

Shaping the next  
**ten**  
**years**

**Developing a new strategy  
for Arts Council England  
2020-2030**

Preparation material for the online consultation  
Autumn 2018

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# Introduction

**Thank you for your interest in Arts Council England's consultation on the development of our new ten year strategy, from 2020-2030.**

Please read this document before you respond to the consultation. It should only take about 15 minutes to read, and then you can go online and answer questions which explore your responses to the ideas set out here, and how best to achieve them. You will also be able to tell us how you think the Arts Council and the organisations we work with might need to change.

We want to hear from as many different people as possible, and we will pay close attention to what you say. Please do make time to complete the consultation, and encourage others to do the same.

We look forward to hearing from you.

## A note on language

Within this document, we refer repeatedly to 'culture', 'creativity', and 'creative practitioners', rather than 'art', 'the arts' or 'artists'. This is partly to acknowledge that our role includes activities involving museums and libraries as well as the arts, but it also reflects findings from the research commissioned for the new strategy, which showed that the general public's understanding of what is meant by 'the arts' and 'artists' is significantly narrower than our own. So, in this document, the word 'culture' should be taken to include the activity we currently support in the arts, museums and libraries; the word 'creativity' refers to the act of creating culture; and the phrase 'creative practitioner' covers all those who are involved in creating culture, from artists and makers through to curators and producers. The use of the word 'we' refers to Arts Council England.

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# Consulting on our new strategy

**In 2010, Arts Council England presented its inaugural ten year strategy, *Great Art and Culture for Everyone*. We are now developing a new strategy for the period 2020 to 2030. We intend that this strategy, which will shape our development, advocacy and investment approach for the next ten years, will help us go further in realising this nation's creativity, and unlocking the cultural, social and economic benefits that come with it.**

To date, we have considered a wide range of evidence and held conversations with the public and with our stakeholders. We have analysed the results of this work and identified a series of proposed outcomes that we believe we should aim to achieve by 2030, along with the barriers that might stand in our way.

These proposed outcomes, along with our case for change and our ambition for the future, form the framework for our strategy. They are not the strategy itself, which will be drafted and consulted on in spring 2019. At this point we will also share our thinking about how we can best use our resources to deliver the new strategy.

During the autumn of 2018, we are asking people if they agree that these outcomes are the right things for Arts Council England to focus on over the next ten years and, if so, how we might work together to achieve them. To do this will require change from both Arts Council England and the organisations we will invest in.

We remain committed to championing, investing in and advocating for all of the art-forms we currently support, but we think this is the right moment to be looking again at what we mean by culture and creativity in this country and the role that the Arts Council can best take in nurturing and supporting them over the next decade.

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# The case for change

From our review of evidence, we identified a number of issues that we believe a new Arts Council strategy should seek to address. Together, these form our 'case for change'.

Across the population there are significant **differences in how 'arts and culture' are defined, understood and valued.**

There are still widespread socio-economic and geographic variances in **levels of engagement with publicly funded culture.**

The **opportunities for children and young people** to experience culture and creativity inside and outside school **are not equal** across the country.

Although awareness of the issue is greater than it used to be, there remains a **persistent and widespread lack of diversity** across the creative industries and in publicly funded cultural organisations.

The business models of **publicly funded cultural organisations are often fragile** and generally lack the flexibility to address emerging challenges and opportunities, especially those relating to operating within the digital economy and declining public funding.

Many creative practitioners and leaders of cultural organisations report **a retreat from innovation, risk-taking and sustained talent development.**

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# Achievements to date

Over the past ten years we have also seen the positive impact of this country's cultural and creative achievements.



We have a growing **national and international reputation** for the quality and innovation of our creative industries, including our publicly funded cultural organisations.

We have **cultural buildings** that are now better able to meet the complex demands of our creative talent, as well as being more attractive and accessible for audiences.



And, as a result, many cities and towns across England have a greatly **strengthened cultural offer** compared with a decade ago.

These achievements have been realised through sustained revenue and capital investment by national and local partnerships including local government, higher and further education, local enterprise partnerships and Arts Council England. So, while recognising the urgency and importance of our case for change, we don't underestimate the significant contributions made by a range of organisations who are committed to strengthening culture in this country. We know that the new strategy must build on these achievements, alongside clear consideration of new and different approaches that may be required.

