

# HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM ARTS COMMISSION

BRIEFING PAPER 1: EXISTING ACTIVITY  
- WHAT CULTURAL ACTIVITY IS  
HAPPENING ACROSS THE BOROUGH,  
WHERE ISN'T IT HAPPENING, HOW  
MUCH OF IT IS EXCELLENT AND WHAT  
WOULD IT TAKE FOR IT TO BE BETTER  
SUPPORTED AND DEVELOPED?

## BRIEFING PAPER 1: EXISTING ACTIVITY - WHAT CULTURAL ACTIVITY IS HAPPENING ACROSS THE BOROUGH, WHERE ISN'T IT HAPPENING, HOW MUCH OF IT IS EXCELLENT AND WHAT WOULD IT TAKE FOR IT TO BE BETTER SUPPORTED AND DEVELOPED?

This briefing paper is designed to help enhance your current view of the cultural ecology of the borough. It draws upon all the best data available (from national, regional and local sources) and supplements this with on-the-ground insight from eight local experts.

Although this might seem like a straightforward subject of investigation, it's actually quite difficult to retain a stable definition of "cultural activity". You may instinctively include conventional things like classical music, oil painting, ballet, etc. but as you get further from that traditional core, the boundaries can get very fuzzy. As researchers, we're committed to finding out about everything that's relevant to the Commission, to be broadminded and provocative. But we also need to be able to draw some boundaries around our brief, to decide what is in scope and what is out of scope.

There are many forms of everyday participation, which might sit at the edges of what the Commission considers culture, but which are also worthy of recognition by it. In this regard we're talking about beauty salons, small craft and textile production, knitting circles, book clubs, gardening, photography via social media, gaming and online esports, pub quizzes, chess and board-gaming, music tuition, music programming and band practice, and much more besides.

**Discussion point – How does the commission want to define culture?**

## WHAT CULTURAL ACTIVITY IS HAPPENING ACROSS THE BOROUGH, WHERE ISN'T IT HAPPENING, HOW MUCH OF IT IS EXCELLENT AND WHAT WOULD IT TAKE FOR IT TO BE BETTER SUPPORTED AND DEVELOPED?

Hammersmith and Fulham is a performing arts borough, with special strengths in music.

There is lots of activity underway in LBHF, and it's rather typical of an inner London borough. Much of the major activity revolves around four anchor institutions: The Bush, Apollo, Bush Hall, and the Lyric. The people we've spoken to in the borough see this quartet as a real strength. However, there is not much more that is recognised or visibly supported beyond this, and so there are gaps in specific geographies within the borough and forms of artistic practice (such as visual arts).

Within the Lyric are nine resident companies and (like The Bush) it's a building that's alive all day every day, not just three hours per evening. Both venues produce and perform popular and cutting-edge theatre. Both reach out into the communities they exist to serve, often in refreshingly unexpected ways. And both take a very broad view of what comprises 'theatre' (The Bush's work to support communities around Grenfell Tower is one example of many community-driven programmes). A similar balance between innovation and popularity can be found in the complementary programmes of the Apollo and Bush Hall.

Some highly credible educational institutions have a base in the borough. There is LAMDA (once again highlighting the strength in performing arts) and both Royal College of Art and Imperial have campuses at White City.

Further south, Fulham Palace House and Garden reflects the rich riverside history of the borough.

Beyond the big anchor institutions a few of the highlights that we've heard about:

- Fulham Symphony Orchestra - amateur 30 piece symphony orchestra
- Dance West – run dance workshops for older people to combat isolation and dementia.
- The Rena Initiative - artist-led organisation in White City empowering women, especially women of colour.
- White City Youth Theatre Group – fast-growing, working with young people.

- Outside Edge Theatre Group – based in borough for 20 years. Work with addicts using theatre as a means to combat addictions.

Riverside Studios seems full of potential but does not seem to command the same degree of respect or visibility as the quartet of other anchor venues.

There are many festivals, formal and informal, with JOY Festival seen as a marker of the cultural sector in borough having a progressive commitment to disability and accessibility. H&F Arts Fest is now a well-established fixture, its annual summer arts festival highlighting all manner of creative groups and artists in the borough.

There is participatory and community arts taking place across the borough through schools, hospitals, libraries, museums, parks, artist studios, youth clubs, etc. A concern that we've heard many times is how this can be better co-ordinated or connected, and what role the borough can play in making that happen.

There are many cultural leaders in the borough – even those from anchor institutions – who are excited by the prospect of connecting more with a set of everyday cultural practices. They see this not only as a way to increase their reach and relevance to people in the borough, but also as a means of enriching their artist practice and programming. It also means they will be connecting with different teams within the council – not just the arts development team.

