8. Let's jump on to Voice 5.

Voice 5: I was going to say something along the same lines to be honest. From my prospective working as a community organisation, partnerships are the biggest part of our work in terms of providing opportunities for our young people and we frequently rely on other music projects around the area as well local businesses to provide music opportunities for our young people as well as what we can provide in-house. I imagine if a Music Hub, I'm not sure where it would be located within the [redacted] area, if we can't work with them directly and provide opportunities to them directly, I guess it could provide access to a wide network, but that would require work on their end to know what's going on in different localities. What we're interested in is expanding our reach as a youth centre and saying, because we've got our in-house venue downstairs, we want people to access that who aren't necessarily from the centre of [redacted]. If a hub can give us that support to access that network, that's great, but I don't understand why there would be a need to have only ten of them when you could have ten of them based locally and more accessible and it would be face-to-face with them and surely if you an organisation working in one area and they have got 100 different music projects, surely it makes more sense to have ten hubs within that area and having them do ten projects and know the people really well and know what work they can provide and what they can't

provide. Surely that would result in better opportunities for young people.

Melissa: Thank you. There is a really important observation made there about the importance of local knowledge and understanding, just adding on to what has been said already. I want to check that's captured in a note. If you haven't, it would be great if you could add that. We've talked a lot about partnerships and relationships with different types of organisations and with schools. Let's talk a little bit about what this would mean in terms of progression and musical development and inclusivity. What are the things jumping out from the board on those themes?

Melissa: Yes, Voice 2?

Voice 2: I was just thinking about the independent and grass-roots music organisations in Suffolk who are delivering lots of diverse work and to diversion communities, to young people in diverse communities outside of school projects and within schools and I just think it would be, that, you know, there is an opportunity here for more partnerships with the Music Hub which it does have a physical space and it is interesting to think of Music Hubs as physical spaces, but we're also using other, you know, we're also hiring spaces and creating projects in other kinds of spaces. So, I just think the partnerships aspect could be really highlighted here. Like there are community organisations delivering music independent of the Music Hub, you know, sometimes independently, mostly independently and also over the bridge organisations or festival bridge which is based in Norwich.

Melissa: Thank you for that. It is great to really expand the conversation on that point. So thank you. Just one more

comment from Voice 8 and then I will have to move us on. Voice 8, do you want to jump in?

Voice 8: Yes, on progression, from our experience for such a majority of progression routes will inevitably be local. When you're bringing the kids up from the starting point. The point at which they might be ready for regional and national ensembles is a long way down the line and realistically will be for a very small minority in terms of that progression. Those routes are already well established and no doubt they can be improved in our area. We have plenty of kids who are signposted on to those areas when they reach that situation, but for the majority of those children, those progression routes need to be local. For practical reasons, the sense of travel distances, we know from looking at other larger hubs, dare I say it, there is plenty of - there is a sense of a local music centre or a local centre for ensembles or whatever it might be. They tend to be far further apart than we have them say in [redacted] for example. And even in [redacted], we're always trying to find ways of making those sort of progression routes more local. I think the danger with anything on this sort of scale will be the diluting of that local practitioner, local practise which could be frank is what serves the vast majority of young people playing music in the area.

Melissa: Thank you forward that. A really important reminder of local progression routes. Just one last thing before we move on. Voice 5, I did see your hand and I'm sorry we have time to get to everyone. If there was something you want to add, can you put it on to a sticky note? We will go on to slide 4. Having thought through the implications of this scenario, this bridge scenario, how would you rate the overall effective of scenario 1 against the strategic functions of Music Hubs? You can add a blank sticky note of any colour in one of the five columns to tell us how you would rate it on a scale of one to five. I think there are nine of us. I see eight on the board and one

floating about. If the floater can move theirs into one of the columns, that would be great. What I'm picking up overall is a pretty negative response to this scenario. I don't think we like it very much at all. This very much reflects the conversation that we've had

Voice 2: Can I say something and I don't know if it is out of turn, but I'm finding my assessment of the scenarios is impacted by my experience our local Music Hub and our festival bridge organisation. So, as a positive experience with the bridge organisation, which is miles and miles away in another county, and not a negative experience, but a lack of communication from the local Music Hub, the current Music Hub and just to say, you know, as we're in a confidential space and everything, other people might have had different experiences, but this is really swaying my assessment of those scenarios because it is about management and about connectivity. That could be a bridge organisation or it could be a Music Hub, a local Music Hub.

Melissa: Thanks for sharing, Voice 2. I'm noticing that the break-out room is going to close and people are joining us again from the other break-outs. Maybe this is a good point to draw a line under our conversation and to bring it back into the main space.

London

Dougie: Yes, no, I think it's definitely not less about the structure and governance of bridge organisations specifically, and more just kind of thinking about if we moved from current hub model, of quite a number of in each region, into their being one regional hub lead, what would be the implications of that for these specific scenarios. Then the later examples, the geographical

examples that we're going to talk to take that a bit further. So instead of 10, what would it be like if it was 40 or 50, and then what would it be like if it was 80 as well. So that's the kind of process we're going to follow so it's really just a thought experiment around what the implications would be, splitting it into those type of numbers.

[Name unknown]: Okay. So it's really just looking at it as a mathematical principle. If you chop it this many times, what does it look like? If you chop it more times, what does it look like? So it's quite basic really. Are we going to consider the different models that Andrea set out in her research? The umbrella, the family, and the fully integrated?

Dougie: I think we can definitely bring that into the conversation in any way that it's helpful to have it noted here in terms of... I suppose that would be particularly around partnership and sustainability in this model, that's where you'd start to think about what the ways of working would imply. I think absolutely worth, I guess if you've got thoughts on how these different numbers of hubs would impact on the ability to work in those ways, then this is the place to say that, and to have it collected as well. I know that Andrea's work is influencing what as [over speaking 0:15:50.4] conversations they're having with DfE.

[Name unknown]: Yes. I'd be interested to hear views of people who are closer to the front line than me. I'm very detached from the front line but obviously I'm interested from a London wide perspective. I guess for me the priority is not how London gets chunked up, and what the boundary lines are, but why, and really what the governance structures are. What is the model that's being put forward for working across a particular area, because that's going to result in the success or failure far more I suspect, than where you draw the red line around it really. I worry that we're getting hung up on geography without really

thinking about how these are going to operate from a structural and governance perspective, which in my mind is crucial.

Dougie: Yes. No, I would agree. I'm interested in what other people have to say about that, but I think you can't really talk about hypothetical geographies, and methodologies, for how things will be split across the country, without thinking about the operational side, and the implications of that. It's absolutely core and central to the conversation and any recommendations that are made back to DfE. So again, I think that's what we're starting to get on the post-its that are being posted here as well, is an implication. There's a lot of pink post-its here around risks, which I think was replicated in the in-person groups last week a fair bit as well. I think it's really important to have that written down, to have that collective here, because that's what Melissa and I are feeding back, kind of capturing those risks, making the Arts Council, and DfE, aware of what you guys are saying are the kind of immediate risks of these scenarios to the way that you think the work needs to be done.

[Name Unknown]: [Unclear word] if you were to look at this in the way that Andrea describes the different models, let's take one of these as an example. The school's feeling far removed from the management of a hub, if the hub is so large. That would be different depending on which of Andrea's models that you went for anyway. If it was a single brand across the whole of London, with centralised management, a merged single London hub for example, then yes, that probably is a high risk. If it's central budget coming in, but totally localised brands, with totally local leadership, and totally local boards, or local authorities overseeing delivery, that probably wouldn't be a risk. So I'm a little bit confused I suppose as to why bridge organisations [unclear words 0:18:39.9] and the other ones have been chosen as the examples here when there are

already examples from music hubs themselves of how they've grouped themselves together.

Dougie: Yes, I mean I think in terms of why we've chosen those examples, it's really just to give differences of scale. They are examples that are active in education currently, and it's just to give a sense of the different scales. It's really just a sort of device to enable these conversations around the different scenarios to take place. There's really not much more to it than that. I think if we're at the starting point of saying there will be fewer hub lead organisations leading larger hubs, it's really how do we have structured conversation in these opportunities today, and last week, and through the survey, how do we have a conversation that enables people to imagine what that would be like. That's really about as kind of sophisticated as it gets for why those examples have been chosen. I think if there are examples of where hubs are working well together, and have been for a significant amount of time, that also needs to be fed back and collected through the surveys, through these conversations today as well, so that you can actually say, well let's look at the model of where this is already working well, and try and replicate that, or ensure that that can be informing the process of redesigning the numbers.

Someone had their hand up. I think it's gone down again. **Voice 32**, was it you? Do you want to come in?

Voice 32: Yes, I was just following up on that point, how much information is available from the bridge organisations that actually show they're working or not working?

Dougie: I'm not sure that, well the plain answer is I don't know, I'm not sure what... I know that the bridge organisations have been reporting obviously regularly over a number of years to Arts Council about what they've been

doing with the funds that they've had, but beyond that I've no idea if there's been independent evaluation or anything like that, or independent research on their effectiveness or not. Again, I think, I understand that you would hope that something like that would be able to influence any decisions about whether music education hubs were to be introduced at a regional level, but I'm not sure, I just don't know if that's something that's being used or not by DfE or Arts Council in these conversations. Again, thinking of this as a device for having the conversation, that's what the process that we're trying to follow today is about. I just don't know if there's evidence around efficacy of bridge organisations that I could share with you, or that I could reflect on with you, but I agree that it's good to have that noted as an observation in this discussion to be fed back to the Arts Council?

Voice 32: I've put it in as a yellow sticky note in terms of progression and development but the data that the Arts Council get from the music hubs is very about volume, and there's very little that actually, when you look at the data gives you any indication of actually how individuals or groups of individuals progress through the system.

Dougie: Yes. Again I think it's important to have observations like that noted here because if we think that there's a clear implication for progression around how hubs are currently functioning, or indeed if there's bigger risks in progression, for example in this scenario of ten hubs than there would be in 87 hubs, we need to make sure that that's articulated clearly, and that people can be signposted into looking at that further, and in greater detail, what those risks would be. Voice 28 did you have your hand up, but it's gone down again?

Voice 28: [Pause] Sorry, couldn't get back on to the right screen. I was just going to say from a statistical viewpoint I think there is quite a lot of stats out there about the number of, for example schools that bridge organisations have worked with in comparison to current hub lead organisations, particularly in London. I was reading the other day that in terms of schools themselves, bridge organisations I think, were working with less than 20 per cent of schools in London, but the current hub lead organisations were working with 77 per cent of their state schools. So similarly from a sustainability perspective this model, looking at this model as potentially one that might be pursued going forwards. It's just interesting that it is currently presenting a model which is actually less effective in some of these areas than the current model that exists at the moment.

Dougie: Yes. Thank you. That's again, useful to have noted and recorded. I think if, Jodie would you mind just making a point about the issue that's been raised there around evidence, around effectiveness of bridge organisations, because it's just to make sure that it's on the Jamboard as well and not just in the conversation, but actually on the board as well. Voice 30 did you want to come in?

Voice 30: Yes, I just wanted to say that I think it's really confusing that we've been given these example geographical structures, because certainly with things like the maths hubs, which are groupings of schools, but with no kind of comprehensive coverage of an area, people can't help but think that that's how the structure would operate, but my understanding is that it's literally about the kind of scale of a geographical area. So I think to have these kind of example structures, do not actually lead us to think that the new structure would be like them. They would simply be about scale and size, isn't it. I think it's as simple as that, it's about numbers, but people, myself included, can't help but think, well how do these organisations that we've been looking at, operate in practice. It's

actually not about that is it, it's simply about numbers, and scale, and geography.

Dougie: Yes, and I realise that that limits to some extent some of the conversations that can be had around, I think it's come up in the discussion already, around implications for how organisations are run and a governance one as well. Yes, it's a noted point as well, that these examples are not comparable, and they're not intended to be comparable. It is about just scale and hypothetical scale. Becky, sorry, I think you've got your hand up.

Becky: Hi Dougie, yes, just to flag that we've just got a minute left on this in case you hadn't noticed.

Dougie: Okay. That's great. Thanks.

Becky: Thanks.

Dougie: Just to make people aware then we're going to move on to the next slide of the Jamboard which would then ask us to rate overall the effectiveness of ten music education hub lead organisations. If you just put a sticky note on to wherever on the scale you think, how effective you think the ten number would be, from one, not effective at all, to five, extremely effective, that would be great. So it's just replicating the approach that we're taking in the surveys, and in the in-person groups last week, where we were using stickers to do this exercise.

Unknown: So Dougie, just to be clear, because I think this could easily be misinterpreted by whoever's reading this, that hasn't been in this session, what are we actually asking here? Are we asking, essentially is the question, what is the effectiveness of a single music education hub for London?

Dougie: Yes, in your view, based on your professional experience and opinion, how effective do you think one music education hub would be in London.

Unknown: I think it would be worth writing, almost saying that we've re-written the question, if others were in agreement with that, and I wouldn't want to force our view on other people. I think it would be useful to hear from them. Somebody looking at this, and reading, nobody agrees that the bridge organisation is the right model for London, could be interpreted in so many different ways, that I think it's a bit risky to even put anything on this personally.

Dougie: Yes, well, like I say it's just replicating some of the quantitative scale questions that were used in the survey as well, so that we can, and in-person groups last week. I'm aware that the breakout room's going to close in ten seconds, so if we get cut off and taken back to the main room... We're about to have a break, and then we're coming back into this group shortly after that break, so we can pick up any conversations then as well. We'll make sure it's noted and...

[End of first discussion 0:28:09.8]

Midlands

Unknown: ...and then report to a very limited structure.

Maria: Okay, that's really, really helpful, thank you very much. I think we've got some comments that really reflect that. Obviously, if there's anything additional you want to add, please do. Voice 44, can I come to you now?

Voice 44: Yes. So Voice 44 from [redacted]. So we have relationships as a business with probably 80, 85 music hubs across the country. So I'm not going to talk about the delivery of the education part, which the hubs are doing very well. I think the challenges for external companies and organisations, and I'm also speaking on behalf of the [redacted], which represents the industry, it is quite complicated for the industry to engage with so many different partners. So that particular element of simplifying, having fewer organisations in a partnership approach, would make those connections, I think, with industry, and maybe external organisations or charities. I think we heard from [redacted] earlier. I can see there's a strong argument there. To support [redacted]'s point, there's a lot of negatives here, but there are definitely some positives. I do think engaging partnerships in a hub-like way, with national organisations or national companies, would definitely be a benefit. The other thing that I do think's worth mentioning is from a leadership and recruitment perspectives on smaller organisations. I think that's something that's worth considering as well.

I know it was mentioned earlier by Hannah, but I can also see in other national organisations that I'm involved with, having smaller HLOs will enable you to recruit from a smaller pool and potentially get a high calibre of individuals running those HLOs. That might not be popular, I'm afraid, but that's just my perspective from an external view. I think the inclusion point that Voice 37 mentioned is a real worry. The other thing I'm worried about with the schools side would be, would that force the HLOs, who have only ten of them, to work with only the big schools or the MATs because that's where they get the biggest bang for their bucks, as opposed to those local, individual schools or village schools, which is where I'm based, because essentially, they're a lot more distant? So I'm a bit sanguine, but I can definitely see some opportunities.

Maria: Sanguine is a great word, and when we come to schools, if you haven't already added that really specific comments about the implications based on different kinds or types of schools, that'd be really helpful for you to add to the board, Voice 44, if that's okay. Voice 45, you've put your hand up again. Can I come back to you?

Voice 45: Yes, Voice 45 here, thanks. I agree with what Voice 44 was saying actually, about that career development, and being external to current Music Education Hubs, as big, national organisations, linking in with HLOs, is a positive for sure. I think if we're just looking about the partnerships, I'm not sure what everyone else thinks, I mean, inclusion should be something by itself. Inclusion should be at the heart of everything, regardless. Inclusion should be at the heart of sustainability, it should be at the heart of schools and progression, music development and partnerships. Inclusion shouldn't be a separated thing. It's something that we've got to really start to instil in our own beliefs and our own thought processes, whether it's a music service or whether it's an organisation. So for me, if we're just talking about partnerships, no matter what is prescribed to us over the next two or three months, we, as competitive leads on the competitive process, this is for a HLO, have got to still have that local knowledge, and the partners' excellence of the knowledge of the local area that they would be delivering with and against.

So it's no good having our partners that we partner with already trying to work across a larger region, because we know that there just isn't the capacity. There may be some that have got the capacity, but not all. So there has to be some directive from DfE and Arts Council to say there's a protective measure for those current partners. Otherwise, they're going to lose funding, they might lose staffing, they may well go under also. So there's a real importance about this being - and it's bandied around a lot, the local music offer. If we look at the West Midlands, all 14,

and we look at some of the excellent partners that we all have, as current HLOs, there's just no way some of those partners can work across the regions. So there needs to be a directive of what is the local music offer? What is the local partnership offer? So I think, already, the term 'fewer partners' has been mentioned, but also, I know, fact, that other focus groups, face-to-face groups, have actually talked about more partners, being opportunistic. So one can only assume that we're not really sure at the moment, but it would be better to have more partnerships, not fewer partnerships, and are we talking about partnerships or are we talking about HLO?

Because there's a big, big difference there. So still we haven't received any information yet from Arts Council and DfE, about the governing role of a HLO and what their responsibility is going to be. Is it going to be different from what the current HLO is going to be? Partnerships have got to remain at a completely local level.

Maria: That's great. If you wouldn't mind making sure that that's on a sticky, that would be really helpful. Just referring back to Hannah's presentation at the moment, at the beginning of this, which just talked about governance structures and operational models, which would ultimately need to be based on what was relevant and useful in the place that they were being delivered. So I don't think there would be a set number of partners or a specific kind of partnership at this point, but it's a really, really useful point. That focus on the appropriate number of partnerships for that area is a really good one, I think. I'm going to move us on, actually, to schools, if that's okay, and just have a couple of minutes talking about that. It feels like there were a lot of yellows on this board. Does anybody have any specific points to make about schools? I appreciate having already heard a point about schools from Voice 44. It's fine if not, and if you just want to put a

sticky on the board, that's completely fine as well. Everything's being held here. In which case, let's move on quickly, and I'm going to suggest we do the next two, kind of, together.

So progression and musical development and also inclusion, because they're so closely related, but also because it seems like there's some overlap in terms of some of the comments as well. Anybody got any specific comments in addition to what's already on the board, or thoughts about what other people have written, and that they want to comment on here? Voice 37 is getting a cup of tea, clearly. Frankly, I wish I was getting a cup of tea as well, so that's good. So if anybody has any additional thoughts or reflections. It feels like progression and musical development in terms of numbers of responses, it's quite equal actually, across the three colours, the RAG. As Voice 37 mentioned at the beginning, lots of risks around inclusion. Does anybody have any further thoughts about that? Voice 37, you do.

Voice 37: Not specifically on the inclusion, sorry, but just on the progression and musical development. Taking it back to partnerships, there's an opportunity that larger organisations such as orchestras, could therefore be clearer about who they offer opportunities for and what those opportunities are. The risk that goes alongside that is if there's suddenly an expectation that one large partner organisation might have to deliver for a much larger geography, that those partner organisations don't have the capacity to do that. Take it back to the flipside which is, we would just have to be very clear about what we provide and for whom.

Maria: Fantastic, Voice 37. That's really helpful. If it's not already on a sticky, please add it onto a sticky and put it on the board. I feel like I'm a stuck record and I'm just going to keep saying that over and over again. Any additional

thoughts? I'm wondering, actually, I know Voice 40, you had your hand up earlier, and I wondered just around the progression point, if there was anything that you wanted to talk about. Given that you are [redacted], and you have a very, very specific focus and interest in progression and on inclusion. Just if you had any additional thoughts.

Voice 40: Well, my comment was actually, I'd forgotten my hand was still up actually. It covered by Voice 45. It was in response to what Voice 44 was saying, really, but it was outside of the query of governance guiding things, but just from my experience, sometimes working with various different hubs and seeing how so many hubs work in so many different ways, and there is no such thing as a hub is a hub is a hub, that within them, sometimes, we can lose the voices of the smaller organisations. Maybe those outside of the regular provision, and that was a risk in terms of partnerships, really. I suppose that strays into inclusion as well. It's just that the young people who would be potentially accessing those not traditional music services etc. etc., do their voices get lost and the organisations' voices get lost, in a bigger picture, basically.