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# Thinking about our ambition for the future

**By 2030, Arts Council England intends that this country should become a truly creative nation - one that celebrates the culture of all of its communities, and that encourages creativity in all of its citizens.**

Every citizen of this country, at every point in their lives, should be empowered to develop their creativity, and engage in cultural activities that are relevant to their lives on the one hand, and expand their horizons on the other.

This is not something Arts Council England can achieve in isolation. We will need to work closely with artists and cultural organisations, and with others: both the many national public bodies that are already active in the arenas of culture, creativity and the creative industries; and in local partnerships built around places, with those organisations and institutions – across government, education, commerce and civil society - who share our goal of developing creativity and supporting culture that is meaningful to the communities that produce and experience it.



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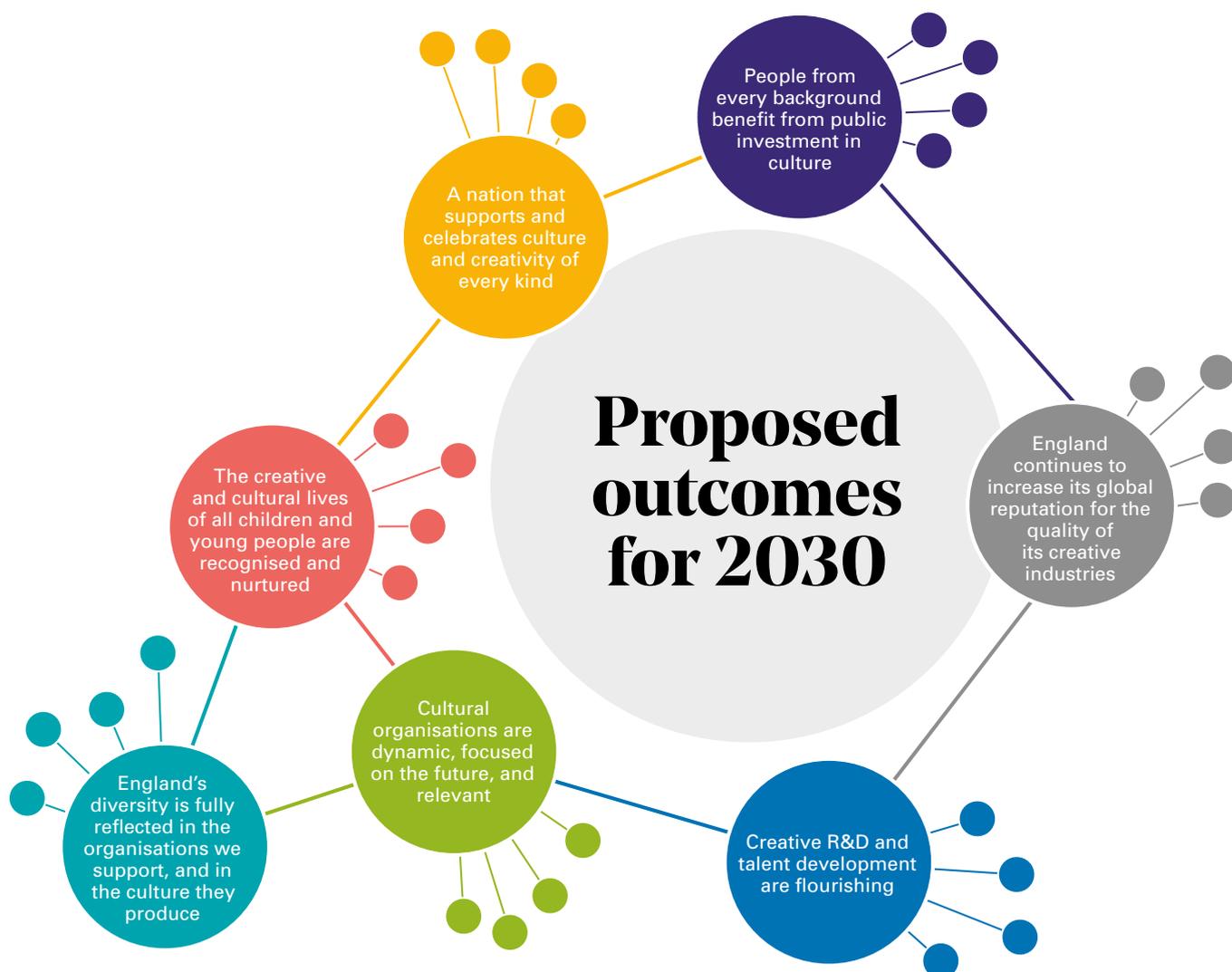
# Proposed outcomes for 2030

**The following pages set out seven proposed outcomes for 2030. They respond to the case for change we outlined earlier, as well as to the achievements of the current strategy, and to the level of ambition we want to set ourselves for the future.**

They are intentionally bold, but they are neither fixed nor final - and we want to test them with you through this consultation.