Not everybody in the borough has the same experience of these cultural offers. The small number of anchor institutions in the borough, like the Apollo and Lyric, sit on public squares, with vibrant high streets and transport hubs close by. How you navigate your route to and from those venues affects your experience and reveals something about your life (such as where you live and what you prefer [and can afford] to do before or after your experience of culture in the borough).

There is significant grassroots arts and cultural activity happening across the borough but anecdotally it is poorly networked and many interviewees expressed frustration at an inability to identify opportunities through Council officers (within the arts, and more widely). Much of this work is driven by impassioned individuals and provides first-class opportunities for cultural engagement amongst specific communities defined by geography, gender, age and other characteristics. But much of it appears to happen below the radar and in the shadows of the four big national institutions located in the town centres in the borough.

The borough has also traditionally been associated with a visual arts movement and there are still a number of studios whose first use by artists

date back to the 1950s and 1960s. While some of these spaces are still being deployed by established artists, it is felt that there are few studio spaces available for emerging artists within the borough.

Anecdotally, there are emerging centres for the creative industries, most notably around some of the major developer sites in the borough – Westfield, White City, Olympia.

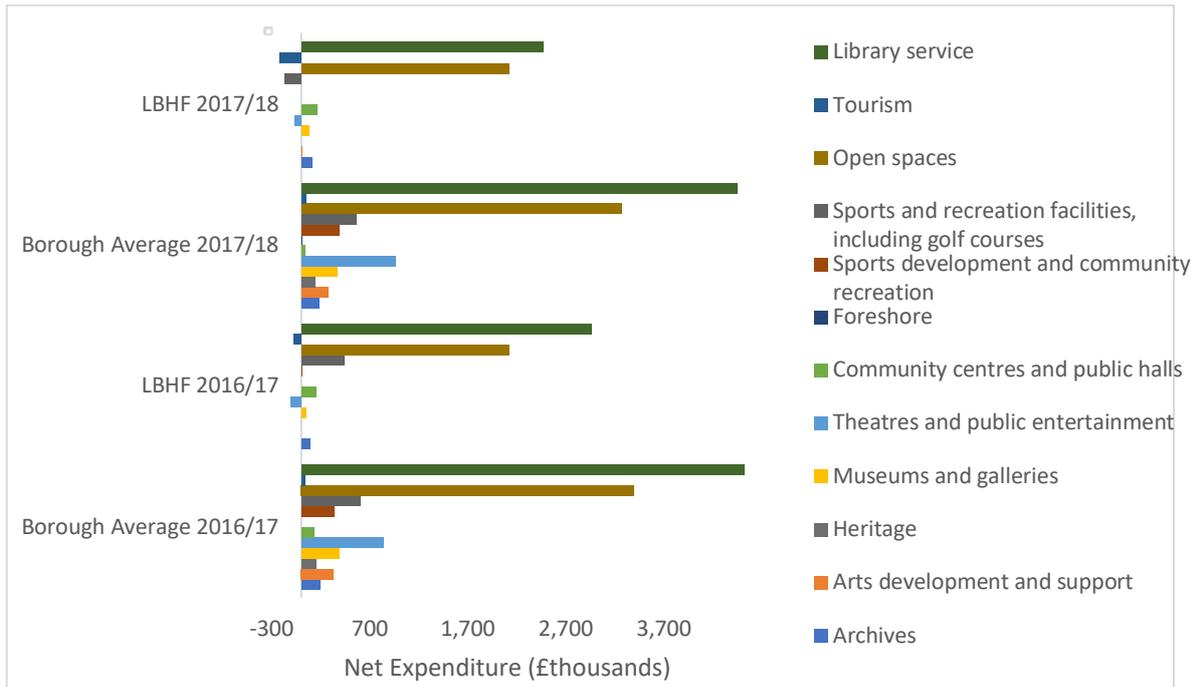
Q: DO MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION RECOGNISE THIS PORTRAIT OF THE BOROUGH? IS THERE WORK UNDERWAY THAT IS INVISIBLE AND THAT WE SHOULD EXPLORE IN A REFINED BRIEFING PAPER?

## SOME DATA ABOUT CULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE BOROUGH: INVESTMENT AND ASSETS

There are three sources of public funding for which we have data: the local authority, the Arts Council, and the GLA. This means there are some missing pieces of the puzzle: volunteering and smaller donations, private and commercial investment, and capital (re)development of buildings (which is often budgeted separately).