Maria: Yes, so it's almost like something around the distance from the hub lead organisation to young people at the coal face, and also grassroots delivery organisations who are working in a very, very localised way?

Voice 40: Yes, and that's a distance both geographically and, I don't know what the other word would be, but I'm not talking about physical distance, you know. We're talking about cultural distance, etc.

Maria: Brilliant, that's really helpful. I've just been given a two-minute warning, so I am going to actually move us on. If you have any additional thoughts or comments around sustainability or that sit in the general pot, then please do

add them. It's really useful. We will be back together shortly, so we can always refer back to them. What I wanted to do very quickly is just take you onto the next slide, which is this one, where what we're going to ask you to do, in as ballpark a way as you can, is to rate the overall effectiveness of this scenario against the strategic functions of music hubs, with a rating from one, which is not effective at all, all the way through to five, which is extremely effective. To do that, what I'm going to ask you to do is to pick a blank sticky note and put it on the number that equates to your feelings about that. So doesn't matter what colour it is, whatever colour it is, but if you could put a blank sticky note on your rating between one and five, that would be incredibly useful.

We may get dragged back into the other room at some point, without me being able to control that, because it's Zoom. So you can still have access to this Jamboard, so you can keep accessing it, even after we move back into the main room. We will be back together again shortly to look at the next scenario. I'm really interested that you're all still using green, red and pink and yellow. If you want to use purple, that's completely fine! Feeling like we're having quite strong correlation at the bottom end of this rating at the moment. Also, I feel like I should say, because I can see a few people doing this, and Melissa and Dougie will shout at me unless I say this, they don't like people sitting on fences. So if you could put it in either a four or a five, that would be really helpful. It helps with their analysis. Thank you so much. Voice 41, you've got your hand up. While we're together, do you want to ask a question?

Voice 41: Yes, you've got, 'How would you rate the overall effectiveness of this scenario against the strategic functions of the music hubs?' So did you not mean the strategic function of the HLOs?

Maria: It should say 'music hub lead organisation', yes, you're quite right there.

Voice 41: Yes, thought so.

Maria: Yes.

Voice 41: Because, effectively, there won't be any music hubs anymore.

Maria: You are right, music hub lead organisations are responsible [over speaking 0:13:13.9].

Voice 41: Interesting slip!

Maria: Thank you very much. We're about to close, we've got 40 seconds before we disappear out. Yes, you have access to the Jamboard, so please do add comments. Yes, just to say, strategic functions are delivered by the music hub lead organisations who are responsible for the facilitation and activity of the overall music hub partnership. So aims and the vision for music hubs are for the whole hub, strategic functions are for the hub lead organisations. No threes or fours. Apparently, you and I are staying here, Voice 41.

North

[Start of first discussion - 0:13:18.6]

Sam: Okay, let's come back together. I can see there are still a few things appearing, so just be aware of those. In terms of your initial reflections on what is coming up, are there any observations in terms of what you're seeing coming through across any of the strategic functions?

We're a relatively small group so feel free to either pop your hand up or just unmute and jump straight in [short pause]. I notice on partnerships there's quite a lot around the size impacting on various elements of how the Hub might facilitate those meaningful local partnerships and what that means in terms of relationships. I don't know if anyone has any comments on those, or would like to say a bit more. Voice 50?

Voice 50: Yes, thanks Sam. It's just a general comment really. Probably stating the obvious but with quite a lot of this, it would depend on the actual role of the HLO versus the role they were commissioning. So, I think for a ten-Hub model to be successful, although yes the Lead Organisation would clearly have to be accountable - because that is the way the money goes - but in a sense they would have to be quite light touch because of the geography. So, the ability to require organisations to deliver on the five strategic outcomes on their behalf and then the mechanisms that they would have in order to hold those delivery organisations to account. I suppose it's about, so if that dynamic is correct then there is the ability... Then you could see it working. If it was very much the HLO having to develop the capacity to have a much more hands-on requirement to be responsible for those five strategic areas, then it could feel a very big geography.

I suppose it's in the dynamic of how those roles are articulated which could have a positive or negative effect of the possibility of ten Hubs, I guess.

Sam: Thank you, Voice 50. Any other reflections from colleagues in the room on partnerships? There only seems to be one opportunity in there; does that reflect a general feeling in the room from a North perspective? So, as we're thinking about this from the North region, is it right that

there's only one opportunity noted there? Any thoughts from people on that? Voice 57.

Voice 57: Thanks Samantha. I think it's just to highlight from a northern perspective how rural it is here, and that when we start grouping all these different smaller Hubs together under this big regional banner of the North, how on earth are we going to maintain the partnerships we have been working so hard to develop? That actually goes across the board so it's not just partnerships between organisations; it's partnerships with our schools, with our providers, with our tutors, with the parents. When we start moving everything up higher and higher and higher, further away from the actual on-the-ground delivery, I know from personal experience. I work in higher education and I've worked as a private tutor, I've worked in schools. I know that when we start pulling management further and further up the chain and away from on-the-ground delivery, we do not get as good results.

I think I can't remember who it was who was saying a second ago about it really depends what HLO looks like, it depends how it's managed, how it's divided up. Absolutely, because there are ways it can be done effectively but then you're adding more and more people into that management structure in order to replicate the current locality we have under our current model. So, I'm not saying we shouldn't be changing - because that is going to happen - but I'm saying that the model we're debating here, the ten organisations bridge model, it's too large. It's too geographically remote from what we need it to be for music. It might work for other subjects, it might work for maths, English. It might work for art but the practical subjects like music and particularly drama, I cannot see that working well at all.

In fact, I think it'd be - dare I say - a bit of a waste of money for Arts Council because I think there'll be a lot of backfilling of gaps in management structures and panic buying people in to fix problems. I don't think that's the best way forward.

Sam: Thank you, Voice 57, that's really helpful. Make sure that if you're making any further comments that aren't captured in your sticky notes, do pop them in - and particularly in the general thoughts as we work through those. It's actually fine to keep throwing things on the board. I will tidy it up so don't worry about that. Voice 59, can I bring you in?

Voice 59: Hello, yes, Voice 59 here from [redacted]. Can I check you can hear me all right, yes?

Sam: Yes.

Voice 59: Thank you. I just wanted to echo the what Voice 57 just said and - sorry - I'm just trying to desperately read all these tiny little sticky notes as well! It looks to me that it's like the same across all of them, right? Then in the general thoughts, which is that there are some positives - as always with everything; there are always positives, but largely what you lose with this kind of model is actually, what is categorically needed in music education, which is the local understanding and the child at the centre of it. If it is this large hugely regional model, how can that deliver on that mandate? I've put in the comment about: if we're at regional level, will that funding end up being diverted or wasted when ultimately there aren't enough funds right now, and there isn't enough under the new National Plan to deliver what we need given the rising cost of instruments and the rising cost of teaching?

So, ultimately if there is then more cost at a regional level, we are going to lose money again from where it is needed, which is actually delivering music teaching to children. That has got to be the bottom line so I think that's where whatever model it ends up with, it's got to be the most cost-effective to get the money where it needs to be. The money isn't enough anyway so we've got to be smarter with it.

Sam: Thank you, Voice 59. Maybe I think in terms of your point around cost-effective, I think what would be helpful in terms of capturing on this board from you is why this particular model would be less cost-effective than others that you've seen. That would be really helpful just to make sure that that's on there. Voice 54, I think you had your hand up next [short pause].

Voice 54: Sorry, just carry on!

Sam: Voice 55, I think you're next?

Voice 55: Yes, so I suppose I work for a bridge organisation so I've had experience of doing it across a geographic area. I think what might be problematic is, so I know it's not the maths version but if you imagine the maths version of this, bigger Hubs with less reach would work for something maybe like maths where there is so much emphasis on it from the DfE already. There are so many structures around monitoring and there is so much focus on it, you know the schools are doing it. When you're talking about the foundation subjects and certainly areas where there is less emphasis, it's much harder because you cannot make an assumption of what is getting delivered at various levels. So, music is part of the National Curriculum, as are visual arts. So, in some ways there is more of a strength I suppose and focus on and requirement for music. But I think it would be very hard to have - to kind of keep an overview and to work across that scale on a subject that will be... I know the idea is to make it more uniform, but without the big stick - no offence - that's hitting people, making them have to do it, it's going to be much more challenging at this scale.

So, I think the bridges were great and we could work at levels, but I have to say we've never worked with every single school in the North West. What somebody said about geography as well is huge, so we can have situations where we've got Greater

Manchester - which you throw a stone and you'll hit a cultural partner - and Lancashire, which has I think five [?NPOs 0:22:13.4] and is a huge geographic area. So, you're dealing with very different setups of what the cultural infrastructure is and how things - schools are accessing and their priorities, which I think would make it very challenging at this scale to meaningfully engage and deliver.

Sam: Thank you, Voice 55. Can you make sure your point around meaningful engagement and the cultural infrastructure challenges across the North is captured? I think it is, but I think it could be more explicit if that feels like a really pertinent point. So, I think it's good to do that. We're going to need to start doing a bit more of a rating shortly. I just want to capture a few more thoughts and reflections - particularly any of the other areas that are coming up here. Schools has got quite a few notes in it, sustainability, so I think in terms of the sizes model it'd be good to hear any other thoughts on that. I think [?Voice 58], are you next? Voice 58 [?Clark].

Voice 58: Hello, Voice 58. A primary school music teacher from [redacted]. I just think we've just sent a really clear message here; we all seem to really agree. I didn't contribute very much because I agree with what everyone has said. The green and yellow ones, they don't need to be precluded by any other arrangements. I think what's really... I just like particularly what Voice 55 just said. I really agreed. Something like music needs to have feet on the ground and it really relies on relationships, particularly when... Like the difference with maths, maybe there's not very much parental involvement with that or individual children, but with music there really is. So, I think this model, really I think we've all been very clear that this would not be in our preferred thing. The most important thing with any model I think really has to be scrutiny. These inclusion things, they're the ones that are most convincing in this model, I feel,

but as long as there was some really, really good and very clear and well-understood standards that people were held to account to, they could work with any model, really.

Sam: Thank you Voice 58, that's really helpful. Are there any other comments from anyone? Voice 54, you've still got a hand up.

Voice 54: Yes, I went and then I came back, and now I'm back again! Mine was really, I reflected really what Voice 58's just said and it's really about visibility. They're talking about making Hubs more visible. I feel that locally we are visible as we stand in our smaller partnerships. I think that schools feel connected and I think if it went to this kind of scale, it would be an invisible body again and you would lose that key place where schools go to for their advice and their support. Those relationships that are the most important thing, certainly where we are, the relationships with the schools is what makes it. Also the relationships - exactly as Voice 58 said - with the parents: it's not just about what happens in schools. It's that vast amount of stuff that happens after schools and you really need that local knowledge and understanding and relationships. So, for me that's why this would never work.

Sam: Thank you, Voice 54. Perhaps the latter part of what you've just said you can capture for me because it might relate to some - to a certain extent around progression and musical development and perhaps under general thoughts. But see where you feel - because it's about out of school.

Voice 54: Yes.

Sam: I think I can't quite see that as clearly on the board at the minute, so I think it would be useful to make sure that's captured and connections with parents and carers and

families. Voice 55, is that a legacy hand, or is that a new one? A legacy one, okay, fine. Voice 56?

Voice 56: Yes, sorry, I was just going to ask a question about the consultation process, very quickly. Obviously some of us may have already taken part in the survey that's done the rounds that just closed at the weekend. I'm wondering, will you be looking at the quality of the responses in terms of the arguments that are put forward, or does quantity matter as well? In other words, is it worth remaking points that we may've already made in the survey?

Sam: You are more than entitled to in the sense of it's actually fine for it to be captured this way. The survey, I believe it's only asking for one person from an organisation so that we don't... It's more about capturing, as you say, the quality but also the content of that. So, it's not necessarily about the amount of people that say one thing, but it's more about capturing that from the areas and the types of organisations and that kind of thing. It's absolutely fine to say again in this forum as you would do in the survey, but it's not about quantity, though, if that helps to clarify that question.

We've got a couple of minutes left, so what we just need to do, if you move on to frame 4, I'm just going to move it across on here, you'll see that we're asking you to rate the overall effectiveness of this scenario against the strategic functions of Music Hubs. So, just put a blank sticky note underneath in the column you would like. Don't worry about the colour, it doesn't matter about what colour it is, but just put it in whichever column. If we could make sure we have one from everyone, that would be great. Make them relatively small just so that we don't get overlapped. Pop them in that before we get brought back into the... We'll get a one-minute warning before we are brought out

of this room. I do love a jaunty angle, though, so if anyone does do a jaunty angle that's fine. It's more like a real-life Post-it note then!

You can have a few of them made a bit smaller. I'm just going to make a few a bit smaller, so if it is one of yours, just feel free to move it around. It's just so that I can make - I can count them easier. There's a green one at the top that's not moved; is anyone claiming that one? If they could move it... One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Four, five... I think I should have 11. I can only see ten at the minute, so if I can just make sure everyone's had a chance to... If the green one at the top is anyone's, if you can either move it or delete it, it'd be useful! We'll be coming back in, so if you haven't had a chance to do it, we'll be coming back to this same jam board when we look at Scenario 2 all together.

So, you'll come back together next so you'll be able to still move things. If you think of anything else, do pop it on the Post-it notes for Scenario 1. We'll be all automatically taken back into the main room in about 30 seconds, so thank you all for your contributions.

[End of first discussion 0:29:20.9]

South West

[Start of first discussion at 00:11:05.0]

Anna: Right, this is looking super-busy, which is great to see. Voice 14, I'm just sending you the link now. Right, can still see lots of folk writing. I don't want to cut us too short, but I think we might run out of some time for discussion. I suggest the Jamboard stays open as long as we're talking -

in fact, it stays open after we've stopped talking - so feel free to keep adding your thoughts and your contributions. In the meantime, would anybody like to open out for discussion, any observations about what you're seeing here in terms of themes or common thoughts? From my point of view, I'm seeing quite a lot of risk, but particularly around partnership. Is there anybody who would want to speak to any of those points in particular? Are we still too busy writing?! Yes, go ahead Voice 23.

Voice 23: I think Voice 19's got his hand up as well, I've just noticed.

Anna: Is that a new hand, Voice 19? Sorry.

Voice 23: No, I think it's been up a while actually. Shall I go first and then hand over to Voice 19?

Anna: Yes, please do, and then we've got Voice 19 and we've got Voice 21, I can see I've got hands up.

Voice 23: Yes, I think, I can also see a large amount of red there. I think, and this is from my personal experience with the Bridge, just that region, not the Bridge itself, we had a good relationship with the Bridge, but I know the remit always seemed too large, particularly in terms of schools and that crucial local offer. I would argue that this bigger region can actually lead to more cold spots than smaller, local areas. I think in terms of school engagement - though when I look back on the experience of the Bridge reach to schools, again, what existed before was quite a network of smaller arts education networks. When I look at the respective reach of both models, particularly for schools, but also within particular localities, I think the model with smaller areas worked much better in terms of schools coverage than larger areas. That would be my initial thoughts on Bridge. I just think it's probably just too big a region

to enable effective provision for everyone we're trying to reach through Music Hubs.

Anna: Thank you, Voice 23, and I think that is reflected in comments. I will say as well - I should have said before - when we're sharing comments, if it's something new that you haven't written on a Post-it or haven't seen on a Post-it, please do add it on a Post-it because that's going to be our best record of what's been discussed today. We've got Voice 15, I think was the next hand up.

Voice 15: Yes, hi. Voice 23 said it really, as far as I'm concerned, but just to echo exactly what Voice 23 said, I'd also like to just throw in a reflection if I may, and that is the idea of scaling up any larger-scale organisation has two really serious implications for me. One is that schools themselves and the pupils and the teachers within the schools are going to have to get to know who these people are, trust them, and understand what their role is, over and above the local faces if you like of the delivery organisations or the teachers actually visiting or working alongside their departments within the institutions. The other thing is, this might sound a bit glib, but this, of the three options, none of which I'm a big fan of, but of the three options that are offered for discussion, this is the one that's furthest away from the idea of teaching a child music. Sitting alongside them, working in the same room, being, having a relationship with young people, whether they be in small groups or individual. There's something distasteful about the size of this organisational idea and its impact on the other end of that particular relationship, which is where people are being, young people are being taught music and are being encouraged to have musical experiences. That's all.

Anna: I'm just trying to check if I think that's been captured in a Post-it, Voice 15. If it hasn't, could you ping Mathilda, just with that point about the connection between the

institution, I suppose, and the child, and the disconnect, arguably, between an institution this large and the child?

Voice 15: I'll write that in, yes.

Anna: Voice 19, I think you were next.

Voice 19: My point, I think, relates to the sustainability thing - although I think Voice 15's point is really good as well - is that, for me, a hub's role in its area - and I'm talking here about [redacted], which isn't in the South East, but the South West, like you guys - it's about, I think, supporting an economy and ecology that exists of loads of individual tutors and practitioners and organisations of different shapes and sizes. Which, as we all know from the arts and creative communities, as well as the education ones, bring variety and choice. These people are interested, and can be given a significant degree of responsibility of running and developing their own businesses and futures as part of an economy and ecology. A hub should be working to support that, not to take things away from it. The danger of a larger model is that inevitably because of economies of scale, and all of this process is driven by longer-term likely funding cuts, is that things will get crushed out. The individualisation and the character, and the person who lives in your village or down the road from your village, who is a really good violin teacher or a songwriter, will gradually get pushed out of a model like this because it inevitably has to become about a Hub Lead Organisation being able to contract or agree to fund larger operations. It will homogenise things...

Anna: Again, that's a really interesting point, Voice 19, and I'm sorry I keep looking over here, so I've got two screens...

Voice 19: The music education community - let me finish - the community, music, the community and music education

economy and ecology will exist whether hubs are around or not. It's hubs' responsibility to work with them, not against them.

Anna: Sorry I interrupted you there, Voice 19, I thought you'd stopped, but you'd paused, which is completely reasonable. I was just explaining I'm looking over to the right because I've got the Jamboard on a separate screen to all of you. I was just looking at the Jamboard, Voice 19, because again, I thought it was a really interesting point and I wasn't sure that it was completely captured in a Post-it, so again, maybe Mathilda can do that for us. Voice 9, your hand was up next.

Voice 9: Yes, just first of all, I think I actually missed the whole bit about colour-coding because I was in the South East group. I think my Post-it's are yellow when they should be pink. Apologies for that. The colleagues who have just spoken echo exactly what I would be saying. This is very large in terms of, I think, what, having any effective impact for children and young people across the different areas that would be, the coverage. Whether also when we're talking about the potential of youngsters being able to access elsewhere, outside of their, what would be their more immediate geography, we already experience lots of challenges around travel, lots of challenges around people being time-rich to be able to do that. I do think as well, it was mentioned about schools, so coming from a school educational background myself, being able to connect effectively with schools across such a vast area, I feel would certainly compromise things. There's definitely a local need in terms of different schools have different needs, depending on their catchments, and is that going to be not supported with such a large area. It does really come down to knowing about what that local need is and being able to support that local need effectively.

Anna: Yes, thank you so much. Again, I'm just checking that this has all been captured on Post-its, and I think what you've just said has been, Voice 9, but again, if in any doubt, either add a Post-it or send it to Mathilda. Don't worry too much about the colour-coding, but just to repeat what that is, the pink or red is risks or challenges, the yellow is neutral, and the green is opportunities. Thank you, Voice 9. Voice 13 first, I think it was.

Voice 13: Hi, I think that's me.

Anna: Yes, it is.

Voice 13: I heard a point about, well, if it's such a large area, then presumably, there's going to be reliance on local delivery partners, in order that we don't have the problems that everyone's talking about, about not making the relationships with the schools and making sure provision is adequate across an entire area. I'm just wondering how those local delivery partners are supposed to make themselves known to a potential larger hub organisation, that might be completely unaware of organisations that are working quite a long distance from where they are based. Yes, I'm wondering how partners will make themselves known to organisations. I'm also worried about, especially in our area, in the South West, where we're such a rural area, whether, if the continued reliance on the per-pupil funding is going to be fair for our area, and is going to be even less fair - it's already pretty unfair - but if it's going to be less fair in our area if the whole hub is covering a much larger area, and it's very rural, where delivery is going to cost more in a rural area.