At this stage, we have chosen to focus on outcomes that describe the results we would like to see, rather than aims or goals, which would describe what we want to do. This is because we need to be clear about the impact we want to achieve over the next ten years.

We think the outcomes are closely linked: every individual outcome connects with and depends upon each of the others. We would like to hear from you through the consultation whether some outcomes are more important than others.





# A nation that supports and celebrates culture and creativity of every kind

Culture means different things to different people, and creativity can be expressed in many ways. But no matter how people choose to get involved with culture or express their creativity – through painting or papercraft, hip hop or coding, joining a book club or their local choir – the joy and benefits that they receive are real and lasting.

While the breadth of creativity and cultural activity in England today is extraordinary, Arts Council England has generally focused on those activities that come under a traditional definition of ‘the arts’. As the country’s culture continues to widen and deepen, absorbing influences from every corner of the planet and using technologies that

didn’t exist before the turn of the millennium, we think we need to widen our focus as well.

England should be a nation in which culture and creativity of every kind are valued and celebrated for the difference they make to people’s lives and the strength they bring to our communities and the economy. We believe we should be looking to develop, advocate for and invest in a far wider range of culture and creativity. We want to celebrate more of the culture and activities that people are passionate about, and help more people to lead creative lives. We also want to support people to improve their own creative practice and increase the range of culture they experience.

**To achieve this we think we will need to see the following changes:**

Arts Council England, and the organisations we work with, will **recognise, value and invest** in the culture and creativity that are part of **people’s everyday lives**.

Arts Council England, and the organisations we work with, will give **better support to new forms of culture**, including those developed using new technologies.

Culture and creativity make a positive difference to society, to the economy and to people’s lives. This **case must be made more effectively**, and demonstrated through stronger evidence.

There will be **greater public support** for, and **investment** in, culture and creativity.

**By 2030, we want significantly more people to have access to cultural activities, and to have developed their creativity. We also want public and private investment in all kinds of culture and creativity to have increased.**



# People from every background benefit from public investment in culture

Our country's thriving cultural organisations and creative industries have built an international reputation for the quality of their output. But while our creative practitioners and cultural organisations have been supported over many years to produce excellent work, less progress has been made in making sure that what they produce is experienced by everyone around the country, no matter where they live or what their background.

Publicly funded culture generally serves only a very small percentage of the population – those that tend to be better off and more likely to have a degree. The Arts Council believes that this situation must change. We know that culture brings powerful benefits to the lives of those who experience it regularly. As a result, where public money is invested in culture, we have a

responsibility to make sure that as many members of the public as possible regularly experience. Unless this happens, it will prove increasingly difficult to make the case for public investment in culture.

Around the country today there are excellent examples of projects, activities and programmes that tackle this issue head-on. Where these are most effective, they involve creative practitioners and cultural organisations working closely with communities to make sure that the culture they produce reflects and responds to those communities' needs, interests and ambitions. In the future, we think we should invest more in practitioners and organisations who are working with their communities to shape local cultural activity.

**To achieve this we think we will need to see the following changes:**

Cultural organisations will **work together and with local communities** to create and develop cultural experiences that involve a far wider range of people.

All organisations that receive public funding will **tackle the barriers that prevent people from taking part** in publicly funded cultural experiences.

Cultural organisations will work with a wider range of partners to **collaborate and invest together to broaden cultural provision** everywhere.

Arts Council England, and the organisations we work with, will **help more people find and access** a wide range of cultural activities.

**By 2030, we plan to invest in culture that is relevant and responds to the needs, interests and ambitions of all people across the country, whatever their backgrounds and circumstances.**



# Creative R&D and talent development are flourishing

This country's cultural organisations, and its creative industries, are sustained and underpinned by the talent, expertise, drive and innovation of our creative practitioners. Their skills and ideas are a vital source of both inspiration and economic value. But many, especially those working outside our funded organisations, struggle to develop their practice and make ends meet. Building and sustaining a career as a creative practitioner is always challenging, but success currently depends far too much on background and socio-economic status.