Anna: I'm just wondering if that last point needs adding to the sustainability section.

Voice 13: I think I put it somewhere, but I probably didn't put it in the correct place.

Anna: Don't worry, if it's there, it's there, we're good. I was probably just not looking in the right place.

Voice 13: I'll put it on again, just in case.

Anna: Yes, just to make sure. Thank you so much, Voice 13. Then we have Voice 21.

Voice 21: Hi, yes, I share the concerns and views of everything that's been said. I guess because of that, I think just this model - sorry I need to move my blind - I think this particular model really does actually change the role of the hub lead. It isn't about local context and local delivery. It becomes much more about an administrative organisation, where I guess that only real value is if it's able to do work at a national level. It's able to be a network or ten or whatever it be, that is about national advocacy and about national best practice, so that it might be able to hold a role that brings thematics into the conversation, which might be about inclusion or it might be about sustainability. I think, at this level, it's not a hub that can look at local context, local delivery. Therefore, I think this model in particular means a very different scope for the lead organisation if it were to have any value at all.

Anna: Bearing that in mind - sorry, I'm being mean and asking you a follow-up question, which I haven't done to anyone else - but bearing that in mind, are there any of the functions though you think that this model would either help or hinder? Bearing in mind some are more in delivery and some are more in strategy, and maybe suggest something different in terms of the Hub Lead Organisation. Is it your assessment that it's risky for all of them?

Voice 21: I think it would hinder partnerships, schools, and inclusion. I think it has potential to help with progression, particularly as in a professional music context, you often have to start thinking about that travel or that scaling or that touring in some way. There might be more natural alignment. I think the sustainability could go either way. I guess if you're looking at sustaining fewer, larger organisations, there may be potential for economies of scale, but that's a very, very surface benefit, I wouldn't base a decision on that. Off the top of my head, that's...

Anna: Thank you for answering my mean follow-up. I think it's Voice 18 next, I hope I've pronounced that right.

Voice 18: That is right, yes, it's [redacted]. My concern would be that if you had only ten organisations, the level of middle management that would have to be employed, and the level of bureaucracy that might therefore creep in, because you would end up with having to almost have, if you've got an organisation like that, other organisations reporting to that in each smaller area, devolving it down. I would be concerned, therefore, as to the use of funding where that was concerned, whether that would be an effective use of it.

Anna: Thank you, Voice 18. Again, a new point, but I'm hoping and assuming you've put it on a Post-it for us, but if not, please do add. We've got just a couple of minutes left, so Mathilda, could we move to the next slide and ask everybody to give this option a rating from one to five? If you could just stick a Post-it of any colour, it doesn't need to have your name on it, it's just to get a straw poll, if you can. Hopefully, you've all managed to navigate to the next screen on the Jamboard. Mathilda's just showing you what to do.

[Long pause]

Anna: I think we've got some pretty clear consensus emerging on this one, it would be fair to say. Don't be shy if you think it's, if you don't think it's a one. We won't know it was you, so feel free! I'm expecting us to get a one-minute warning any minute now, so if there's anything you'd like to say before we return to the main room, I think we're going to have a brief break and then we'll all be coming back together to talk about option two. I think about a minute left in this conversation.

[End of first discussion 00:27:35.0]

Melissa: Fine. Welcome back everyone. I hope you had an interesting conversation in your break-outs. We've worked you hard already and we're going to keep working you hard in the second half. I want to give you a short break first for you to stretch your legs and fill up your mugs. Becky, how long can we give everyone for their break?

Becky: Take five minutes.

Melissa: If we could be ready at 2.45. We will see you in a bit.

(Short Break)

Melissa: Welcome back everybody. I'm hoping that everyone is back because not everyone has their camera on. If you choose to leave it off, that's absolutely fine, but we do love to see everyone's faces so we can connect with you. I'm just going to hand over to Dougie now to tell us a bit about scenario 2.

Dougie: Thank you, Melissa. So scenario 2 is again replicating the approach we took in the survey, asking

about different models of geographical areas. It relates to maths clubs. They are hubs of 40 maths hubs. They are made up of schools and colleges and other organisations to provide support for math teaching in a particular sub-region of England.

Compared to the first scenario of ten regional hubs or nine regional hubs, we are thinking of how hubs could operate at sub-regional level. The maths hubs is at 40. We're going to go into the break-out rooms. Has anyone got any clarifying questions about this scenario? Just raise your hand if you do.

Melissa: Just to jump in Dougie, we had some questions about this in my break-out and also in the in-person focus groups last week. By way of comparison, when we are talking about a network of 40 hubs, currently there are 118 Music Hubs across the country. So this would mean scaling down to about a third of the number that we have now and then a corresponding increase in the size of geographic area that they would be delivering within.

Maria has messaged me saying there were some comments in her group about the title of the Jamboard being strategic functions for Music Hubs rather than strategic function for Music Hub lead organisations. That's very well spotted. Well done to that focus group. So we are talking about strategic functions for Music Hub lead organisation because they are the ones who will be responsible for ensuring the high-level co-ordination of the works across the hubs and the strategic functions, but organisations of all types will be involved in the delivery of the work on the ground.

Dougie: Voice 19 has got his hand up just to ask a clarifying question.

Voice 19: Is it the 40 hubs that collaborate with each other or is it collaboration within the hub?

Dougie: There would be 40 organisations supporting collaboration within the hub. We would anticipate there would be collaboration across the 40 in this scenario.

Voice 19: If it was collaboration between 40 hubs, that would eclipse scenario 1.

Dougie: My understanding is that we are talking about these as separate scenarios completely. There wouldn't be a scenario 1 if scenario 2 was going ahead.

Voice 19: No, thank you.

Dougie: And Voice 45?

Voice 45: Can we clarify the terminology hub, a hub is a partnership of organisations. Is there any directive from DfE or Arts Council that the term hub should be used in a different way?

Hannah: It is Hannah here. We're trying to be really specific about the language we use and it is tricky sometimes to remember every time, but we're really think about the hub lead organisation as the organisation that will be responsible for the strategy and in receipt of the funding from the DfE and they will lead the Music Hub partnership.

So the hub as you say, is the partnership organisations that are ensuring that children and young people are being supported as set out in the national plan, but we have the funding relationship with that lead organisation. So,

Voice 19: Can it partner with existing hubs?

Hannah: Any applicant can come up with a model that they think would work best for that area. We're not trying to set out what the model should look like in every place. It will be up to local partners to decide who makes up the partnership and who would be a lead organisation. That was a question from Voice 19 for the purposes of the tape.

Maria: If you have a question, if you could put your hand up. Especially if they are in the general thoughts part of the Jamboard. That would be really helpful.

Dougie: Thanks, Maria. Voice 23 put a question in the chat that I'll read out as well. That was just to double clarify, we are looking at 40 as a numerical example. And yes, I think we are looking at 40 as a numerical example. We're using these as scales, hypothetical scales, that exist currently in education practise, but we're not looking at the specific processes that maths hubs use and looking to replicate that in the conversations. Voice 55, you have got your hand up.

Voice 55: I'm becoming more confused. Are we talking about 40, what would be almost lead hubs and within each hub, they would have lots and lots of partners. So they might work with several existing music services and music charities. Is that what we're talking about? Yes. Good. Okay. Just checking because it sounded different to what I thought I'd heard a minute ago.

Hannah: Can I come in on that? What we're looking at is 40 Music Hubs across England. There would be a lead organisation that's leading each of those hubs, but they would be, those hubs would be groups of organisations working as a partnership. So it is 40 Music Hub partnerships led, each led by a hub lead organisation.

Voice 55: How many hub lead organisations might there be?

Hannah: There will be 40 hubs. There could be 40 lead organisations. What I would say is that and this came up in a question last week, so say, as said earlier, with prescribed geographies, we would be anticipating we would publish the list of the places that would make up those geographies and an applicant could apply to lead a hub in those places, but that doesn't mean that a potential applicant can't apply for more than one. We are anticipating there would be 40 hub geographies, but one person could apply to be the lead organisation for more than one.

Voice 55: But there are lots of partners in that hub?

Hannah: Exactly. I can see Voice 50 has got his hand up. Voice 50, do you want to come in?

Voice 50: I would have put this in the chat. I think this conversation is pertinent to the level of understanding and communication required when we move outside our sector. So, we're having this clarification conversation within the sector, stakeholders, key organisations who signed up and been invited so one would hope our understanding would be okay, this is, this is a significant risk for schools and stakeholders if the outcome of this consultation is not intuitive and clear because the ones who will need to respond and react to the geographies as well as those who may or may not be lead organisations. So I think this, you know, I think the use of terminology and the focus, you know, for example, I read that as saying it should actually, there should be 40 lead organisations leading 40 hubs that would cover the geography of England. Now, are you requiring the lead organisations to be collaborative themselves or are you expecting them to lead a collaborative hub in each geography? We have to nail this down so it is really clear what a lead organisation does and the area it represents, not just for the clarity of the bidding process, but

also for the recipients of music education in that area so they intuitively understand and they know about the structure that's being put in place.

Hannah: Thanks Voice 50 for that feedback.

Dougie: I was going to go to Voice 21 for another clarifying question.

Voice 21: I wasn't clear what point we might talk about methodology. Today's conversation is clearly about how many, not what their role and scope might be and actually I think those two things are interconnected certainly from the break-out group we've come from. Scale will depend on what's required of those hub leads and the level of detail, what we mean by strategic leadership and so, I just, I wasn't clear when you gave the timeline earlier Hannah as to where in the process is the methodology and scope of the lead hub organisation going to be considered because I feel we're doing this bit before we've got clarity around that.

Hannah: The plan sets out the policy which we're trying to deliver through the Hub programme. We need to reflect to the aims and functions. When we are talking about numbers today, is there a number which makes it easier for harder to deliver the aims and these strategic functions? When it gets to the stage of publishing the Guidance for Applicants. More information about the lead organisation role, accountability, governance, quality, inclusion, that will all come in the Guidance for Applicants.

Dougie: Thanks, Hannah. I think we're done with clarifying questions at this point in relation to this scenario. Maria?

Maria: I think Voice 34 had her hand up, but put it down.

Voice 34: My question might have been possibly answered, my feeling what I'm experiencing sitting here is a lot of the concerns or issues that I have from the SEND prospective can't really be, they don't really fit within the scope of this consultation which seems to be very much around numbers, but having listened to [redacted]'s question and the response to [redacted]'s question, will there be further consultation on how those guidelines that are going to be published that you mentioned and how those are going to be shaped because, you know, there is policy, but then there is the actual practical implication of those policy from, I guess, it is, you know, how are resources going to be, you're going to have to excuse me. My brain is struggling. It is a mid-afternoon slump. Am I making sense?

Hannah: You are. We're not anticipating at this stage doing consultation particularly on the elements that I just outlined that will be drawn into the Guidance for Applicants. However, that doesn't mean that we won't be talking to some experts in that area to potentially help with some of the language or resources, but we're kind of working through that at the moment and we will be talking to the Department for Education about what, if any, other consultation they would want to happen once we've shared the recommendations with them about the things we're talking about today. So there are still some unknowns in that area.

Dougie: Thanks, Hannah. A couple quick more questions for clarification before we go into subgroups. Voice 14 has got her hand up. Voice 14, do you want to ask a question?

Voice 14: Hi, can you hear me okay?

Hannah: Yes.

Voice 14: I just wanted to clarify the three models about the impact on children and young people because that's what we're all here to really focus on in our day-to-day jobs and I notice from the rationale behind it from the website is that obviously it says about opening up to competition and all hubs will cover multiple local authority areas and children and young people benefit from broader stronger and more effective Music Hub partnerships that continue accessible delivery at a local level. What I struggled with is trying to find how by looking at any of these models where we go further and further and broader how we can ensure that local need is absolutely understood and delivered and why changing the format that it is already in is going to make a difference for children and young people because, you know, naturally the bigger you get, the less you're able to focus on those local needs. So I think a little more evidence around that would be really welcome. I think the other thing that I just wondered if we could clarify is some rational about whether there was any cost saving, kind of ambitions from this because obviously, if you're going to go broader and wider with these new HLOs then the work involved in making sure you can meet that local need and the understanding of that is going to be quite a job and so, I'm a little bit confused. Nothing has been mentioned about those things. They're quite broad, but some things we're struggling with.

Hannah: Thank you. It is really helpful to hear that. This is Hannah again. I'm not sure I can remember what the first part of your question was though. The second, sorry, can you repeat the second part as well?

Voice 14: The first part was about the focused intention about understanding children and young people and their need and the broader you get, that seems to be - and the second point was just about clarifying whether there seemed to be any financial benefit from these scenarios because the broader you get, the bigger the hub, the more resources really you're going

to need in order to keep those relationships, understand the local need and so I'm just wondering if there is any financial benefit in this?

Hannah: Sorry, you're breaking up slightly, but I think I got the gist of that. With regards to the first thing, I know the first time you asked, you asked about changing from what we have now. What we have now is very different from place to place. What the DfE is trying to do is trying to get more consistency in terms of the approach and the rationale for that is in part around that consistency driving more consistency in terms of what is available to children and young people and that came through very strongly in the department's consultation that it did in advance of the writing the new National Plan for Music Education. A lot of teachers, a lot of parents, a lot of young people said they didn't feel they were necessarily getting what they needed and wasn't particularly consistent from place to place and that's driving the department's direction for trying to get more consistency, which we don't have at the moment.

In terms of the second part in becoming broader and cost efficiencies, I'd challenge that and put it on you in terms of when we're going through the different methodologies today might some help or hinder and rather than thinking about does some things cost more, as well as thinking that and that's what we'd like you to share, do some of the models help with trying to leverage other income in towards the grant? Does some help you with your fundraising and resource development and we'd really like to get that from the conversation today.

Dougie: I'm just going to go to Voice 55 so we can have another clarifying question before we go to the break-outs.

Voice 55: When we say sub regions, it might be Greater Manchester and Merseyside? Is it existing pre-determined sub differentials or might they randomly be put together? There are differences in Lancashire compared to Merseyside is very different in size so they're into the comparable. I think what was said, I suppose, part of me thinking back to what is the problem they're trying to fix? That's been partly answered in the sense of the idea of consistency of delivery because it feels like that is missing. If you know what was wrong with the existing model, it is easier to work out what other model would address those issues if you know what I mean and the other thing around funding or the money it is whether the thinking is if it goes to bigger organisations so the thinking in the academisation system, you cut costs on admin and HR and things like that. The person just before me, Voice 14, was saying it will cost more, but is there an idea that in one way it would cost less because of that core, the delivery, the back office stuff they're expecting that would be less cost rather than more in terms of if it is centralised? Sorry, there is a lot there.

Hannah: Thanks, Voice 55. That's what we'd like you to start thinking about when we talk about the different models. Do you think some of them might be more cost efficient than others? With regards to your first question what do we mean by sub-regional, where there are existing sub-regional models in your area that you think are useful for us to be thinking about within this and explicitly referencing those in your feedback so we've got something tangible to start thinking about.

Dougie: Thanks, Hannah and Voice 55. We're going to go into the break-out. We will be trimmed down to 20 minutes rather than 25 minutes because we are aware there has been a lot of chat in this central room as well. Just to reiterate the point, we'd like people to put their thoughts down of anything that's going into this chat in the main

room just now, try and get as much of that into the sticky notes within the Jamboards and within the discussions in the sub-groups. That's what Melissa and I will be using to look at alongside the transcript of these conversations but we're not going to be using the chat strand itself in our analysis. Voice 15, you've got your hand up.

Voice 15: It is more of a reflection. There is a lot of talk about national consistency. I would like to point out that one person's consistency is another person's local needs. You see can't say what's right for Central London is right for rural Dorset. There is a tendency to use the grand terms as some justification for review and I don't all together hold with that and I'd just like that logged somewhere.

Dougie: That's fine. It is recorded as part of the transcript. If you want to make a short summary in the Jamboard just to make sure it is double noted, you're welcome to do. We'll stop from the main discussion and go into the break-out groups for 20 minutes and to look at the second scenario of what 40 hubs would look like and we'll come back together before moving on to scenario 3 and we'll come back at the end of the session to have a summary discussion as well. So, there will be chances to come into the forum again. For now, we're going into the sub-groups.

Break-out room 2

South East

Melissa: Thank you so much. Can I just check if there is anyone who is not in the Arts Council south-east area here? And who needs to be moved across to a different room. Stuart, where do you belong?

Voice 30: I was in London previously.

Melissa: Becky, can you move Voice 30 across?

Becky: I moved you across previously.

Melissa: We'll do the same thing as last time. Just to check we're on the correct slide. I'm on slide 6. So, it says scenario 2, maths hubs, 40 and there are six boxes. Five for each of the five strategic functions and one for general thoughts. I'll give you a few minutes to log your reflections about the strategic functions for this scenario.

There is a hand up from Voice 10.

Voice 10: Can I have some clarification over what's meant by sustainability?

Melissa: If you click on the thing that says six out of ten at the top, you can go back to slide 1 and on slide 1, there are the definitions of the five strategic functions of Music Hub lead organisations. So, I'll just read it, sustainability, ensuring the strategic financial and operational sustainability, leveraging DFE funding to develop wider investment, being accountable and transparent by publishing plans, needs analysis and impact data and environmental responsibilities.

Voice 10: Great. Thank you.

Melissa: No worries. It is really good to see a lot of comments already cropping up on the board. I'm noticing there are a lot of concerns about the potential risks or challenges, but I just want to challenge you to think as well about are there any opportunities? Are there any up-sides to working at this level? Voice 1 says, "there really aren't."

Voice 1: It used to be Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Herefordshire split off 20 years ago because it was too big and you could not get from one end to the other. That end is Birmingham to Bristol, and the Welsh border all the way over to Oxford. And you're proposing because that's the maths example of one lead organisation managing that huge, massive range. It is just utterly ridiculous. It is a preposterous idea. Sorry.

Melissa: I think it is really useful to know that you've had experience working at this level and apologies, I forgot that you're Voice 1.

Voice 1: Me and [redacted] are almost as one!

Melissa: I want to give a couple more stickies before we open up the conversation more widely. I see Voice 5 has a hand up already. The flurry of stickies has started to slow down. Let's start with Voice 5 to open up the conversation.

Voice 5: Yes. Following on from what Voice 1 just said. It is a problem for people as workers when they have to move over that distance, but for the young people as well. How are the young people going to influence the changes that will happen in these organisations to make sure the provision for them is adequate and how is it going to be ensured that people are getting their needs met depending on where they come from and their personal circumstances? I know that we have got a [redacted] up the road at [redacted] and because of the public infrastructure and costs, it is very difficult for someone from [redacted] to get to [redacted]. We are a [redacted] organisation. It is only a short bus ride, but the cost of that, just to get here, particularly because it is an area that has a lot of people living in difficult circumstances and the provision is very limited there for what I can access. I guess that kind of reflects the wider system as a whole, that services aren't accessible for

people living in certain areas. Another thing I wanted to bring up in general, the young people aren't being included in this conversation at the moment. We are talking about what the best things might be for Music Hubs and how they're going to influence, how young people can engage with music, but at the moment, they're not involved in this consultation. I'm not saying that's not going to happen at some point. I hope that it does because it should and if it doesn't, I would be really, really concerned that the voice of young people and what they think about the opportunities that are provided to them, that's really, really important to get in here.

Melissa: I think's a really astute conversation about where young people are and something for us to feedback to the Arts Council.

Voice 6: I thought it would be worth mentioning about the Shire Counties and the size they're already in and what they operate under and some of the successes they have. In for example, where they can provide a whole range of different levels at a local level rather than perhaps having to acquire or rely on national partners come in. I think there are some models of that where the small hubs are working together. I do wonder if some cases some of this is starting to feed through from the work and the partnerships that hubs are starting to develop on that local level already, but I also do think in some of the areas that we talked about last time actually the relationship is such a key part to this and it should therefore, that relationship with schools and with partners needs that local level to be successful and to have the strongest outcome as possible.

Melissa: Thank you so much for that. It is really useful to reflect on. Voice 1 again because you are one as you said.

Voice 1: To be slightly positive for a moment because I can be positive. I think it would be really useful for example in the

bringing together like a larger hub could afford to pay for a Symphony Orchestra that all the secondary schools could bring their children to play to pay for. I've just put in a couple of stickies. I'm trying to take students to go and see a concert in [start of highlighted text] Birmingham and it is from Worcester [end of highlighted text], costing £1,000 for the coach. So actually, it costs £10 for the ticket to go and watch the orchestra and each child is having to pay £30 just to get there and back. I've made another point.

There are no professional orchestras in this country once you're out of London and going west and you go south of Birmingham. Once you hit Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Bristol, Devon, Cornwall, there are no professional ensembles working there and there are no concert halls, we've got nothing in Worcester except a cathedral and nothing in Gloucester except a cathedral and who wants to sit in them in the middle of December? Again, it is just, the scope of the problem is much bigger than the management of working together. It is what's available in the country and while this country is still let's have a big hub for London and a big hub for Birmingham, that's great. But it is no good as soon as you get into the ruralness at all.

Melissa: Thank you so much, Voice 1. Really well observed. I think that's a really important point that you brought up. The challenges around music education delivery aren't just relating to how hubs are organised or just around the geographical areas that they cover. For the purposes of today's consultation, that's the thing that we are focusing on just because that's the question that they need to make a decision on at this stage, but I'm sure that they'll also be thinking about these wider issues as well as they continue to develop out for the new Investment Programme. I think there will be an opportunity at the end to feed in on any other things DFE ought to take into consideration so

maybe that's something to add to that Jamboard as well so we can ensure that's recorded. Voice 8?

Voice 8: Yes. So, I'm just thinking about, you know, trying to think about this particular scenario and the size of these hubs. The partnership report has been referred to a number of times which was commissioned by Arts Council England. One interesting thing that Andrea made when she presented it back in December, multi-area hubs are not cheaper or easier to run which is a stark realisation and this is from someone examining hubs have come together which presumably there is mutual interest and it is mutually beneficial. When you're looking at 40 hubs, you're inevitably going for shoving together local authority areas and so therefore, you're going to inevitably come up against the idea of hubs coming together who are not compatible, whose working practises and whose established structures, workforces, policies on how they work with the schools, how they distribute their funding, are not going to necessarily be aligned. It is crucial that the compatibility of neighbouring hubs is considered and the relative successes of those hubs. The data that we've looked at from Arts Council's own dashboards doesn't give any significant indication that multi-area hubs are somehow more high performing than other hubs. It is not clear that every multi-area hub is performing above the national average for example. So again, it does come back to the rational and I think this model is a particular danger - although the regional hub has many disadvantages, individual areas might be allowed to just get on with their job if the person in charge of the hub lead organisation has got a too big area to run. It might be a hands-off scenario. It is feasible that a hub area could be top-down and imposing of strategy upon local areas, so I think there is a huge risk of compatibility really.

Voice 1: You're on mute Melissa.

Melissa: Thank you, that's a really interesting observation about compatibility. At the in-person focus groups we ran last week, someone used the term "arranged marriages." That's something for us to reflect on. Voice 6, I see a raised hand. Does anyone want to speak? I want to get a spread across the room. If there isn't, Voice 6?

Voice 6: I was just going to say I agree with what has been said. And the prospect of an arrangement marriage doesn't sit well. It is considering in the national plan, there is a lot of focus on the local plan and there is a need therefore for local plans not to represent the whole hub area, but actually the different requirements or different needs within the hub area and I just think there is some potential, some benefits to that and also the size of that hub therefore, you would hope, would mean you can appoint people to focus on one particular area and one of the things I find particularly with the smaller hubs I work with, there is someone who leads in many areas and spins many plates and has to find the capacity to deal with different things at once. My area is equivalent to a maths hub area. I see some of the challenges and I see the challenges that the smaller hubs have to deal with and the challenges that go with that. I wanted to share that with you as an additional thought and a provocation as well.

Melissa: Perfect. It is really good to hear about having that prospective and experience of working in a geographic area at this level. Anything else that others have observed from what's been said on the board? Any other themes that you're picking out? Voice 4?

Voice 4: Hi. Sorry, I've been very quiet on this because I don't have any experience of working with Music Hubs yet because I'm from a university. I know that music departments in universities are being closed so we have an interest in younger people, more young people doing more music to a higher level,

a vested interest, but obviously, we're also very passionate about it and I think one of the things that I could see as an advantage of regional, of a bigger regional model is that current Music Hubs are so local, it is quite difficult for bigger organisations like universities who might have things to offer to get involved, whereas if this seems to me to offer more opportunity for organisations which are not at the moment involved in Music Hubs who would like to be to kind of be able to feed in expertise which wouldn't necessarily have to go down to local school levels, but it might be models of good practise or organisational links or connections to different organisations, something like that. So, I think I also have children in local schools and in particular the region I live in, the Music Hub is useless and it is a small hub. I know there are problems on the ground. The issues that there are for getting people into orchestras are different to people who are interested in pop music and tech and different teacher expertise and that's something that universities or urban organisations can share with schools and that would lead to a better organisation. I have no experience of how Music Hubs, but those are the connections that would be quite positive in a different structure that hasn't existed in a current structure.

Melissa: Thank you for sharing from a HE perspective. There are lots of hands which have shot up. I received notification that this break-out is going to end soon. If I could get you to move on to the next slide and if you had to rate this scenario overall on a scale of one to five, how would you rate it and just put a sticky to indicate your response.

Becky: Thanks, Melissa, we're starting to welcome people back.

London

Dougie: Hello again. I didn't press record then but maybe I just had to press it the first time we were in the sub-groups, and it does it each time.

Unknown: It does say it's recording.

Dougie: Yes, it does look like it's recording so that's good. Okay, so we'll pick up, there's a few points that came up in that main discussion, so do feel free to respond to that. I know Voice 27 you had a couple of points in the chat that it would be good to make sure that we're capturing that somewhere on the Jamboard alongside where it's most relevant as well. I think we'll probably just go straight into looking at the Jamboard again. Voice 32, you've got your hand up, so feel free to jump in.

Voice 32: Yes, I just wanted to pick up on that last point that was made in the general forum about effectively what we're looking at is situational excellence, and situational excellence in one place isn't necessarily what's going to work in the other. I just think it's really dangerous, and I know we're talking about scale, and 40. It's really dangerous for musicians to let a model of maths instruction, maths tuition, inform, even nth of the discussion, because there's a universal truth to maths that allow it to be organised in a certain geographical way, that as musicians we should not entertain, and local delivery providing excellence, and finding consistency isn't necessarily about big models. It's about enabling local provision to reflect and make good for what's local, both in terms of what's available, and in terms of what's needed, and in terms of what's great about a particular geography. I just think the whole maths comparison, it defeats the discussion about local that we need to be having.

I think the final point just relating to that previous discussion, I think at a previous Arts Council briefing, an umbrella hub did declare that it was no cheaper to run. I think that was a briefing sometime in December. They were very honest and said that there was no cost saving to be made.

Dougie: Yes, thanks for that. I think again it's just, I'm not representing Arts Council, so I can't speak back to some of the elements of your statement there, but I think in terms of the process of these conversations again it's a thought experiment of what 40 would look like for music education hubs. The maths thing is sort of moot. It's not really got anything to do with this, the exercise is 10, 40, and then the third scenario is 87, so around 90. I think what we need to capture in these conversations are the points you're just making about how do you try and balance that locally responsive, and locally led approach with something that does feel quite top-down and imposed by a number that's been decided somewhere else. I think the nuance of that conversation is what we're hopefully trying to capture today as well. Voice 34, do you want to come in?

Voice 34: Yes, I can see where you're coming from with a lot of stuff Voice 32, but specifically for SEND inclusion, provision is really patchy, and it's one area where I feel that it does need to be given a national level overhaul and consistency in terms of what's expected, and provision and resources available needs to be radically altered from what is currently in place now. That, in some ways it sits alongside the individual regional musical offering that happens from place to place. At the moment, I mean I don't want to go on about this at length, but for example we have a lot of people who come to us who can't access a brail music teacher because there's nobody in their geographical area who can teach brail music. The nearest one will be several counties away. Or they can't access their local youth orchestra because there isn't anyone there who knows

how to work with blind musicians, or visually impaired musicians. So whilst I really fully respect the need to keep that local knowledge of what's available, the musicians who are working locally, from an inclusion point of view, it really feels like there is just so much work that needs to be done about...

Gosh sorry, my brain is running on mid-afternoon energy, and I think I've already made my point. Yes, that's what I'm trying to say. That is one area where I really feel like a unified national strategy is very important.

Dougie: That's great, thanks Voice 34. Again it's something, we'll try and capture that on a sticky note as well in this Jamboard that we're going on to as well, because I think that relates to your earlier point in the full room conversation about inclusion leads, and what the implications, and roles, and responsibilities of inclusion leads would be within hub model of 40, or 10, or 90. So we'll make sure that we try and capture that in the Jamboard as well. Voice 28 did you want to come in?

Voice 28: I think the thing for me that feels like it's slightly missing for all of these models, is sort of what Voice 27 was talking a bit about in the chat in the main group, which is for those... There doesn't seem like at the moment there is a huge amount of reference to what is working really well already. A lot of the plan talks about building on the success of the last ten years, but then we're talking about potentially throwing everything up in the air and starting from scratch again. I think the thing that, actually there are a lot of hubs that I think are already working outside, or with other hubs, so across their local authority areas through alliances and other partnerships that exist. We have a big partnership in [redacted] and those hubs have an alliance between eight of those partners as well. So things like they have commissioned an [redacted] wide inclusion strategy for the entirety of those boroughs, but then

within that inclusion strategy is a local plan for each individual borough. So there is still the top-level strategy for a much wider geographic area, but also then the ability to have smaller plans which respond to local need.

The maths hub structure in terms of prescribing geographic areas is probably the one that at the moment from an [redacted] perspective seems to reflect closest to what exists already, but I think in terms of prescribing those areas, the bit that seems to be missing for me the moment is an acknowledgement of what is working really well, and successfully, and then using some of that success to help inform where these geographies might make sense to sit, so that then those local hub leads at the moment can also make decisions for the partners in geographic areas that also make sense for them to lead on. So where their demography's and their communities make sense, and methodologies to how they work with their community, makes sense for them to partner and join into a larger force. Also, there is a lot of this cross local authority area of working also going on without the need to force into one larger hub. I'm not really sure where writing that in the Jamboard is right, which is why I'm kind of saying it now, rather than putting it there. Yes.

Dougie: Well, let's go into the Jamboard. I know Voice 27, you've got your hand up as well, but we can keep the discussion going in that space. I just want to make sure that people are being encouraged to put things on the Jamboard directly as well, because that is going to be a key source of collecting the data from these conversations and consultations. So I'm just going to share my screen again on the relevant slide so that people are aware of where we should be and what we should be doing. So we're looking at scenario two, maths hubs. Just exactly the same process as before. So please do take some time, we've got about five minutes left in the group, so please do take some time to get some thoughts and ideas added to

the Jamboard in the relevant areas. If it's cross areas, if it's general thoughts, or it sits across different areas, please feel free to just point that out, or put it on the note as well.

So please do start to put some of your thoughts around what the implications are, or would be of 40 hubs, and 40 hub lead organisations for these different strategic functions of the hubs. So again, you're going to do green for opportunities, pink for risks, and yellow for neutral statements. I think, Voice 28 if you don't mind trying to put something on in relation to that point you were making as well. My take on what you said was that there is effective work taking place. How is awareness of that sub-regional hub cross local authority, how is that being looked at, represented, explored, as a source of evidence for the decisions that are going to be made by DfE moving forward. Voice 27, do you want to just come in while we're here.

Voice 27: Yes. I think fundamentally there's a problem with the structure of the session. You're stuck in the middle Dougie unfortunately, so I do sympathise with you entirely, and the people that cooked this all up obviously aren't anywhere to be seen. So I'm just wondering how much we can use this project to get across, this process of writing on post-it notes, to get across these other points... I completely agree with what Voice 28 just said. Can we use this process to start suggesting some of what is working really well? Celebrating the positives and building on success is always more effective than throwing everything up in the air and starting again right, but I think everybody's feeling very nervous about this process because it seems like it's all been reset back to zero again, and nobody's quite sure where the red line boundaries are going to get drawn, and it's out of their control. People can't decide how to group themselves, which is what they've always done in the past, and which has worked really well.

It's going to be imposed top-down upon them, which is causing everybody to feel extremely nervous, understandably. So I just wonder if there is a process, and there's only a few minutes left now, to start suggesting some of what's working on here, and actually hijack this process a little bit.

Dougie: Yes, I don't think it's about hijacking the process. I think it's definitely, as you say, an imperfect approach to quite a complex problem and consultation. Please do share any of those examples on this board. Please do make these points directly in this forum, make the points you want to make, even if it's slightly outside of the process that we're trying to replicate with the in-person focus groups, the survey, and the online focus group. Essentially reducing this imperfect process to try and give everyone a fair experience of what these conversations are when it comes to actually money being allocated and applications being open, but people have been through a similar consultation process in each of the different forums that they've been able to engage with and contribute to. Absolutely it's the space to make those points, and have these things recorded. Anyone else that wants to come into the discussion, do feel free, but otherwise please do take a moment to just give some further thoughts on the board itself. [Long pause]

I would say, as well, that that point about how effective cross hub models are working currently, and how any sort of prescribed geographical areas are being influenced by effective current practice, and not throwing everything up in the air, and not starting from a blank sheet, but actually starting from what has been most effective over the last ten years. I think if someone wants to bring that up in the discussion at the end as a whole group, I think that's probably quite a good forum to do that in as well.

Midlands

Maria: Okay everybody, I'm going to suggest we come back together and have a little bit of a chat. Please do keep adding comments as we talk though, that's completely fine. My immediate reaction to this board overall is that there are less pinks this time around, which seems quite clear to me. I wonder if anybody had any initial general thoughts about the board that they want to share? No? Okay, let's look at each other's strategic functions in turn, in that case. So if we start with partnership. Any initial thoughts about anything that you've written that you'd like to go into a bit more detail about, or reflections on what other people have written in there? There seems to be some really interesting comments again around this focus on a local music offer and making sure that that's in the core of what everybody is doing, and that that's understandable by everybody who's involved. I'm interested in the middle ground one, so the comment which is around effective partnership working with regional and national partners.

Does anybody want to talk a bit more about that? Something around equity of access there, or who wrote that comment and would like to say a little bit more? Or you can just keep writing comments as well, that's completely fine.

Voice 45: Hi, it's Voice 45 again.

Maria: Hi Voice 45.

Voice 45: Hi. I didn't put that comment, but I think it's a worthwhile comment and it's one that we should all listen to. It just gets me thinking about whatever's prescribed to us, the current work that's happening in local areas is absolutely vital.

I'm just taking, for example, ourselves in [redacted]. We're close neighbours with [redacted], who I know are on the call. Their partners are going to be key to the next ten years of music education in [redacted]. It's absolutely vital. I think the terminology of cold spots, to me, isn't used enough. It's about how effective we are as organisations, as music services, as partnerships, as national organisations. It's how effective are all of us at reaching those hard-to-reach young children, whether it's to do with the amount of public organisations. I don't think it is to do with the amount of public organisations, it's actually to do with how effective, really, are the people working on the local patch? My only concern is that if you go down the ten route, it's going to be a supersized top slice.

Funding, although it was mentioned in the meeting earlier by Hannah, funding would not be taken away from children, well how can it not be taken away from children? Because it would be taken away from children, so the more hubs, the more Music Education Hubs, the better, because more funding would be going to the people that actually need it. It's the schools and the children. So it's about keeping those active partnerships and communication lines open, regardless of what happens.

Maria: Yes, that's really helpful Voice 45, thank you. Can I ask, if you haven't already, in amongst these notes, made that specific comment about financial modelling and the implications of these different approaches, it would be really helpful if you could put that on a sticky, that would be really helpful. There's a risk here that's come through with the partnership board, this thing, which is around a less personalised offer. The comment there is about schools, but I'm assuming we can extrapolate that more broadly into a conversation around children and young people more broadly and other kinds of organisations too. Any comments about that as a risk for this model? Does it feel more or less acute, with this methodology than the

previous one, for example? So it's, again, I think it's that distance point that we talked about with the last board, the distance between the hub lead organisation and children and young people on the ground. In which case, shall we move on and talk about schools?

Any initial thoughts about the board that's in front of you? Any comments on something that somebody else has said that you think is a good point, that you'd like to follow up? I'm interested, again, in the yellows. I wonder who wrote the comment around serving schools on geographical borders. Is it worth just going into a bit more detail about that? Voice 47.

Voice 47: Yes, I was just thinking about the other one, about schools and personal relationships with current local delivery, which I think is really, really important. I think it does vary across schools. So it's like, you know, for some schools, having an efficient way of just working with one thing is going to be brilliant. For MATs, particularly, in that way of thinking. For others, it's all about the relationship that you have with your local provider, whoever that might be. So I think there is something in thinking, how does this affect schools? Do they really care, and this is very controversial, about their hub lead organisation, or do they care about who's working with them locally? So that makes a question for me around what the HLO - and I know we keep going back to this, what that role is. I do feel like what we are doing is a bit what I think it was Voice 55 said in the plenary session, around we're, sort of, doing it in reverse. So we're trying to look at geography, and this is about structures. I think we should try and avoid thinking this is about models, because it's not really.

We're just being asked to comment on numbers and structure, not on models. So what you said about the financial modelling, I mean, that's my biggest concern really, is around financial

modelling, capacity, and creating layers, more layers, within a system that's already overloaded and at capacity, in terms of delivery. I think, to challenge us to come up with a financial model is not really acceptable. I think that has to be within the consideration that there is no more money. So that's the reality of it. So it is quite difficult to see where schools - and young people, particularly, I know do fit into this, and what are we asking them? I don't know if there's any schools on this group, but we aren't really hearing from them about their relationships with HLOs and what that means to them, and how this model works for maths is very different from how it works for music, which is non-statutory and delivery-based, whereas maths is across schools and curriculum-based. Just an observation, really.

Maria: That's really helpful. We don't have any schools in this group. We did in the focus groups that we did last week, so we are hearing from schools and from multi-academy trusts across this process. You are right, they have a very specific perspective and very specific information that they're sharing with us, as well. Voice 36, you've got your hand up. Do you want to comment?

Voice 36: Mine was in relation to who wrote that yellow one in the middle box. Voice 36, I'm from [redacted] Music Hub and Service. It was me who wrote that because, obviously, [redacted]'s a geographically vast county. There are cold spots that we just can't get teaching staff to, and some schools are served obviously better than others. Now, some of those schools are on the borders with other neighbouring counties, large counties. If I can't serve a school from [redacted] and whichever delivery partner ends up being in [redacted], then I'll go to the hub lead organisation or another partner on the hub. In this case, probably [redacted] is the lower neighbour and say, 'Could you see if you can get someone in this school?' If they have a different tariff, then they're going to offer their - I mean,

it's just an example, I'm not basing it on anything, they could offer the service at a lower charge, at a lower fee, because they're using their grant to underpin other activities rather than x, y and z. It actually erodes that relationship that you have with the school because they keep returning to us to deliver. They're only bothered about what is delivered in the school.

The word 'hub' means very little to them. They like that local relationship. I mean, I did put something in the general thoughts as well, that four is really problematic, three seems fairly manageable. In the maths hub that applies to my geographical area, there are four, and one of the four doesn't share a border with the other three at all. So I think, really, we've got to think about the geography of borders, getting staff across borders to deliver, getting children and young people across borders. Getting them across a county is difficult enough. I can't understand how maths hubs came to determine their geographical location, and for that very reason, don't think we should just be led by what is already in existence. I would advocate for three, simply because there are structures, LEAs, Business Growth Hubs, that mean it increases our chance to leverage funding as well. We can tell you the political reality of that three or that four, and that's really important. I'll be [quiet now 0:31:12.2].

Maria: That's really helpful, Voice 36. Thank you very much. We have quite limited time in this session, so I'm just going to ask if there are any more thoughts across this board, and then we're going to go onto the rating exercise. I'm really sorry, we're slightly squeezed for time because the last part of this overran a little bit. So if there are any other thoughts about progression and musical development, about inclusion or sustainability that you really want to point out and follow up.