We believe that the Arts Council should do more to support creative practitioners and independent cultural organisations to develop and maintain

their practice. We want to help them achieve their individual potential so that the benefits are felt across the creative industries. We think publicly funded cultural organisations could also do more to support a sustainable independent sector, through a more structured approach to research and development, nurturing talent and risk-taking.

We also believe that making sure both audiences and creative practitioners in this country have regular and active contact with the best talent, expertise and ideas from around the world is central to developing a vibrant domestic culture and critical to the international competitiveness of our creative industries.

**To achieve this we think we will need to see the following changes:**

Arts Council England will invest in organisations that consistently **identify, nurture and support creative talent and collections expertise.**

Organisations and practitioners will **work with their peers internationally to share best practice** and develop new content for wider audiences.

Organisations and practitioners will work with new partners, eg. from higher education and the commercial creative industries, to **research and develop new forms of creative practice.**

Arts Council England, and the organisations we work with, will focus more on **supporting independent creative talent.**

**By 2030, we want to see an increased focus on creative R&D together with a stronger commitment to making sure that more independent cultural organisations and creative practitioners can achieve their potential and maintain their careers.**



# England's diversity is fully reflected in the organisations we support, and in the culture they produce

Diversity is essential to the growth of culture and creativity in England. It gives rise to work that is richer and more varied. Diverse cultural organisations are more relevant to their communities and more successful as a result. Diversity generates new ideas and entrepreneurship. To achieve a vibrant, diverse culture that speaks directly to the experiences of all parts of our society, we need to see the organisations the Arts Council invests in drawing consistently on talent from all parts of our society. This is not currently the case.

Over the course of the last ten years, despite a series of investment programmes and policy initiatives targeted at this issue, we have not succeeded in delivering systemic change. There

are still too few disabled people, people from ethnic minorities or people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds working in, leading, or sitting on the boards of our publicly funded cultural organisations – and women are still under-represented in leadership roles. As a result, the work that is produced still fails to reflect fully the breadth of experience and creativity that this country enjoys.

We believe that all of us who work in publicly funded cultural organisations will need to apply new thinking, new approaches and new investment to tackling the causes of this issue. We will need to do more to hold ourselves, and the organisations we fund, to account so we can deliver this change.

**To achieve this we think we will need to see the following changes:**



**By 2030, we intend that all publicly funded cultural organisations will draw from and invest in the widest possible talent pool.**



# The creative and cultural lives of all children and young people are recognised and nurtured

The Arts Council believes that every child has the capacity to be creative. But the opportunities to realise their potential – through access to encouragement, resources, and inspirational cultural activities – are currently not equally available. We believe that supporting the creativity of all our children is critical to our nation's future success. It will help improve the wellbeing of our citizens and our communities. It will also drive future economic growth in a world where artificial intelligence (AI) will transform work and where the creative industries will employ more and more people.

There needs to be greater support for creativity, both in and out of school, so that every child and young person has the same opportunities to develop their abilities. This will include making sure that we have an arts curriculum that is fit for purpose and is taught widely in schools, and is

valued by parents, carers, teachers, employers, children and young people.

While access to cultural activities is still unevenly distributed across the country, many children and young people lead fulfilling independent creative lives – in their own time, on their own terms, and often online. As well as focusing on broadening access to publicly funded cultural activity for children and young people, we think more needs to be done to acknowledge, celebrate and invest in the culture they are creating for themselves.

We and the cultural organisations and creative practitioners we support will need to work with a wide range of national and local partners to make sure all children and young people, and their families and carers, take part in high-quality cultural activities that are relevant to their lives, meet their needs and raise their aspirations.

**To achieve this we think we will need to see the following changes:**

In every community, **children, young people, their families and carers will work with educational and cultural organisations** to design and deliver high quality cultural activities.

The **importance of developing creativity** in children and young people will be **better understood and more widely emphasised**, eg. by the public, government and educators.

Children's and young people's **use of technology** to develop and share their creativity and to take part in cultural activities will be **recognised, celebrated and supported**.

Arts Council England, and the organisations we work with will invest more in accessible, inspirational **cultural activities for pre-school children and their families and carers**.