Voice 45: Voice 45 here.

Maria: Hi, Voice 45.

Voice 45: I'm interested just to hear from our colleagues who are not music education hub lead organisations on this meeting as to, I am just assuming that, as we get to maybe this figure of 40, would that be easier for them to work with? Following on from what Voice 44 said, working with ten is obviously going to be easier than working with 40 or 87. How would they feel? Not knowing which sticky notes they've put in, if they wanted to come forward and share any information.

Maria: Voice 44, do you want to comment? I know you've just put your hand up.

Voice 44: Yes, I think 40 is a lot easier than 120, Voice 45. I think someone else made the comment earlier, if you're an external provider to, or a partner with a hub, there are 120 different methodologies. That is inevitably inefficient for external partners, often. The benefit of this, as you've quite rightly identified, and others, is that you really know the locality well, and that you're serving those children locally. We don't only work with hubs. We work with external, independent, charitable, education deliverers, let's call them, who are not associated with hubs and who are not delivering music provision through schools. I think there's a raft of activity there, which sits outside of some of this conversation, which we just need to be mindful of. So I think 40 is a more manageable number. I do think you lose the power, nationally, with, you know, the ability to procure more effectively, value for money. I mean, I've made a couple of comments about sustainability, which I appreciate most people are reading in terms of the viability of an HLO, but the national plan for music education is clear that sustainability and the green credentials is an absolute, fundamental priority. Music Education Hubs are not delivering this well, and this is a great opportunity for music education as well, and the children who are engaging in music making are very passionate about the

green side of sustainability. I think national projects and national agendas are harder to deliver when you've got a lot more hubs to deliver it through, but in essence, I think the 40 number is a lot easier to manage for external partners, definitely.

Maria: That's really helpful, Voice 44. I'm really sorry, we have a minute left. So Voice 40 and Voice 48, could you both put your comments on the board somewhere. Also, just a reminder that on the next page is the rating. So if you could, same process as last time, think about your rating for this scenario between one and five, and add a sticky note to that part of it. We will be back together again to look at scenario three, so we can go into a bit more detail there as well. That's really helpful if you can add those comments. Oh, and thanks Voice 48. Voice 48's just made a comment just to say that she's teaching in a primary school as well, so Voice 48, when we come back together again, it would be really good to make sure that we bring you into the conversation to bring in a school perspective as well. That's really helpful to know, thank you.

North

[Start of second discussion 0:37:05.4]

Sam: Just looking at the colours, any initial reflections on... It's more of a mixed picture here. Anyone's thoughts particularly more greens around sustainability, inclusion, progression? Any thoughts from anyone on what is coming through? Voice 50?

Voice 50: Hello, yes. I was just picking up on something Hannah said right at the end of the last session about saying what we thought would work locally. It's quite an interesting way of thinking about it because for some areas of the country - and

I include myself in this - unless I've really done my maths wrong, there's an argument that's saying that the number of Hubs involved in either 40 or the 80 model could actually be really similar, if you reflected it on the geography. Obviously you could have more Hubs joining together in some parts of the country and not others. So, trying to think of what would apply to our area as a way of trying to work out what the best result is, isn't the same as necessarily saying that it would work in another part of the country, ultimately - unless we're willing to say, 'Well, actually here this would work; here are the strengths, here are the weaknesses. So, some of the things I would put down for this model, for example transport infrastructure: all the main roads, working in a certain way that could create an intuitive link across a certain number of Hubs might mean that that would definitely not work in another part of the country if we were looking at a similar model.

So, it's trying to unpick; it's the population over geography thing and saying, well, if we're looking for equitability is it in pupil population? Is it in geography, or is it equitability in terms of manageability? In other words, you might get a mixture almost of all three but it actually is driven by the local boundaries that actually make sense on a local level. That is quite difficult to unpick, but certainly I felt there were more possibilities with this. A lot of fears, but more possibilities here than with the previous one we looked at.

Sam: That's really helpful Voice 50, thank you. I think definitely this is about everything from a North perspective, but obviously being aware of all of the individuality and specifics of the North as a region. Obviously we appreciate that's a very big region, so it's specifically from your perspectives and bringing your local knowledge and experiences and having worked in this region to the table on all of this. So, that's a really helpful reflection, thank you. I've noticed quite a lot of greens around sustainability.

I don't know if there are any thoughts from anyone on some of the comments in there about how this model could enable some positives in that function? [Short pause] I've noticed some comments in the chat around travel; would anyone like to say those? Obviously comments in the chat we can't capture, so make sure they are on a sticky note. Would anyone like to share anything in particular about what would need to be navigated in terms of travel? [Short pause] Voice 56.

Voice 56: I'm not sure I have an answer in terms of how you would navigate your way through this, but just to make the comment that the Hub I work for covers [redacted]. Even if you just took [redacted] as a single partner within an existing Hub, it covers a very large geographical area. So, the more that area is extended - our current Hub includes [redacted] as well - but the more that gets extended, the greater of a barrier you create for children and young people to access any kind of centralised Hub activities. If that's how things go, then that begs the question: does the Hub exist for administrative reasons or for operational reasons. So, I don't think there is an easy answer to that. I just think it's a problem that gets worse the larger the Hub areas are.

Sam: Thank you Voice 56, and do make sure that that's captured somewhere in the general thoughts perhaps as well, if it's not already. Thank you. Voice 49, you've got your hand up.

Voice 49: Yes, I think Voice 56's just said exactly what I would've said, to be honest. Even at a local level, travel is such a massive barrier for us and it's not just the travel, but it's also the time and support from - parental time and support. So, in terms of inclusion, we're not just talking about disability and SEND; we're talking about financial exclusion, things like that. So, if you've got families that can't afford to travel or they're

single parent families where they've not got anybody to look after siblings whilst they take a child to an activity. So, it depends on - as Voice 56 said - whether it's in a delivery sense and for the benefits of the children and young people that we're thinking about, these collaborations and these big Hubs. If they can't actually - the opportunities might be there for them and we've created all these lovely new opportunities for them, but if they can't actually get there it's not real.

Sam: Absolutely, thank you. Voice 58, you've got your hand up.

Voice 58: Yes, I think that everyone's experience is really different and some Hubs are too small, and I definitely come here thinking: I don't think a massive thing is good. But for instance our city has about, what, 230,000 people and that's the Hub, and we have always struggled with various things. We're still struggling now and it's never worked, and one of the reasons is that there is not enough expertise or experience. It can become very incestuous and I don't think [signal breaks up 0:43:31.5] in [redacted], which I've seen has 800 schools in it, we've got 60, 70 or so and it's - that is too little. So, I think right now there is too much diversity around the country. Also [signal breaks up 0:43:42.7] is not very diverse in many ways and I think our children miss out and I would definitely say there are lots of opportunities that I can see them being able to do with a wider area, even though I hear the stuff that... It's [redacted] [signal breaks up 0:43:56.2] the stuff about transport, but if significant funds were allowed for that, I think that we would certainly benefit from a bigger area and more expertise.

Sam: Thank you, Voice 58, that's really helpful. Voice 54, you've got your hand up.

Voice 54: Yes, I'm not sure where I'm going with this - but I'm going to give it a go anyway! There are a few things in there. I

think what Voice 58 said, the smaller Hubs: we're in a smaller Hub as well and we've got 80 schools so I guess that's relatively small. However we very much work already across the region, We work really closely with [redacted] and [redacted], with [redacted]. Those partnerships very much are strategically managed in an unofficial way, I guess, at the moment. So, yes, I think maybe your experience maybe is different, but I would agree that the tiny single Hubs, I think this is an opportunity just to officialise, I guess, what we are already doing. But going beyond that, I think that is for me where it becomes very tricky, I guess, to manage good outcomes for young people and good activity and good opportunities.

We find that it depends on what you define as a small Hub as well, I guess, but for us that 40 I think for me, I feel like that 40 is still too large - although it's significantly better than the 10 - so I don't know where I went with that, really. It was more just about the small Hubs really, but I've said that.

Sam: No, that's really helpful, Voice 54. Also reflecting your own experiences and work within the current Hub that you're with. I think what's really helpful here just to make sure that you've captured everything on the jam board, we will need to go and do the ratings shortly. Are there any other thoughts or reflections from anyone as we go through - as you're having a look at what's on the board? I notice there's not much on progression and musical development. That might be because it's captured elsewhere, but if there are any thoughts from anyone on that, please do feel - share. Voice 57.

Voice 57: Yes, I'll just jump in on progression and musical development. I think my concern with the 40-Hub structure is actually about again: how do you manage, how do you monitor the progression of the individual students? At the end of the day, this isn't a big class of students all the time; it is individual

students. How on earth are you able to track the individual progression pathways? How are you able to make sure that those individuals are put in touch with the next steps beyond Hub work - whether it's the universities, the colleges, external organisations. I do have big reservations about that. Now, I work in a university. I'm working with the Hubs as a way of getting students particularly from widening [stumbles over word] participation backgrounds - I can't talk now - into university courses. Part of the problem is actually some of the Hubs are already struggling to track progression at these more local levels. They can't tell me who is currently Grade 6, Grade 7 on their instrument. Who is coming from these WP backgrounds who are eligible for our interventions?

If you can't do it now, when we make these even larger, what is potentially going to happen there? I suspect more and more students are going to fall through the cracks and actually what we need is probably more detail and more people able to provide help to the existing Hubs without then zooming out even further and losing track of these youngsters. So, yes, that's my I think big concern about this particular structure. That obviously applies just to the bridge model as well - and particularly the bridge model; that just will not work for tracking progression. This one at 40 Hubs I don't think is enough, especially when you take 40 and divide it across England. How many Hubs are you going to have in the North i.e. outside the M25? How many Hubs are we actually going to have shared between our geographical locations?

I fully understand that small Hubs will really benefit from being more officially partnered up with other more established Hubs, but I think there are other places where it really needs to be a conversation with the Hubs and the existing partnerships. Which direction do we slice things up and actually how many Hubs will we have between us in the North? It might not be that many.

Sam: Thank you, Voice 57, that's really helpful. Voice 55, I'll come to you next but I'm just going to encourage everyone, whilst you're listening to reflections, if you can move on to the next frame and make sure you've put a blank Post-it note against your rating for this scenario in terms of its overall effectiveness at delivering on the strategic functions. Just remembering: we're talking about the strategic function in terms of how the Hub Lead Organisation will work. So, obviously what you're looking for in terms of what they're required and how they then work with Hub partners to deliver activity on the ground. Voice 55, your question.

Voice 55: Just looking at progression - and I suppose this isn't a done deal on how it would be set up - so I suppose part of my worry would be that it becomes... If there's one big ensemble that is part of that Hub and that's where people are aiming at, in terms of progression, then that reduces that down in terms of the opportunity to play at a certain level because there will be fewer places. Now, obviously I suppose this sized-Hub might say, 'Well, we'll have lots of ensembles.' But there are issues around that - around when it gets scaled up - that there might end up actually being fewer opportunities rather than more. That would be a worry for me.

Sam: Thanks Voice 55. We've got about 30/40 odd seconds or so. If you could make sure you've all put a Post-it note on the number that you feel best...

Unknown: I keep trying to do it on the screen and not going into the link! It's really...

Sam: Yes, I know, sorry!

Unknown: It's really...

Sam: It's a balance between showing everyone and then also not confusing everyone with screens, so apologies for that, but do make sure you've moved it over. We will be coming back again in here to do Scenario 3. Thank you everyone for your contributions. If you've forgotten anything or want to add anything, you can still go back and add that on to the jam boards. Just make sure you haven't covered anyone else's points.

[End of second discussion 0:50:10.1]

South West

[Start of second discussion 0:37:15.0]

Anna: Feels like the sticky notes are slowing down a bit, so if anybody would like to start the discussion, it would be lovely to open up if you put your virtual hands up again, if that's all right. We can start discussing while folk continue to add to the board. Still busy beavering away. We've got, I think it's a hand from [redacted] and not applause, is that...?! Yes, [redacted] would you like to come in?

Unknown: Sorry, yes, it's a hand, I'm afraid, not applause.

Anna: Applause is welcome, but no.

Unknown: Apologies, I should have thought, I do beg your pardon. We all thrive off it in the end. I want to just make a point about delivery and how local schools, small primary schools that are trying to do their thing, and the larger-scale academy trusts and all that kind of thing, they're all very different and they're all very, they relate to each other in a very particular way. I can see there is a way in which this model might work, but I would just want to make a point about the fact that, to my

knowledge, maths isn't delivered in the same way at the moment. Maybe there should be diverse and wonderful maths delivery organisations working across the country. At the moment, the diversity of offer that a Music Hub could provide, or a worthwhile Music Hub should provide, isn't necessarily replicated by the current model. I think, going back to my other point about making sure that the perception of what comes next is a smooth and easy one to understand by the schools and the teachers and the staff, who are already under a lot of pressure.

Anna: Thank you, [redacted]. I think I'm seeing that reflected in Post-its, but if in doubt, do add one or send one over to Mathilda. Does anybody else want to jump in? [redacted], would you like to add something?

Unknown: Well, only that I think we're in, I've just put it in chat, that this, I think we're suffering from people saying, 'Well, a Maths Hub must be the same as a Music Education Hub.' It's unfortunate that these scenarios have been put out with subjects against them or references to other things if that's not actually what we're meant to be thinking about. [redacted]'s absolutely right, it's a different approach, and it's unfortunate, I think, in that way.

Anna: Appreciate that and hear the view...

Unknown: I think the more we talk about it frankly, the less I feel any trust in the process because I don't think it's been sufficiently thought through before it was brought to the table. That's not a criticism of the facilitation today, it's a criticism of the dogmatic nature of the process.

Anna: Understood. I would say, which I know you appreciate from what you've just said, but just to repeat it, that I wouldn't get too hung up on the fact that we've called it Maths Hubs really...

Unknown: The problem is that by calling it Maths Hubs, you've set people off in the wrong direction. I hear that we're not meant to get hung up about it, but the whole point is that Music Education Hubs were never meant to be the same as Maths Hubs...

Anna: No, that's certainly not the intention of drawing the comparison, absolutely.

Unknown: No, we've got that, but - never mind, forget it.

Anna: It's all right. Did anybody else have anything they'd like to add? Still seeing lots of Post-its being added. I think we've probably already got quite a lot more on this one than we did on the last one, which is interesting in itself. More neutral observations, rather than, I guess, assessments one way or another, which again is interesting. Is there anything anybody would like to add to the conversation? No. The quiet is also quite telling, I think, about how people are feeling about this one. Just having a quick look and - sorry...

Mathilda: Just to chime in - it's Mathilda - that we've got just over five minutes left.

Anna: Given that, if anybody would like to start - we've got, Voice 23 wants to come in and say something. In the meantime, if you'd like to start rating this on a one-to-five, feel free to move yourself over to screen, to slide seven on the Jamboard, that's where you'll get to add your Post-it under one-to-five. In the meantime, Voice 23, would you like to come in?

Voice 23: I'm back to the point I made about the Bridge areas, obviously less so in this case, but I still think we're talking about enormous regions with this model, compared to what we've got,

and huge numbers of schools involved. You're potentially talking about 1000 schools in a hub area, which again, that local offer and the small-scale practitioners, I think similar reservations, although it's less so in this case, but I still have similar reservations about how difficult it will be for small-scale partners to get involved in these new, larger hubs. Also, whether it could end up creating the exact opposite of what DfE think it will create, which is a more consistent approach, in that there will be more cold spots because there's a much larger region for one HLO to cover.

Then my other big reservation, I guess, is I can't see any way that this won't lead to less money going to the front line than the current model. In fact, I think it will involve more top-slicing, another, more layers of admin, potentially, and more layers of organisation, which is basically less activity within schools funded by DfE. I'm still struggling with this model because I think although they're more workable regions, and I can see some advantages in terms of regional functions and stuff, I still think that local, smaller-scale hub model is so much more suited to reaching out to what's needed in particular localities. That's what I just wanted to chuck in.

Anna: No, thank you, Voice 23. On the point about the top-slicing, you may have added this somewhere, but I'm not seeing it under sustainability. If it's not there, if you could add it, that would be great, just so we've recorded it. Somebody's adding it as we speak. I don't know if that's you or Mathilda. I think we've got it covered! I can just see a new Post-it. [redacted], would you like to come in?

Unknown: Mine's just a general comment, not necessarily linked to this [?40 0:44:38.7] actually. It was more to do with the fact that there needs to be consideration of the fact that the schools - what's the word - the way schools operate is undergoing a radical change, isn't it, at the moment, with the

whole white paper saying that schools must be joining a MAT within the next ten years. Schools are going to be working together already in these MATs. Some of them will be national, some of them will be local. That hasn't, doesn't seem to have been considered at all. MATs, there are lots of MATs already that have people operating and overseeing music delivery or music opportunities within the MATs, and they don't necessarily operate in conjunction with a hub at the moment, but they could do in the future. There needs to be some consideration of the way that funding is, there's already some funding going into music via the MATs. It feels like it needs to all tally up a bit more, and shouldn't be ignored.

Anna: Thank you, and certainly, I think the Department for Education is interested in how the model can work in a world of evermore academy trusts, notwithstanding what [redacted] just said.

Unknown: I think they have very quietly rescinded that fairly recently.

Anna: I'm not sure, have to go and have a look, but regardless, the landscape's very different, I guess, to how it was the first time round, even if things don't go any further than they are now. It's a fair question of how that can work more effectively. Again, [redacted], I definitely saw something on multi-academy trusts, but I can't see it under schools, so if it's not on a Post-it, please add it, but if it is, apologies that I've missed it. [redacted], you had your hand up.

Unknown: I think, it's a really obvious thing to say, but I can imagine that this scenario would look a lot more feasible, and possibly come across as being more popular in urban conurbation areas, but we're not one in the South West, and we're in a group for the South West. I think we still have to face

up to the fact that whatever strategy may come down from wherever it comes, it isn't going to change the geography of the South West. We're not building roads and putting in transport infrastructure here. It just feels, it doesn't feel that much better than one in that sense.

Anna: Thank you, [redacted]. Again, I'm trying to scan across to check that's been captured somewhere.

Unknown: I put it in a sticky.

Anna: You have put it in a sticky, thank you so much. I just can't keep up with them, there's so many, got so much to say.

Hannah: Can I just ask a question about this sticky, which is dot, dot, dot, which is shouldn't? Does that belong to, is there a page one, a sticky note one that it belongs to or...? I'm not sure what that one is meaning if somebody is able to clarify.

Unknown: I put it in because I didn't, I'll try and zoom in and find the point it related to, Hannah.

Hannah: Thanks [redacted].

Anna: Thank you. Voice 13, was that a new hand? Voice 13, that is, sorry, was that a new hand or was that the old hand? No, okay! I think we are nearly at time. Maybe a few more minutes. If anybody else wants to add anything to the discussion, please do. If you want to keep adding sticky notes, please do. We've probably got a couple more minutes to go until we're going to be moved back in. Looks like, Mathilda, are you putting a sticky note in for Voice 21? Yes.

Unknown: If Melissa were here, she would say, having heard her say it five times last week, because in the survey people have to choose one, two, three, four, or five, we can't allow any fence-sitting, on-the-line numbers. You need to pick two or three, I'm afraid, and stick with it.

Unknown: I'm happy to do that, just no one told me, they just kept deleting it.

Anna: Sorry, I have to say, I didn't know about that rule. Now we know, thank you for clarifying. Any final reflections? I've not had the one-minute countdown, but I'm expecting it any minute now. Thank you again for all the very thoughtful comments. This is a very busy board, which is a good thing. Got our 60-second countdown now, so head back to the main room whenever you're ready. We'll see you in there in a minute.

[End of second discussion 00:49:16.0]

Melissa: I hope you had a good discussion. We had lots to say. We just have three hours and there is so much expertise to share. We have to draw a line at conversations at some point, but if there is anything you didn't get a chance to say in your break-outs, please put it on a sticky so that we have a record of that.

Let's move on to scenario 3. We looked at two different scenarios, scenario 1 was looking at a small number of hubs. Scenario 3 is looking at what we're calling a locally nuanced structure of Music Hubs across the country. It is scaling down from what we have currently. Instead of 118 hubs, we would approximately 87 hubs across the country. So that's approximately three-quarters of the number that we have now.