**By 2030, we intend that investment in the creativity of every child and young person, both in and out of school, will be increased and better co-ordinated.**



# Cultural organisations are dynamic, focused on the future, and relevant

The Arts Council's investment in many cultural organisations is a critical part of their ability to thrive and produce great work. But in a changing economic environment that has seen public funding fall sharply over recent years, we believe that cultural organisations will in future need to focus more on building new sources of income beyond public funding. By 2030, we would like to see a more dynamic environment for publicly funded culture, in which organisations change and develop, and come and go.

We want the organisations that we invest in to sit at the heart of this country's thriving creative industries, able to attract the best creative talent and leading by example when it comes to adaptability and innovation. This will need increased investment in developing leadership and governance so that more cultural organisations,

large and small, are better able to adapt to changing political, economic and social conditions and respond to the challenges and opportunities offered by new technologies. We want cultural organisations to be more collaborative and enterprising, as well as act as models of social responsibility. We want them to lead the way in terms of training and developing their staff and demonstrating best practice in relation to environmental sustainability.

Arts Council England will also need to change and become a more dynamic organisation focused on the future, more skilled at utilising data and new technology. We will need to be better at giving organisations business advice, as well as developing a range of alternative investment tools to go alongside our grant-giving functions.

**To achieve this we think we will need to see the following changes:**

Cultural organisations will collaborate to achieve efficiencies, to **share good practice and to experiment with new technologies.**

Cultural leaders will develop the **skills and expertise to guide and govern** enterprising and environmentally sustainable organisations.

**New technologies and data** will be used by all organisations, including Arts Council England, to better understand demand, reach new audiences, and demonstrate impact.

**New national and international markets** for our cultural products and services will be developed.

**By 2030, we intend that the organisations we support will invest more in business innovation as a tool for business growth.**



# England continues to increase its global reputation for the quality of its creative industries

Over the last ten years, England has built an international reputation for the innovation and quality of its creative industries. The country's publicly funded cultural organisations, working alongside our commercial creative industries, play a critical role in raising our profile and persuading other nations to do business with us.

Creative talent developed in our publicly funded cultural organisations achieves commercial success in Hollywood, international art markets and elsewhere. Theatre productions made here regularly transfer to Broadway. The reputation and commercial profile of our musical talent of all genres has never been higher, our literature is read around the world, and our museums attract visitors from across the globe. Year after year, the creative industries are our fastest growing economic sector. And those towns and cities that have invested in culture have consistently achieved strong economic and social returns.

But none of us can take this success for granted. As the UK leaves the EU and the international cultural

and creative environment becomes increasingly competitive, we cannot assume that the talent and organisations that are so prominent today will continue to lead the field in 2030. Arts Council England must ensure the right combination of the established and the new, all able to develop ambitious work that makes its mark on the global stage. We will also need to support the right mix of buildings to meet the demands of creative practitioners and audiences of the future. Over the next ten years, to drive national and local economic growth, we must see ever more purposeful collaboration between cultural organisations, the commercial creative industries, higher and further education, local government and other partners.

Getting this balance right – developing our existing cultural assets while supporting a new generation of creative practitioners and cultural organisations - will be key in cementing our creative industries' global position, and maintaining our publicly funded cultural organisations' power to attract visitors and talent from around the world.

**To achieve this we think we will need to see the following changes:**



**By 2030 we intend that this country's publicly funded cultural organisations will improve their ability to explore, develop and share this nation's culture to the highest international standards.**

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# Possible actions

We have started to think about the sorts of actions we might need to take to deliver these outcomes.



## **A nation that supports and celebrates culture and creativity of every kind**

- Champion a wider range of culture and individual creativity, both nationally and locally, eg. through public facing campaigns, competitions and events.
- Develop new ways and new partnerships to support community-led projects.
- Support partnerships that focus on improving health and wellbeing through cultural experiences and creative opportunities, eg. with health and social care providers, sports clubs.
- Partner with world class research organisations to develop metrics and methods that clearly and effectively show how culture and creativity improve people's lives.
- Develop Arts Council England's knowledge and expertise about community-led cultural activity and new forms of creativity.



## **People from every background benefit from public investment in culture**

- Require publicly funded cultural organisations to work in place-based partnerships and/or national networks to deliver shared outcomes.
- Support organisations to distribute their work as widely as possible, including via new technologies.
- Provide better advice and information to the public about what's available locally.
- Invest more in places with less provision via new partnerships to deliver shared, locally relevant cultural outcomes.