They would be working at a locally nuanced level which means pairings or groupings would be done with local authorities taking account of the particular issues that would be affecting those areas. So, I hope that's clear, but just to check. Are any clarifying questions about scenario 3? Yes, I see a hand up from Voice 19.

Voice 19: I'm just wondering how much thought or consideration is being given to collaboration between hub lead organisations because that will have an impact on the amount of resource and top-sliding and time and energy which gets taken up at HLO-level as well as managing the local relationships. I hadn't particularly picked up on that point until we got to this one. And it affects the Arts Council's role considerably and the maths of funding on this, because it is one-and-a-half existing hubs to a new HLO on this kind of number.

Hannah: I think I'm really interested Voice 19 in how hubs collaborate between each other. There is a lot of collaboration now. I'm interested to know from you and others where there are particular areas which you think are useful in terms of thinking about the new aims and functions for collaboration and having fewer or more hubs helps or hinders that collaboration because it is something we would want to be able to continue and to continue to support within that moving forward. So again, I would just sort of put it back on you for the purpose of this consultation to share what your thoughts are.

Voice 19: I would prefer to collaborate with hubs. In the case of [redacted], we want to do stuff about deepening stakeholder engagement, about moving forward to digital agenda. About EDI which I know we all say that we want to do. And about expanding musical opportunity and proximity is not necessarily the key to any of this.

Hannah: Thank you. That's helpful feedback.

Melissa: I see another question from Voice 23.

Voice 23: Yes, just a question I meant to ask Hannah earlier. It is a clarification, it is more whether you have any awareness at this stage, Hannah, whether consortium bids will be accepted for HLOs or is it one organisation leading? I don't know if any thought has been given to that yet.

Hannah: Thanks, Voice 23. That is something that will be very clear in the guidance. At this stage, even with our other programmes such as creative people and places, there needs to be one organisation that is the lead organisation. So I think what we looking for is a consortium organisation wanted to apply to do something in the way that you outlined, that would need to be described how it would work in the application, who would be legally responsible and accountable for the funding and having that direct relationship with the Arts Council. But I do anticipate that we would be looking for organisations locally to tell us what they think would work best for them and that might be a consortia of organisations.

Melissa: Thanks, Hannah. Our next question is from Voice 6. Voice 6, do you want to come off mute and ask your question?

Voice 6: Hannah, I just want to ask in terms of the, in the introduction, you mentioned that no top tier local authority would be divided in this process. In terms of this geographical, there are some shire counties which are larger. How will the requirement of local authorities being joined if there are some larger than this?

Hannah: Thanks, Voice 6. That's what I would like you to feedback to us. I would like you to share with us when you're thinking about these strategic functions and this model if this has piqued your interest around that particular issue, what it means to you with the guiding principles that we're consulting on and these methodologies, what you think it means in terms of a county of your size in [redacted] and your thoughts that you would want the DfE to be thinking about in terms of things like no single local authority hubs or multiple local authority hubs.

Melissa: Perfect. Thanks for that response. Our next question is from [redacted]. Voice 21.

Voice 21: I wanted ask if Arts Council will be flexing its internal resource depending on the number of hubs which might be decided upon and for example if there are 87 hubs instead of ten, will there be 87 Relationship Managers and music specialists for those hubs and what's the thoughts around the internal structure around ACE and for the hubs lead.

Hannah: It will be a conversation with the DfE as the fundholder and how it wants to manage the relationships with hubs moving forwards, but the differing number of hubs will mean that we have got different resourcing that's available to support hubs moving forward. So that would be taken into consideration as we move forwards and that will be a consideration that we will be having with the department as we negotiate the fundholder.

Melissa: Thanks. I see one more hand from Voice 11.

Voice 11: I had a question about HLOs and whether or not there will be some specific criteria around at a strategic level regionally, are you envisaging that they will not be delivering

either? I'm just thinking about a traditional model where you have got a hub with a service attached because if one of those were an HLO and covering a region, how would it work in their own location as well? Does that make sense?

Hannah: Thank you, a good question. We will be issuing invitations to apply for the lead organisation role. Now, they may or they may not be delivery organisations. If they are a delivery organisation, I think it will be up to the hub board and whatever commissioning policy they have got in place to make sure they are commissioning the right delivery organisation to deliver the work that's needed for the children and young people in that place, but we wouldn't, I'm not anticipating that there will be a rule that you can't be a delivery organisation as well as being the lead organisation, as long as those things are clear that I've just outlined in terms of making sure that they are the right organisation to be delivering.

Melissa: Thanks, Hannah. A final question from Voice 59.

Voice 59: I thought it would take the time to say things loud and clear and it is on the transcription. This consultation process is so limited. Getting a place on groups is so limited. There are lots of organisation who aren't represented. The conversations we're having in the groups are really important and valuable and yet we're really rushing to get everything, desperately typed on stickies, there are so many questions coming through and we don't have much time in our break-out rooms, given the fact this is so important and there is no other stage of consultation, I feel I need it logged that actually it just feels really disappointing, the level of consultation that's happened around this process and we are all trying to desperately to get our views in and it is different at regional levels and different local levels. I just wanted to take the opportunity to say it just feels like there is so much more to be

said and more for people to hear. Hannah, you keep on us looking back and you want the answers from us, but we don't have time or the ability to be able to do it in a really thorough way and it needs to be thorough because of how much is riding on this. I want that logged.

Hannah: Thank you that are sharing that, Voice 59, I hear that. I appreciate that the consultation feels very squeezed and part of why that is we're really trying to protect time further in the rest of the process. So we think it is really important once we've shared what the hub geographies are going to look like that organisations locally have got the time to build the partnerships and have the conversations and at the other end of the process we think it is important that we're able to give the successful or make the announcements for the changes which are coming. There are two key parts. It will be logged and it will be fed back to the DfE about what the feedback we're getting for consultation. Thank you for sharing it.

Melissa: Clarification from Voice 36.

Voice 36: I have a question on the final geographical models. In some of the hubs, there are internal hub models where there might be three regions in one hub already. Is it an assumption that it is ripping everything up and starting again so you're looking at every region separately and you will device a geographical model from that or will those existing arrangements be honoured?

Hannah: The DfE has asked us to not take into consideration the existing arrangements, but to start by the methodology that we'd like to use that will then prescribe what the geography will be. But use the opportunity today to share what you think about those guiding principles.

Voice 36: Thank you.

Melissa: Thank you for your questions. We'll just take 20 minutes to go into the break-outs and talk through scenario 3 within your Arts Council areas.

Break-out room 3

South East

Melissa: Welcome back. Can I just check everyone here belongs to the south-east? Is there anyone who is meant to be in a different break-out group? Okay. Great. I think everyone here I recognise from the previous break-out sessions. Voice 5, do you have a question before we jump in to the Jamboard?

Voice 5: Just a question around the decision on who is going to be chosen as lead organisation. Obviously, I hope that the right people are picked who can provide this because it is a huge change and it needs to be the right people, but I just want to ask how much involvement are other organisations going to have in choosing that group? Because I know personally from the area that I work in, there is a lot of people that are really, really open to working together and really open to try new things and working collectively, but there is also a lot of conflicting interests when it comes to accessing funding which is really important for us as a community organisation. So, there is some conflict of interest, but I just think it is something that needs to be noted and spoke about to make sure that everyone is kind of making sure that all organisations that are working with the lead organisation are getting their fair amount of access.

Melissa: Yes. Absolutely. That's a great question. I can't speak to that because I'm an independent researcher and facilitator that's support Arts Council with this process. Maybe that's something that you could log under any other considerations and we can feed that back to Arts Council and ensure they communicate clearly what this process for decision-making around the hub leads will look like. I have seen a question from Voice 4, is it still possible for us to fill out the questionnaire? Can we add more detail about our own experiences here? I am afraid the questionnaire did close already. It closed on Sunday. I think if you do want to feedback about your experiences in this focus group then the best place to do it is within the focus group and to ensure it is logged especially like in writing on a sticky note because that's the best way for us to pick it out. Any other questions before we jump in?

Voice 4: Can I just reply? No, I put that there because it is in the general chat, bearing in mind Voice 59's last comment. If this focus process has made people think more about what we'd like to share, I don't know if it would be possible to re-open the questionnaire now because what we put now might be different from what we put before. I don't know.

Melissa: I don't think it is possible at this stage because the questionnaire has been closed and we've already started analysing that data. I don't know if you can withdraw a response. I can ask about that if it is something you feel strongly about.

Voice 4: Because people said they don't have enough space here to capture their thoughts if that was a way of allowing them to do. It is not for this group. So let's carry on with the Jamboard.

Melissa: It is brilliant to see that there are lots of stickies and people have jumped right in. It is great to see there is more diversity of colours. Just another minute or two to finish adding your stickies and then we'll have a group discussion about what's on the board.

Voice 8: Melissa, did you say there was a general feedback at the end?

Melissa: There will be a general reflections and any other considerations outside of the geographic question that the DFE ought to be considering.

Voice 8: Perfect, thank you.

Melissa: Right. It looks like things are starting to slow down. Feel free to keep adding if you have more to put up on the board. Let's try to have a discussion about what we're seeing and what about the key themes and commonalities that we're picking up are.

Voice 5: I like the idea of increased locality of hubs. On the other hand, I kind of see that if a local lead is chosen, and it becomes ineffective there needs to be systems in place for how we kind of challenge that and look into and reflect and evaluate how those systems are working. I could see that there is a limited pot of funding available to kind of set-up these hubs if a hub can't cope within a locality and aren't delivering for the young people who need access to this stuff effectively, there needs to be a way of re-evaluating. That's something that's been missed.

Melissa: There is potential for opportunity, but there is something about the accountability question and how people are held to account. Is that captured in your sticky

notes already? If it isn't, it would be great if you could add that, thank you. Voice 8, do you want to jump in?

Voice 8: It was echoing a point that Voice 6 made in the main discussion. A very significant point was added by Hannah today about the potential for top tier local authorities as she called them not being split up or I can't quite remember the exact wording, prior to today, the implications of 87 hubs which are A, similarly sized and B, covering more than one local authority is nothing, but utterly destructive really and would seem to be a completely strange exercise in ticking boxes, almost destroying current local authorities to just about manage to get a little bit of another local authority within an area that is about - it is destructive. With this acknowledgement that the larger hubs should not be split up then there is a positive step, but with this, it hasn't necessarily said that in addition to not splitting up large local authorities does that also mean that those local authorities do not need to cover more than one local authority area because if that requirement isn't also dropped then you end up with a very, very large hub, you know, having to pair up with another hub on their border to make them even larger and as Voice 6 were saying some of the Shire counties are next to each other and you might end up with enormous hubs just because they have to tick a certain kind of box. A lot of practical considerations need to be taken if this sort of 87 model was to be put into place and you would accept that the majority of hubs would need to remain within their current boundaries and perhaps that is an opportunity to focus on cold spots as identified by a decade's worth of Arts Council data, it does beg the question as to not necessarily why are they cold spots, because there will always be areas for development and places that might need extra support, but why have those areas not been targeted for support in the meantime or as part of this process.

Melissa: Thank you. I think lots of practical considerations need to be taken into account as you said. I see a comment from Voice 7 in the chat about local authorities and MATs. Voice 7, do you want to say anything more about that?

Voice 7: I was just saying that local authorities are being - I'm a teacher - so local authorities are being, schools are now being led by a lot more academy trusts anyway and local authorities are becoming obsolete in a way. So MATs is kind of taken over. I think it is like a business, like a churning machine, but that's what is happening in our country at this moment in time. There was even talk on the [redacted] being one of the leads for teacher training and things like that. It is happening and I feel like whether we like it or not, it seems like it's going that way.

Melissa: Thanks for sharing that context, Voice 7, that's really helpful. Voice 1, I see your hand. I want to give Voice 3 an opportunity to chip in.

Voice 3: We are a partner in a multiple local authority hub and we are the lead on inclusion and inclusion is generally determined by local authority and obviously need is very different in very different areas and our hub struggles to meet the needs of the rural areas and the town that it serves. So [redacted] has got very, very different needs than rural [redacted] where rural isolation is the primary need here, but in [redacted], I'm working with young offenders and kids who are in the Criminal Justice System and the hub fails, fails, absolutely has failed throughout its history to reach those young people and I cannot see a positive outcome from any of this reshuffle for the hubs if our hub has not managed to crack inclusion in a way that is meaningful and long-term. So that is my primary concern as a small music charity trying to lead on inclusion for the entire hub.

Melissa: Thanks for that prospective. Is there is something I'm picking up on, the way hub geographies are drawn, you can't match the urban and the rural, you need to cluster them in a way that makes sense geographically?

Voice 3: It would make more sense for me, [redacted] and well, [redacted] Music Hub serves [redacted] and [redacted] and it stretches from [redacted] to [redacted]. It makes more sense for Reading and Slough which have specific and similar needs and work with very similar young people to be partnered and then for Berkshire to have a Music Hub that serves the isolated areas that would capture a larger area, yes, but with more similar needs. I don't understand why the conversation is about geography and it needs to be need-led and that's why we're here, but I don't understand how the DFE has gone "the answer is finding a region, finding a geography." That's not how we reach young people. That's not how we reach all young people. We need to be thinking about need and about specific areas in the same region which reach the same need.

Melissa: I saw lots of thumbs-up as you were speaking and I know that's shared across the room. I know it is difficult, you said it needed to be needs-led rather than geography-led, I wonder if you could capture that in a sticky note for us. Thank you.

Voice 1: It needs to be need-led because when I think of the work I've tried to do in both city and rural schools, I do not have access to like a recording studio. So, I lose all of my students to local colleges because they have got recording studio. We don't have access to them and for me to have a day out in order to take them to just have two hours in a recording studio means that I don't get to teach my year 7s and year 8s which means they won't take music later on because you're taking, you're take the teacher away. That's one of the issues. So, you know, it needs to be, to have, the hubs need to develop facilities in

whatever region for whatever need and the other thing is about staffing and I have put a lot of staffing things on this one because I know that because of my work with [redacted], they haven't been able to appoint violin teachers, piano teachers, singing teachers, take up to half an hour to get from one school to the next. You're not being paid for that time. So it makes it not a viable job. So, to fill in the gaps of the needs, the people who are managing the hubs are then going out to plug the holes in the teaching which means that the managers aren't available for you to have conversations to actually build these relationships and put in to place all these strategies. So, I've made the point that it needs to be led by managers who aren't necessarily teachers which brings the cost down because you're not paying a teacher to do an office job and your teachers and your practitioners should be out with the children. It is that sort of thing and if you've got 87, like that would save [redacted] a lot of money. Whereas if it was ten, because you need so many more managers to manage so many more teachers, you're not actually going to save any money. That was my point really.

Melissa: I like that a lot. Really the larger model doesn't actually lead to economies of scale in the way that you think it might. That's really, really interesting. I would just encourage you to make sure that's captured in a sticky if it isn't already. I think, I saw something from Voice 10 in the chat. Voice 10, did you want, is there anything that you wanted to say?

Voice 10: I think just to reiterate really that this local knowledge that the likes of Voice 3, who belongs to a, you know, a partner arts organisation, is able to contribute to this whole process and of course, that's, you know, across England, isn't it? That knowledge of, it would make much more sense if X were to speak to Y. That's just not going to be captured if we're not careful and it is really important as was being reiterated on the

larger session earlier, we have this process of being able to contribute more to this exercise and young people as well. It is really, really important that we're actually speaking to the young people. And capturing their needs.

Melisa: Great. Thank you so much, Voice 10. I see that other people are coming back from the other break-outs. Can I encourage everyone from the South East break-out to go on to the last slide and tell us how you would rate this scenario on a scale of one to five.

Becky: Okay, I think we have got everyone back in the room now.

London

Dougie: Hello again. Thanks for bearing with us. I just realised it's a very long session despite the fact that it feels rushed at the same time in terms of, there was comments about the consultation being rushed. I'm aware it's a long session to be online so thank you for your ongoing energy and commitment to the cause. So we're going to look at the third scenario then and try and collect some thoughts and opinions on the Jamboard in relation to what 87 might look like. Obviously, 87 is a random number, but it's about the hypothetical scale of what sub-regional hub models might look like at something twice the size of the 40 that we were reflecting on a minute ago. The teaching network that we used as the example, again was just something that exists in the education sector, where organisations are working and collaborating together at the scale of around 87, but the specific number itself is more of a ballpark figure for the sort of scale that we would like to consider.

So if anyone's got any immediate thoughts, or reflections, or questions from the broader conversation we just had, feel free to start using the Jamboard in the background because I'm aware we're a bit squeezed for time, and I'll share my screen in just a second as well so we can start to look at that collaboratively. Voice 30, I know you had your hand up there.

Voice 30: Yes, sorry, just a really quick question. So the 87 is not a definite figure that might be put forward as the final recommendation, but we do know that it needs to be fewer than the existing number of hubs. So it could be more than 87 potentially. It could be just a few less than the existing number if it's felt that they are the strongest geographical boundaries, yes.

Dougie: Yes, it's possible. Whether I think that's likely or not I'm not sure, but again in terms of the sort of consultation exercise it's really going what are the practical implications for your work, or the work of hubs, at a scale of around 80, versus 40, versus 10. That's the device that we're using to have these conversations. There's not, as far as I'm aware, there's certainly not been an implication that these are the numbers that are being discussed directly at DfE or being recommended in any way. It's really just what's the implications of that type of scale on the five strategic functions on the work.

Voice 30: So the implications are that most, if not all of the existing hubs will be larger than they currently are.

Dougie: Yes.

Voice 30: Sorry, I'm speaking from a national point of view here, it may be different for London guys. Just trying to get my head around what those pairings, those natural groupings might be.

Dougie: Voice 26.

Voice 26: Hi everyone, Voice 26 from [redacted] here. I just want to add to the general chat about the kind of point that [redacted] was making earlier. She was asking about questions that haven't been asked or answered at the moment, and you mentioned Douglas, that these are the questions that would be asked somewhere down the line, but these are the questions that should be central to any conversation at the moment. So we're kind of being asked to make informed choices with no real evidence and no real knowledge of what's expected of us in the future or the near future. So really, we're doing a lot of guessing here, as to what we're being asked to do.

Dougie: Yes, I see your point I think about the sense of we're working in hypotheticals here, it's thought exercises, and I think what we're trying to do is come up with some sort of sensible representation of what the implications of this would be of these different scales, and this sort of level of change would be for your work.

Voice 26: It doesn't sound very sensible to base such big decisions on the thought exercises without proper consultation, which is what we're getting. We're not getting a proper consultation here.

Dougie: Yes, I think that point was made in the main room as well. I think the other sources that we're using for this stage of the consultation that was feeding in, is the survey that's been out for the last six weeks or so, five weeks, and then there was obviously the 100 people that took part in the consultations directly last week as well, so although it might feel like this specific opportunity, isn't particularly generous. There are other things that are going to go into the consultation but it's a point well noted, and well made, and will be shared. Voice 25?

Voice 25: I'm not sure where to add this, I just wanted to mention about the timescale again because even though this is squished, I also think that there's other processes that we're looking at that's going to be a challenge in the timeframe. I didn't know whether other people shared that opinion. The time to put together an application, and then also the time to then implement it, in the middle of a financial year as well. I know it's academic, but finances are financial years, and it's just very little time to then set up new partnerships. That's my opinion, sorry. Voice 25 from [redacted] Music Service.

Dougie: Thank you. Again it's good to have that noted. Can we also just, do you want to put that as a risk, maybe in the general thought in the Jamboard as well. So I think we can collect there both the sense that this particular consultation isn't feeling adequate for the scale of change that's being proposed, as well as the timeline not feeling, or there being risks and worries around the timeline as well. Voice 28?

Voice 28: It's sort of an extension really of that point from Voice 25. What Hannah was just saying about a deliberate choice not to consider what partnerships already exist within the network already. It does just kind of put everybody in this position of potentially having to start from scratch with all the partnership working. So actually, if you don't know you're going to be hub lead organisation until beginning of 2024, to have all your partnerships developed and in place for September, feels like a largely non-existent time frame really. The partnerships we've been working on in East London with hubs have been developing over the 15 years, so the thought of having to start all of that from scratch again doesn't feel great.

Dougie: Yes. No, I completely agree, and I think again it's the sort of comment that it would be useful to have in the partnership section. I mean it doesn't matter really where it

is on the Jamboard but just to put that in the partnership section that there are clear concerns about what changing the number of hubs would mean for existing partnerships, and that not honouring the work that's gone into that feels disingenuous. I'm just going to share my screen again. I know that people can see the board more clear, at an individual level, but I'm just going to share my screen again so we can look at it collectively in this space as well. It's so I can try and see points that are being made as well as people that want to speak, and so on. It means that I've got a lot of windows open on my device as well.

Voice 25: This is Voice 25 here in the music service. I was trying to look back when the survey was actually released, because you've just mentioned that we had maybe six weeks to complete it over. My memory, it wasn't, it was [unclear words 0:56:33.4], it felt quite rushed. I didn't have time to consult all the people that I wanted to consult with before filling in that survey. I can't look quickly in my emails when we were given it, but it was not a long period of time it felt to me [over speaking 0:56:45.5]...

Unknown: I think the survey only came out on the 4th January. I think.

Unknown: And finished on Sunday.

Unknown: Yes.

Unknown: And was unsuccessful successful for people using particular types of accessible software. I couldn't fill it out. I've had to send a paper form in.

Dougie: Good to know, and sorry about that. It wasn't something I was directly responsible for, but I...

Unknown: No, I'm not, I'm just raising it as a point, I'm not holding you responsible. It hasn't been a long process or an accessible process.

Dougie: Yes. Sorry that was my mistake, I thought it had gone out before Christmas, but if it only went out on the 4th January, I'm aware that's not a very long time for it to be available.

Unknown: Shall we put that in a general thoughts, even though it's...

Dougie: Yes, by all means, yes, please do. I think, like I say it is noted in the transcript from this recording as well, so these will all be made available as transcripts for anyone looking to engage with what was done in the consultation process. [Pause] I think we've just got a few more minutes, maybe five minutes more in this space, so just make sure that you can get as much of your thoughts on the board as possible.

Unknown voice: Just to say I seem to be running out of characters quite frequently. Maybe just a piece of general feedback for the software.

Dougie: In Jamboards, not letting you write what you like on the notes.

Unknown: In that when I'm doing a sticky note, I just ran out before I can finish what I'm trying to say.

Dougie: Just feel free to use, I know it's not ideal, but as a workaround, if there is more, just put them over two notes. It's really not ideal but I think we're in this space now, and kind of have to work with what we've got. Again, useful feedback for future such exercises.

Dougie: Voice 30.

Voice 30: Douglas, will we get to see all these comments because I haven't had time to read them all as I've been thinking about doing my own, or will they be distilled down into a summary that we'll get in due course?

Dougie: Yes, well both. You've got the Jamboard link here so that will remain active for the rest of the day. So feel free to go in and spend a bit more time at the end of the session to look at it and add any further thoughts across any of them that you would like to as well. In terms of what outputs will be produced, so Melissa and I are going to write a summary document based on the transcripts and the Jamboards that have been produced across each of the five breakout rooms regionally, as well as the conversations that were taking place last week across the country, as well as the survey as well. So that will be written up as a short report summarising some of the key themes at a regional level and at a national level, against these scenarios that have been shared with us. So that will be made public, alongside the transcripts themselves once they've been anonymised. [Pause]

I'm not sure exactly when we're going to get the message to go back to the main room, but I suppose a general question that I'm quite interested in is, because I've noticed that this has definitely scored higher on a sort of effectiveness scale than the other two models. Is that just because it's the kind of closest to current arrangements, or is it because it just enables hubs to be far more locally responsive if there are more hubs? Is that question clear? What do people think?

Voice 28: I think anything that keeps strategy and delivery quite closely connected, is probably going to be most successful, so

that you're not getting a dilution, or a remoteness, from actually what's going on on the ground, and what is being planned. Also just the ability to keep those things quite closely connected so that you are being very responsive and needs based in terms of how things are developing.

Dougie: Thanks Voice 28. Voice 32?

Voice 32: Yes, I think following just on Voice 28's point, and Voice 28's note about building partnerships, anything that retains a closeness to existing partnerships that can be built on, because as musicians we only learn by doing, and if you throw that out and have to start doing from scratch, you start the learning process about what works in individual areas all over again. To come to Voice 34's point, we definitely need to work better at the SEN on a national level, so there's a better understanding, but building on the knowledge that's there already, I think's vitally important.

Dougie: Thanks. Voice 30?

Voice 30: Even though we know that there's some really effective partnership working between adjacent hubs, neighbouring hubs, then presumably the ideal, or the least bad scenario would be for the new hubs to reflect those natural partnership areas, so that there would be a unified partnership rather than the neighbouring partnership. So it feels to me like 87 is likely to be the closest to that rather than a much lesser number.

Dougie: That makes sense. Voice 34, did you want to come in?

Voice 34: Yes, I think something that's been percolating through my mind a lot as I've been, prior to this group, and researching, reading about the plan, was that, because there is a limited

amount of money available for SEND and inclusion within this plan, it is going to necessitate sharing resources, and the more hubs there are who can share resources with each other, so you're not duplicating cost, so that more people can access resources, because if one hub has spent money getting one score transcribed into brail, and can share that file with another hub who can then share it with their student who needs it, you'll be able to support more people. The more hubs you have who can share resources, the better, is what I'm trying to say.

Dougie: Yes, that makes sense. I think it's a big thing to think about in terms of how hubs will be encouraged to work together, not just within hub members, at whatever level that takes place, but actually collaboratively, and with Arts Council and others. I think we're going to go. Thank you everyone.

Midlands

Maria: Right everybody, shall we come back together? Or would you like another couple of minutes? Happy to come back together? Excellent. So interesting how many risks there are in the general thoughts, but that actually, across the board, there aren't as many risks on this one. Shall we go straight into a conversation about the individual strategic functions, so we can just focus in there? Any comments, additional thoughts, something that you'd like to go into more detail about, or underline the point that you've made around partnership. It seems to be that there's some comments here, I think from - organisations that are not currently hub lead organisations around partnership around working with external partners. Do any of our non-current hubs want to comment on that? I'm seeing that there's definitely some conversation around a nuanced approach, and quality of partnership, which that seems to

be coming through as an idea on this board. That with smaller, local partnerships, that are more nuanced based on what's already there, perhaps, and that that could lead to a greater quality of partnership.

Also, I don't know who wrote the comment about progress since the first national plan, whether it's worth going into a bit more detail about that. So it's the point which is around building on what's already there. If not, we can move on and talk about schools as well. Please do keep adding notes to the board, though, that's great. So with schools, I am going to, if possible, go to Voice 48 directly, straight away, because we know that she can offer us an interesting school perspective as well. Do you have any thoughts about this scenario with regards to schools, or any of the others, Voice 48, actually? Voice 48, you're on mute.

Voice 48: There we go. Just a general comment, really, and that is as far as I'm aware, there is no youth voice in this consultation whatsoever. As the largest stakeholders in this whole situation, I'm absolutely aghast that that hasn't happened. As the second-largest stakeholders in this situation in schools, that I am one of a very few who are represented on this whole thing. Certainly, from what I hear of what was happening last week in the face-to-face sessions, there were not a lot of teachers there either. That might simply be because they don't have time, which we don't. I'm here with my [redacted] hat on, I suppose, but yes. I'm just a little bit aghast, to say the least.

Maria: The thing I would say about the youth voice element of it is I completely hear you. What I would say is that the national plan itself was supported by young people's consultation. So the call for evidence that the DfE did involved a conversation with young people, and so their views were represented at that stage. It is true that there is no youth voice process as part of this specific

conversation about geographies, which has largely been down to the timeline. I hear you, and that's absolutely been noted. It is certainly something that is important and a consistent focus for the Arts Council across the programmes that we do. So I hear you. Voice 45, you've got your hand up.

Voice 45: Yes, I think Voice 48 makes a really good point. Voice 45 here from [redacted]. Voice 48, just to make you aware as well, just on the back of what Maria says, I'm sure all the music services on this call can put their hand on heart and actually say even without the instruction of national plan two, we are quite a way down that avenue of building youth voice into our own structures. So not just because national plan two came along and said we've got to do various things, you know, we are and have been doing, and creating some really strong links in our own areas around youth voice. Yes, I mean youth voice is talked about a lot on national plan two. Actually, it's talked about a lot more, it's talked more than the terminology of music services, which is not mentioned at all in national plan two. So yes, it is some really, really positive work going on. From what I gather about these focus groups and these [?missing 0:45:07.9] the consultation, it's the hub lead organisation side of it.

So one would assume that youth voice isn't required as a hub lead organisation tendering process, but it's part of the hub lead organisations' guidance. So the notes that will come out from Hannah and the team around the guidance for hub lead organisation will have to form elements of youth voice somewhere in it. Reflecting national plan two. I just wanted to say that, without national plan two, even before in national plan one, youth voice was very strong in our music services and hub lead organisation conversations.

Maria: We see lots of really good evidence of interesting youth voice work across the music hub cohort at the moment, so just reflecting that. Yes, also just to echo Voice 45's points. You're quite right, it comes down to a conversation which is around needs analysis and local plans for music education arising from what is relevant and useful in the areas that they are delivering in. Of course, a really essential way of understanding that will be through conversations with young people. So that angle will certainly come through in terms of guidance and requirements for hubs when we get to that stage in the investment process. Any other comments? Do we want to talk about progression and inclusion? Any specific points we want to make about progression and inclusion? Apologies if I keep moving your notes around as you're writing them. Voice 44, I think it was you last time commented on the idea around the parts of the sustainability strategic function which are around environmental responsibility. There's a comment here which is around this scenario could potentially be quite challenging in terms of addressing that. Do you have any other thoughts about that, or anybody else?

Unknown: I think that was my comment actually.

[Unclear words 0:47:13.4].

Unknown: I think it's hard with 87 organisations to deliver national strategy effectively. I mean, a sustainable agenda is difficult to deliver anyway, and a more joined-up approach is - I mean, yes, there are localised things you can do, but it's a national agenda, and a national opportunity. My only other comment was, I'm interested in - again, like I said, we work with probably 80, 85 hubs, and we know how hard people are working. I'm interested in, particularly from hub leaders here, is, with 87 organisations, do we have the capacity, through

leadership and governance, to have really great leadership and governance with so many organisations? Then the pivot to that is - and my comment is there around I'm not sure Arts Council England can effectively and properly hold to account 87 organisations. I've got concerns about that, because of just the quantum of activity that that requires. So do we feel that 87 is - is it achievable to get 87 great hub lead organisations, leadership, a broad spectrum of great non-exec directors and advisors to be working in those organisations? In this sector, that seems challenging to me, but I don't know the answer, I'm just interested in, maybe from Voice 47 and Voice 45, how you feel about that.

Voice 45: I can't see Voice 47 on the screen, but I'll go first if that's all right. Voice 45 again, [redacted]. Don't want to hog this call but great point, Voice 44. I think probably - and [redacted] might want to come in here, Voice 47 might want to come in here. The work we've done on governance, certainly over the last three or four years and through the pandemic to now, has been blooming hard work to really strengthen the governance of our hub lead organisation and the governance of Arts Council spend. I think if we move to a fewer number of hub lead organisations, I think the governance would then be - it could well take two, three, four, five years to get to where we are now, in building those governing boards, and real drilling down and stipulation into how that spend is being spent. That's the only thing that would worry me, is about building a really, truly challenging new governing board for, let's say, the maths hubs. So let's say the maths hub's area was Birmingham, Sandwell and Dudley, then we're back to square one. We'll have to look at our current and existing governance structures and then that could take two, three, four years to get the right people in the right place.

Maria: That's really helpful. I think it's a really important point which is around transition and mobilisation. So the

realities of moving into a change model. So again, put it on a sticky note, it's really helpful. Voice 47, you've got your hand up.

Voice 47: Yes, I mean, it's a really good question, Voice 44. I think, currently, we're already more than 87 as far as I can see, so we're already being assessed by Arts Council. I'm not sure, I mean, one of the challenges I've had with Arts Council has been how consistent that has been. You know, you talk about equality, leading, excellent organisation, and I still think we need, and going back to what I said earlier, the criteria around what that looks like, because there are huge inconsistencies across the country. We all know that. There's no doubting that the delivery is good and excellent in places, but there are lots of questions around governance, which I think Voice 45's just highlighted, in that getting people to volunteer in anything at the moment is really challenging. Both of us, actually, Voice 45, we're probably not - I don't know if anyone's - well, Voice 38's here from [redacted] which is slightly different. So from our perspective, we're a charitable organisation.

So our governance is our board of trustees. I've always had that challenge with what is a hub lead organisation and what is the accountability? Because the steering group, what we call our steering group, is different. They're our partnership group, but our accountability sits with our organisation, which is our board of trustees who are running the organisation. There is room for improvement, I think, and there is room for improvement in this whole thing, but what I think, for us, would be more interesting, is to get the evidence base based on the last ten years. What has worked and what hasn't worked, rather than this, sort of, slightly starting from scratch approach to this, which is the bit that I think is frustrating for everyone. It's like, we have got this body and where is that evidence, and where is the challenge from us to Arts Council, DfE? Because actually, we have got the experience of doing it. I'm not an experienced lead, I've only

been working in this sector for about five years. So there are others who are extremely experienced. Including industry, you know, we don't have, hand on heart, very good connections with industry because we're in a big, rural county.

So I could go on, but I won't. How do we make those connections? We have tried to make those connections and do pilot projects, but it's not sustainable. So that, for me, is back to that capacity and resource and building those structures. There is some discussion to be had around the efficiency of that and sharing that resource, and sharing that strategic direction, to make sure that what we're saying is excellent, is excellent, because it's very difficult to define that. So yes.

Maria: Thanks Voice 47.

Voice 47: Happy to have a conversation though, Voice 44, afterwards or later.

Maria: Thanks Voice 47. [redacted], I'm going to come straight onto you because I know you've got your hand up.

Unknown: Yes, thank you. I think that's a really interesting comment that was just put there. I think it's made me reflect that, currently, the hub leads aren't legal entities. So you've all got different structure, status. I suppose that's not equitable in some areas, so you might have a hub lead that's a charitable status and withdraw and apply for different funds and things that a local authority can't, and vice versa, local authorities can get other... So I think, in that sense, actually, I know we're looking at the principles and things, but it's not quite - depending on who the hub lead organisation is, we're not going to still have that - yes. I don't know what I'm quite saying here, but I just suppose it's something about the equitable status and yes, how you can draw governance in, how you can draw extra

funding in, and making sure that top slice is minimal, so the money goes directly to the learners.

Maria: That's really helpful, [redacted], thank you very much. If you haven't already made these comments, put them on a post-it note. I appreciate I keep saying the same thing, apologies for that. We're going to be dragged back into the room in 30 seconds, so a reminder that on the next slide is your rating. So think about this scenario. One is not effective at all, five is extremely effective. If you were going to put a post-it note next to one of those numbers, please do so now. That would be really helpful. Thank you for your time and thoughts, it's been really great to talk to you. Apologies that it hasn't been longer today, but it's been really great to hear from you all. Thanks so much.

North

Sam: If you can just make sure you've got things where you would like them to be in terms of the different sections. I'll just resize a few so that we've got some more space. I'm noticing quite a few pinks in progression and musical development. I know we had a conversation like that in the previous scenario, but are there any particular reflections on that? [Short pause] Or any general thoughts? [Long pause] Voice 52.

Voice 52: Hello there. Voice 52, part of [redacted] but I also teach in schools as well in the North. I've actually put quite a lot of green, a lot of opportunities, but I did put a pink in progression and musical development. I did feel that the bigger the Music Hubs, even though it's still been 87, it's not allowing that close relationship with the Hubs, still. Schools at the moment, especially in the North, have that one-to-one basis

with Hubs and have opportunity to have real music development planning opportunities. Is that going to continue?

Sam: So, is that a risk of this generally of all scenarios, or particularly this scenario, sorry?

Voice 52: Well, all scenarios really.

Sam: Do make sure that's captured in there as well, but thank you. Voice 50.

Voice 50: Yes, purely to ensure things are captured, two quick observations: firstly, by having grants specifically allocated to each local authority area as currently, I've put on the red note that there is a moral purpose to what we do. We champion the children and young people of our area; the advocacy from that particular region. There is the risk in all of these models that that, to a certain extent, gets lost because delivery organisations are then being commissioned to deliver. I think we need to make sure that there remains a moral purpose to Music Hubs and it's not purely a transactional, traded, financially-driven model. That links to inclusion, I guess, as well. Then the other thing - which I know has been raised a few times but again I just thought I'd make sure it was on the sticky - is that the rationale for the five strategic partnerships and everything to do that within the National Plan doesn't reference geography. I'm still intrigued as to where the rationale for the translating what was put in the plan into therefore fewer Hubs, where that came from.

If it comes from somewhere, it'd be really interesting to read it and understand the rationale behind, and therefore the strategic decision is that this will be best served by fewer Hubs because as I say, the strategic aims of themselves could be - in theory - delivered by the existing Hub structure.

Sam: Thank you, Voice 50. Just for anyone else: I did notice that there's the rationale for fewer Hubs, so the fewer Hubs is stated in the National Plan. So, that is in there and then there is the rationale that's linked from Hannah's presentation earlier about fewer larger Hubs and obviously then about prescribed geographies, which is what's being tested out in DfE. So, there is all of that information out there for anyone that isn't as familiar with it. Do log any feedback on that so that we can make sure that's all captured. There are quite a lot of general thoughts on this one, so thank you everyone. I'm just going to make sure that we can actually see them all as we move through this.

There are a few ones that look like general thoughts on partnership, which would be worth just to make sure that they are - whether they are general thoughts or whether they are partnership related. So, if anyone owns those thoughts, do take a little look as we listen to others' reflections. I think Voice 58, you were next.

Voice 58: Just to say in response little bit to what Voice 50 just said: there is massive difference in the success of Hubs across the country. I know particularly in lockdown I was particularly looking for support from Hubs and looking elsewhere. The difference in what goes on in different parts of the country, was incredible, the sort of provision that's made by Hubs and how they operate and what they provide. That certainly does need looking at. I think if you're in a part of the country where - I can see, I remember looking at Southampton's Music Hubs and being so impressed and sort of like, 'Goodness me! A completely different scenario is happening here also.' I do think that there does need - it needs to be looked at ten years on and maybe just evened up a bit, if that does... There does need to be some shaking up in some areas and just make them a little bit more level and maybe size... There's a massive difference in

size at the moment. That is going to contribute in various ways and there are going to be pros and cons. At the moment, the provision is not good in all areas at all. It's just still - in that brilliant word that we always use about music education - very patchy.

Sam: Thank you Voice 58, that's a really helpful reflection to hear first-hand of your experiences, so thank you for sharing that. Voice 54, you've got your hand up.

Voice 54: Yes, I guess again - Voice 58, I'm following you again! - it's exactly that; it's the quality. Nothing ever seems to be discussed about the actual quality of offers that different Hubs have - which surely should be the measure of where those Hubs are led from, where the strongest strategic offers are currently and where the strongest offers are. That never seems to be really part of the conversation, which I always think is concerning because in schools very much that is what it is. You are very much judged on the quality and if your quality is not good, that's what it's all about. It's not how big or small you are and who you're joining with. The other thing I just wanted to ask - and it might just be me misunderstanding or, I don't know - but once we have made, this decision has been made during this consultation and the number of Hubs is decided, whether it's the higher, the middle or the lower, will those geographies be prescribed within that? Would we then have autonomy with that, looking at how that looks? I don't know whether anybody can answer that or whether that's...

Sam: I can try to, but I think also just capture that within a sticky note as well. I think what Hannah outlined earlier is that the prescribed geography would then be shared. So, what the prescribed geographies would look like across the country would then be shared with anyone. Then anyone that was wishing to become a Hub Lead

Organisation would select that area as part of their application. So, the area...

Voice 54: When you're saying shared, that's the bit I'm a bit - that I don't feel is very clear, so when they say it is shared, does that mean: so we've established 80 or 40 and now that is going to be... It's going to obviously stay within those regions that can't be broken up. Does that mean they could say, 'You have to work with, say, three specific Hubs that may be within your region' rather... I'm thinking about the North East, for example, so we've got eight Hubs or eight regions at the moment. There are obviously geographical political areas which work much better than others, although we all work together anyway, but what we do on a more regular basis is very much localised. That's because that geography and the combined local authority and all the political thing works for the children and young people in that area. Is that going to be taken into account, or could they say, 'Right, well, you'll end up in North Tyneside with South Tyneside' - which is on the other side of the water, for example? That's a concern that I have; regardless of who leads it, that jump is very important and I don't know whether that is going to be prescribed.