## **Creative R&D and talent development are flourishing**

- Invest more in independent creative practitioners from every background to develop and sustain their careers.
- Encourage publicly funded cultural organisations to develop creative talent and collections expertise outside their own organisations.
- Broker partnerships between cultural organisations, universities and technology companies that focus on innovation and creative R&D.
- Promote a wider understanding that creative businesses that systematically invest in R&D and tolerate a significant 'failure' rate are more likely to be successful in the long term.
- Provide specific investment support for the development of innovative new work that may not immediately find an audience.
- Invest in international collaboration, co-commissioning and exchanges that stimulate learning and innovation.



## **England's diversity is fully reflected in the organisations we support, and in the culture they produce**

- Promote careers in the creative industries to people from every background.
- Develop Arts Council England's knowledge and expertise in recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.
- Provide advice, guidance and training to cultural organisations in how to recruit and retain a diverse workforce.
- Remove the barriers that prevent disabled people working in cultural organisations.
- Invest in the development of diverse future leaders, eg. through leadership development programmes, secondments, fellowships, mentoring.
- Arts Council England takes a more active role in senior leadership and governance appointments in larger cultural organisations.
- Link funding of cultural organisations to their progress on achieving diversity targets.
- Encourage greater turnover of leadership in publicly funded cultural organisations, eg. through better succession planning, use of fixed-term contracts.



## **The creative and cultural lives of all children and young people are recognised and nurtured**

- Learn about and celebrate the culture and creativity of young people.
- Advocate for the development of a high quality, relevant arts curriculum that is valued by parents, carers, teachers, employers and children and young people.
- Advocate widely for the importance of creativity across the curriculum in schools; both in terms of skills development, and the health and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Create new partnerships that provide a high quality, relevant and accessible cultural offer for families with pre-school children, eg. with early years providers, GPs, libraries, and families themselves.
- Deliver a high quality local cultural education offer through local commissioning partnerships involving a wide range of cultural and educational organisations.
- Support publicly funded cultural organisations to work closely with children and young people, and families and carers, to co-design cultural experiences that are relevant to them.



## **Cultural organisations are dynamic, focused on the future, and relevant**

- Learn from entrepreneurial organisations and leaders in the creative industries, nationally and internationally, particularly when it comes to developing new income streams and new markets.
- Work with technology companies to invest in programmes and research projects that model the smart use of digital technology and data for cultural organisations.
- Develop a wider range of funding and investment tools to stimulate enterprise and innovation, eg. crowdfunding, alternatives to grants, competitions and challenge prizes.
- Develop Arts Council England's knowledge and expertise in new business practices, and provide relevant advice, guidance and training to cultural organisations.
- Connect with national and local agencies to provide improved business support to cultural organisations.
- Increase the use of time-limited or start-up investment to support cultural organisations.
- Broker and facilitate partnerships and mergers to improve the delivery of functions such as 'back office', education, marketing.
- Require cultural organisations receiving public funding to make progress on environmental sustainability targets.
- Invest in higher quality and relevant leadership programmes that focus on developing the skills needed for the future.



## **England continues to increase its global reputation for the quality of its creative industries**

- Use advocacy work and global partnerships to build the reputation of our leading creative practitioners, cultural organisations and collections.
- Require and support publicly funded cultural organisations to seek feedback from audiences and peers as a way of continually improving the quality of their cultural offer.
- Invest in touring and other forms of distribution to ensure our most valued cultural activity and collections are more widely available and accessible, at home and abroad.
- Enable cultural organisations to collaborate with and learn from their international peers.

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# Thanks and next steps

Thank you for reading this document. If you want to read a more detailed version, please **click here** to read the full framework document.

Please tell us whether you think these outcomes are the right ones for Arts Council England to aim for when you respond to the online consultation, and if so, how we might work together to best realise them over the next ten years.

Do remember that this isn't the strategy itself, or even the draft strategy. There is much more work to be done.

We will listen carefully to what you have to say and then further develop the outcomes. In the spring we will share a draft strategy which will set out in more detail how we will start to deliver these new outcomes and what this might mean in practice, both for the Arts Council and for the organisations we will invest in over the ten year period.

We can't realise any of our ambitions for culture, and for the public's experience of it, without the artists, organisations and partners that work with us.

Thank you for taking part in this consultation. Your interest and your views are incredibly valuable to us, and greatly appreciated.

We also want to thank the Innovation Unit for working with us on the development of these materials and the framework.

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We are committed to being open and accessible. We welcome all comments on our work.

Please send these comments to our Enquiries Team at:  
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