Sam: Yes, the geographic...

Voice 54: Does that make sense?

Sam: Yes, I might want to clarify that with you further, but maybe it needs to go on a sticky note as well just to make sure. What I'm hearing, what I'm understanding from the process, is that the Hub geographic areas will be prescribed as in they will be set. So, there would be X number of areas that then anyone could apply against. It would be the local authority geographic areas, so not necessarily referring to existing arrangements. It would just be these geographies. They would then be - so you

could have X number of geographies within a region and then...

Voice 54: But there's no consultation about that is what I mean, I guess, but there's...

Sam: Yes, there isn't currently any further consultation about that, no.

Voice 54: Yes, that's what I'm trying to say, really.

Sam: If there is feedback there that you feel that there should be, then that's something that you do capture in general thoughts.

Voice 54: Yes.

Sam: That is relating to the guiding principles that have been set by the Department for Education, so capture that somewhere - but obviously it's captured in this conversation as well.

Voice 54: Yes, thank you.

Sam: Thank you, Voice 54. We've got a few minutes left, so I think is it Voice 57, then Voice 55? Voice 57 first.

Voice 57: Thanks Samantha. I just want to pick up on Voice 58's comment, and then I guess it bolts on to what Voice 54 was saying as well. Just to say for the tape, we need to make sure that the funding is appropriate for each of these new Hubs that are created. We do have these geographical challenges. Now, if I'm running a Music Hub in, say, Newcastle City Centre I can get a teacher between one school and another in five minutes. It takes no time at all, but if I then teleport them up to Berwick-upon-Tweed on the border with Scotland, getting

between one school and another rural school can be up to an hour depending on the instrument they're teaching, with the requirements of the Hub. The funding therefore needs to support these different geographical challenges and also the demographical challenges.

What we see in Newcastle City is very different to what we see in Northumberland. It's very different to what we see in South Tyneside. The different communities requiring different musical interventions and experiences. That funding needs to reflect that, so yes, dividing up the Hubs in different ways, joining up partnerships, pooling our resources could be really positive, but it will only be a good thing if we have appropriate funding from Arts Council and it can't just be a blanket, 'Here's a budget; split it into 87, off we go.' It needs to be, 'This Hub requires extra funding to allow for these geographical challenges. This Hub needs extra funding because of the demographic challenges that they are facing.' So on and so on. It's just for the tape and logging that with colleagues here as a big point of concern I have that the funding won't actually then follow through as we need it to do so.

Sam: Thank you, Voice 57, that's a really helpful reflection - and thank you for sharing that. Do make sure it's also on a Post-it note, if it's not there as well, because there are quite a lot. So, I can't quite see all of them at the minute. Voice 55, I think you might be the last one before we get called back through. Please go ahead.

Voice 55: I suppose it's probably not a very helpful point in one way, but I suppose it's building on what somebody said earlier about: it's like almost why is this happening? It's like what I said earlier; what is the problem they're trying to fix? I know there are a few things around - unless somebody else has found it, I don't understand why they're doing this, as in the evidence of what they're trying to change apart from more consistency. I

suppose is there a political thing underlining this where they're maybe trying to break that barrier, I suppose, of maybe local authorities having a music service and that that was the problem because that's fundamentally what happened. A lot of it became that and with the academisation thing, they're obviously trying to make - get rid of those boundaries of local authorities in terms of school provision. In some ways, I suppose if we understood why the drivers for this, it would make it easier to come up with - I suppose understand what the model should be.

I suppose that's what I don't feel is clear, and a few people have asked it - and I realise you're not probably in a position to answer this maybe - but it's: why do they want to do it in the first place? What is it that they think is broken and that would make it easier for us to work out how to fix it?

Sam: Thanks Voice 55. I would say that the rationale that's published on our website from the DfE is the reason why they are recommending fewer larger Hubs. If you have specific feedback on that, then do make sure that's captured as well, but it's obviously captured in this conversation, but captured in your sticky notes as well. Thank you for that. I'm conscious that the general thoughts is getting quite crowded - which is really helpful - but we might just need to make things smaller. We've got about just under a minute. Voice 51.

Voice 51: Yes, it's not [redacted]; it's Voice 51. I'm standing in for her because unfortunately she's ill today. So, I'm Voice 51 [unclear words 1:09:12.0] in [redacted]. First of all I just wanted to say: I think you're in a very difficult position, Arts Council England. You've been given a job of deliberating a consultation without the detail behind any of the proposal, to be quite honest, in terms of how the Lead Organisations would be governed, how they will be funded and the funding strategy,

how that works. Also the commissioning; it could be that a Music Hub doesn't get the Lead and it's an organisation that's not familiar with how we operate currently. They've got the task of commissioning out work, which could fundamentally put a lot of music services very much in the risk element. I just feel that the whole process, the three models, would be easier to actually determine the functionality...

[Recording ends mid-sentence]

South West

Anna: Right, I think, seems to be slowing down slightly. If anybody would like to chip in for discussion... Just one thing I'm observing is there's a few comments here that are in different colours, I guess because people think it maybe means different things, suggesting that, arguably, this isn't a big enough change to justify the change. If anybody wants to speak to that, I think that could be really interesting. If there's anything else anybody would like to chip into conversation, please do put your virtual hand up and we'll start talking whenever you're ready. [redacted].

Unknown: I'm one of the people who said that, but I think it's the best scenario, not that I think any of the scenarios are really good to be honest. I'm not being negative there, but we have to take this opportunity to be critical. I think it would need measures working into it. I think it's better for a region like the South West, but I think it would need, I refer to them as anti-fudge criteria putting in. That's always been the problem. We wouldn't be dealing with some of this stuff now if some things had been done more firmly and properly ten, between six and ten years ago. I feel that we're all rather being hit with a rather large hammer, to deal with a relative minority who have sat in the mud for too long. I think this would be better, but I think it

needs something in it to push it along. That could be stuff about collaboration between Hub Lead Organisations in a realistic way.

Anna: Thank you, [redacted], that's building on something you said in the main room, I think. Voice 16 .

Voice 16 : Yes, hi. I also was thinking and feeling that perhaps it wasn't enough change in terms of the numbers of hubs. I think there are some collaborations of hubs, who are now working together, and actually it only takes three or four of those and you're back down to 87, in which case, how much change is there then for the rest of the country? I think if we're going to embrace change, we need to find ways of making that change manageable and workable within regions that we're in already. Yes, that's probably all I need to say.

Unknown: Just to come back on that point, this model would give more propensity for hubs and Hub Lead Organisations to collaborate on the basis, with other people in different parts of the country, on the basis of mindset and mutual interest and affinity, which is what the geographical one doesn't do.

Voice 23: Is that the case though, [redacted], sorry, is that the case if those...

Anna: You're quite quiet - there we go - you were very quiet for a minute there Voice 23, but...

Voice 23: Can you hear me? Sorry. Yes, it was just, [redacted], I was just going to say I agree absolutely with what you've been saying about that change was needed a few years ago, and we're being all hit with a rather large hammer. In terms of that working with hubs, similar hubs in different regions, I don't know if that will be possible if it's prescribed geographic areas, that's the thing, isn't it, on that. I agree with you.

Unknown: The whole point is, Voice 23, that hubs can and always could have worked with each other, without being forced to get into bed.

Voice 23: That's true, yes.

Anna: Yes, so I guess, I think what I'm hearing is in this world where there's, let's say 90, let's round it up, individually-appointed Hub Lead Organisations with funding agreements, you might want and expect that within that 90, there would continue to be collaboration, which may not have to be restricted to geographical areas. Is that what you're saying, [redacted]?

Unknown: Yes.

Anna: Voice 23, was there anything you wanted to add? Sorry.

Voice 23: No, I agree also, I agree with what [redacted] says absolutely. We collaborate with other hubs across our region and nationally on various initiatives, like [redacted] and all sorts of stuff. I think the other thing is there's a lot of stuff, there's not been much acknowledgement of this, but actually there's, I know Hannah said she is very interested in it, but certainly the DfE don't seem to be aware of the amount of existing partnership that does happen between hubs, both regionally and across the country actually. Yes, and that's the other, the final thing I would say is I get the geographic prescription, but actually, why tear up everything so dogmatically when there are already existing partnerships that work pretty well? Why shouldn't hubs be able to have a shot at existing hubs or new partners across a region that suits them? Rather than having it all prescribed to them, who they have to work with in what region, if you see what I mean.

Anna: I do, and if that isn't on a Post-it, Voice 23, because I know it's not directly relevant to this 87, but if you want to get it logged anyway and stick it in the general thoughts section, that would be great.

Voice 23: Okay.

Anna: [redacted] and Voice 16, you both have hands up, and I'm not sure if they're new hands or old hands! Old hand for Voice 16. New hand for Voice 16, sorry, do come in then Voice 16.

Voice 16: Okay, thanks. It was just a more general point really, that a lot of us are from national arts organisations, from music services, from local authorities, MATs. Actually, just in the grand scheme of life and music education, yes, of course this is about hubs and collaboration, but regardless of the geographical areas, good practice would dictate - and I think [redacted] was alluding to this - good practice dictates that we work with partners for the best of what we're doing for our children. I just feel that is really important to say because it's not just doing and working with the people we're told to by the government. It's actually doing what's best for the children, regardless of those geographical areas as well. Obviously, the hubs would be confined to those, but good practice would dictate - a bit like the lady from the [redacted], we would work with the [redacted] if we had children who were visually-impaired because that's good practice. I just felt that was important.

Anna: Absolutely, and it's a very fair observation. I guess the only thing I would put back, but I think you've all been already doing this from the comments I'm seeing, is if any of these models, examples or hypotheticals, would better or worse facilitate that partnership that you're, that is very much part of your bread and butter and what you do... I think I have seen that on Post-its. If there's anything you

wanted to add on that, then feel free to add further reflections on that to this board or another board.

Mathilda: Yes, just about to say, just under five minutes to go.

Anna: Yes, it's just under five minutes to go, so if you would like to rank this or rate this option on slide ten of the Jamboard, you can add your sticky note under one, two, three, four, or five, as you've been doing on the previous ones. As we were reminded last time, no fence-sitting, you've got to choose a number, please. Feel free to keep adding comments to the previous page of the Jamboard as well if you've still got things you wanted to add. If anybody wants to throw anything into conversation, we can do that in parallel as well.

[Long pause]

Anna: Thank you [redacted]. Thank you [redacted] as well if you're still there!

[Long pause]

Anna: Not in this group, [redacted], I don't think we have, but it's, nobody's so far rated any of them as extremely effective, but who knows? Other groups may have felt differently. Thanks Voice 11. Personally - sorry, [redacted], I'm answering your chat in person - but personally, I haven't been in the other sessions. I don't know if Hannah has any reflections to share in our last couple of minutes, but the in-person sessions, I think...

Hannah: Each session has actually been quite different. There hasn't been a common reaction actually for any of them, between the areas. Some have been quite pro for

some and not others, which has then been different to another area. Yes, what will be interesting for Melissa and Dougie is to overlay all of these because I can hardly see the wood for the trees. Yes, some people have rated each of them as highly effective, each of the options, in the different sessions.

Anna: Thanks Hannah. We've had our 60-second warning, so please feel free if you're finished with this one to go back to the main room if you have time to stick with us for some final reflections. I completely understand if you need to shoot off.

Melissa: Welcome back everybody. I am aware it is already 4:00pm and we told you the session was going to end at 4:00pm. If anybody does need to leave, thank you for the contributions that you've made within your break-outs and thank you just for taking the time to join us. For those who are able to stay, we won't keep you more than another 10 minutes or so, but it would be wonderful if you are able to stay for some final reflections which I'll hand-over to Dougie to tell us a little bit about.

Dougie: We wanted just to have this moment at the end to enable the whole group to come back together and share maybe some of the more pressing observations and ideas that came up with the individual groups. It is an open session. We've had quite useful time in between each of the scenarios and going into the sub-groups to have a general conversation in this space as well. It was really just so people feel they have got an opportunity to contribute in this forum.

So, essentially you can tell us if you have a strong preferred scenario and we know we've record that had to

some extent in the Jamboards through the sub-groups, but it is anything more general that the Department of Education should take into consideration when making its decision about prescribed geographies for Music Hubs. Are there any key take-aways that you really want to be noted and considered. As usual, just raise your hand and you can have the mic.

Melissa: I popped a link to the Jamboard where it would be great if you could record your most preferred scenario and final other considerations for DFE on those Jamboards, that would be wonderful.

Dougie: Thanks, Melissa, Voice 3?

Voice 3: I want to reiterate what I said in the break-out, I strongly feel that this should be need-led and not geography-led because needs across regions vary so drastically that this cannot possibly be a decision that is made according to area geographies. That was it.

Dougie: Thank you. Hannah, please indicate if you want to say something. I will move on to Voice 28.

Voice 28: I wanted to repeat something that I said in our break-out groups. It is about the prescription of geographies and the thing that feels like it is missing in the three methodologies that we have been exploring today is the existing really successful partnership work which is going on which extends to beyond just one Music Hub and there is a lot of cross-local authority and Music Hub working that already goes on and successful appliances and partnerships. Both built some really successful programmes of work for children and young people over the last decade and it comes back to building on the success of what has been achieved so far, but if we are to completely disregard the partnership working and success of what has come up until

this point, it feels like we're starting from scratch in terms of a lot of that work and it's just a kind of plea I guess to think about how the existing partnerships and the successful work that which is taking place already is considered as part of the prescribed geographies that will then be shared as part of the next stage.

Dougie: Thank you.

Hannah: I hear you.

Dougie: Voice 23?

Voice 23: Voice 3 and Voice 28 have said what I was going to say. It seems to arbitrary to rule out using existing partnerships where they are working well and enabling them to an extent define geography by need. That was one of the points I wanted to make and the other point was around it seemed in our group that there was a fairly, the most positive option was the one closest to the current model. I think I'm being accurate in representing that, i.e., the 87 hubs or whatever it turns out to be. I think the other thing, I would just add in at this point is just around the length of time, if the model is completely torn up. If we go to a ten region model, those existing partnerships, will be torn up. We've only got six years left of the new national plan what's left, two of those years could be spent putting into place the new processes. It adds to what has already has been said, do we have time to do that? Do we want to tear up the whole rule book and start again? There is existing good practise. There are partnerships already happening. Obviously there are some hubs that aren't working well and there are scope to remodel those and we need to think of the timescale and the disruption that would be caused by tearing up the whole thing and starting over again. That's what I'd like to contribute.

Dougie: Voice 5. I think you've had your hand up.

Voice 5: I want to say thank you, you guys are in the same position as us where it is we're in a difficult position and where we don't necessarily know what is going to happen and we are talking about what potentially could happen. I wanted to reiterate this meeting has been a good starting point, but we need further conversation to happen following this to get down into further details about what's needed and that needs to be based on locality and based on the needs of those people within that locality as well. I think that the break-out rooms in this meeting were really productive and how we could talk a little about what's going on for us locally, but we didn't get to cover as much of that as I'd like to. If we were to have more meetings and split that and discuss what is affecting our areas and what's in need, what this restructuring could bring and any challenges that the restructuring could potentially miss and that's a huge point and included in that, we need young people here. This service is meant to be provided for young people and to give them the opportunities to participate in music no matter where they are at in their life free of discrimination, in a safe space, that's accessible and they have got people they can trust. Young people need to be in these meetings. I'm sure we have experience that young people make their voices heard about this kind of issue. They know what they want. They can field the issues within their systems and quite often from my experience, they know the best ways to fix them that are going to be the best for them. Those have to be the next steps before any decisions are made otherwise I fear we are going to be in the same cycle in however many years' time when we look at the system again and say "oh, it didn't fix the way we think it is going to." We're going to be back to square one. A lot of the issues are access to funding and access to resources. Restructuring could bring some potential benefits, but there needs to be a discussion around what resources are available, how we can work together to make sure that resources are available because there is people within the same locality that will have things that each other need. Here we have a venue.

Let's work together and we don't necessarily need to look at restructuring Music Hubs to do that. There needs to be resources and funding and it needs to be accessible to young people to make that happen.

Dougie: A lot of key points. I am aware of the time and people have got their hands up. I will ask Voice 31 and Voice 50 to make as short as statements as possible.

Voice 31: I was going to say the same thing as Voice 5. There is a huge influence on the co-creation, but it felt like throughout this process there was none. Youth music was mentioned at the beginning of this. There is a massive highlight on the co-creation with children and it would be great to have them there and also try and explain about the repercussions of these three choices. What will happen to your violin teacher if we go for option A, B or C. It is about how am I going to study music in September 2024? That's a very important thing for me. Then this might be just a personal thing because of the way we as a company completed the survey last week. I have to say I'm not very comfortable with the three labels as bridge organisations must have because the way we replied to that survey was by implying the three methods also include three very different models as they were described on the Arts Council website. Today's discussion is choosing 10, 80, 47. I want to make the point that if we disregard the difference in business models then I think we should highlight that. For example, bridge organisations are the only ones that are arts organisations and we went under the assumption - they are not necessarily the same type of model. Multi-academy trusts were mentioned multiple times. That is a for profit model within which a non-profit will be established, but we really felt that having this type of grant been a for profit model might hinder the collaborative possibilities across regions.

Dougie: Voice 14 put her hand down and made a comment in the chat.

Voice 50: It is important to acknowledge Arts Council, that it is a really challenging job that you have, and I don't think everything that's being said is in a constructive way to contribute to the process. That said, I think it is important to understand that we need to be outcome-driven and not process-driven and if the need to have a completely transparent process from a tendering point of view is driving the equality of size, we need to make sure we're not driven down an equality pathway rather than an equitable one. We need to ensure that each region is served by an equitable hub. That's not to say whether it should be 40, 80, 10, but it is just on the understanding that the local need, if that informs the size of the hub that represents the area, the greater the impact, the greater the nuance of the partnership and the greater value for money, but whether that is compatible to the process to be delivered in terms of being able to compare one bid to another is something that we don't know at the moment, but it is a real challenge.

Dougie: Thanks, Voice 50. I'll hand over to Hannah because she will be able to summarise her thoughts.

Hannah: Thank you. Well, I'd like to thank Voice 31 and Voice 5 on listening to the needs of young people. It is critical. This is a programme which should be for them and designed with them and that's why it was important to the DfE to have young people responding to its open consultation for the national plan and if I'd had the time, like we had done with our Let's Create consultation, the opportunity to talk to young people would be really important to me.

What we will be also making sure moving forwards is, making clear the need for public lead organisations and

their partners to be continuing to talk regularly to young people, parents and teachers. I'd like to thank everybody for their comments. I have listened to those and we will be sharing them with the Department for Education. Thank you.

Dougie: I think Melissa, were you going to wrap up the session.

Melissa: Thank you for everything that's you've contributed. It has been a real privilege to speak in today's focus group as well as the in-person focus groups last week and to hear from many of you in the survey. Thank you for being reflective and constructive and thoughtful in your criticisms and your feedback. Dougie and I will be taking all of this into account as we review all the data that we've collected and in ensuring that we fairly and accurately report everything that we hear back to DfE and Arts Council so they can take that into account in their decisions.

Hannah: Once we have got Melissa and Dougie's report we will be coming up with recommendations for the department and how they'd like to progress with this issue and we will be, after these focus groups are completed, we will be sharing how many of each type of is taking part in the focus groups alongside anonymised transcripts of the sessions so everyone who has not been able to attend today can read those and know what we have talked about and as I said earlier, we're intending to publish the Guidance for Applicants in the Spring ahead of the portal opening in the summer.

Thank you very much, what we have been talking about is really difficult. That is coming through that this is a really tricky issue and as Melissa said, you've all contributed so

positively and constructively. So, thank you very much for doing that. It is all very abstract at the moment and you've responded really well to that. Yes, thank you very much. Thank you for staying on a bit later as well. I hope you all have a nice evening and I look forward to working with you all moving forwards on the music programme.

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