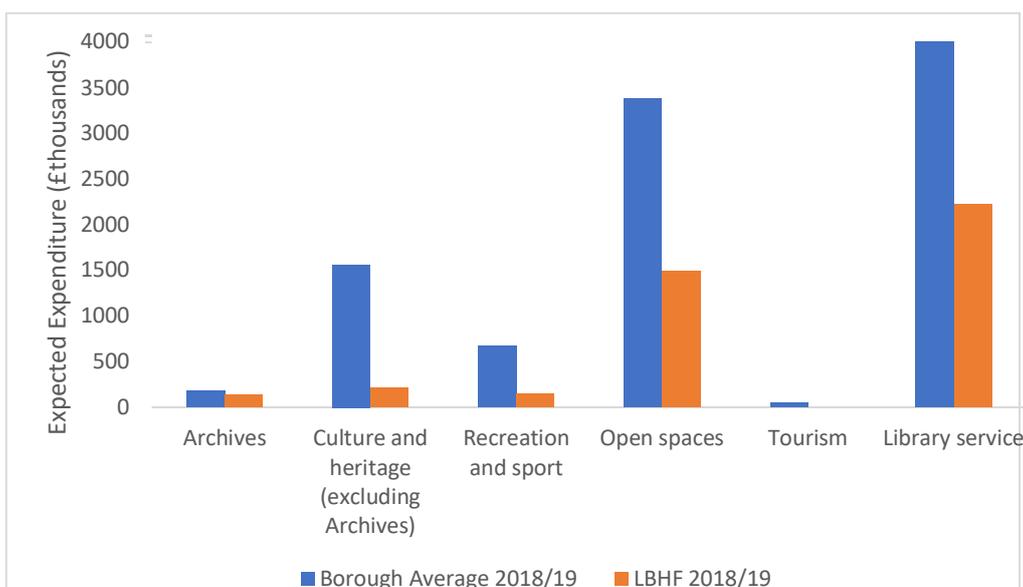
### LOCAL AUTHORITY INVESTMENT

The borough invested c £5.6m on “Cultural and Related Services” 2016/17, and c £4.5m in 2017/18. In the chart below the LBHF figures for both years are shown beside the London-wide borough average.



You will see that LBHF actually makes a profit from “theatres and public entertainment” and it spends less than the London average on other aspects of cultural services. (These figures take no account of population or demonstrable need.)

Looking at the current year’s projections (using less detailed categories), the trend for a lower-than average continues to the present day. This may be considered to be a good thing, a marker of ruthless financial efficiency, or it may be a sign that LBHF need to do more to match other boroughs in the capital.



One of the most obvious ways in which the borough supports arts and culture is through its 'Fast Track' and '3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Investment' grant schemes. In the year to May 2017 the following grants were made:

- Art West Open Studios - £1,000
- Caribbean Steel International Steel Band (Arts Award) - £3,500
- Doorstep Library Network - £26,667
- Fulham Symphony Orchestra - £2,000
- H&F ArtsFest - £10,000
- Lyric Theatre Community Participation Programme - £191,667
- Maleeka School (cultural integration project) - £4,000
- Metta Theatre ('Blown Away' performances) - £1,500
- Polish Educational Society (Poetry festival and 'PGT!') - £1,500
- The Bhavan (facilities upgrade) - £2,000
- Turtle Key Arts - £9,000
- Western Kurdistan Association (Kurdish Museum) - £2,000
- William Morris Society - £12,500

And in the year to May 2018 the following grants were made:

- Doorstep Library Network - £32,000
- Irish Repertory Theatre Company ('Wash House Stories') - £3,000
- Lyric Theatre Community Participation Programme - £230,000
- Metta Theatre ('Blown Away' performances) - £1,500
- Open Age (physical activity sessions) - £1,500
- Polish Educational Society (Poetry festival and 'PGT!') - £1,500
- William Morris Society - £15,000

We know that many valuable Section 106 agreements have provided the local authority resources to fund cultural services in the borough and we are actively investigating the nature and scale of that investment.

The best available data we have currently comes from [a Council meeting in November 2018](#). The papers detail the 20 most valuable S106 agreements since 2014. Since 2014 the Council has negotiated over £310 million worth of funding through developer contributions as part of new developments in the borough. This includes £21,000 for the position of Arts Development Officer (via Imperial Wharf development), just over £450,000 for the Bush Theatre (via Riverside Studios and M&S White City developments) and more than £1m for the refurbishment of Hammersmith Library (via Chelsea Creek and Westfield developments).

## LOCAL CHARITABLE INVESTMENT

### **Hammersmith United Charities**

Hammersmith United Charities invests in the people and communities in the 8 northern wards of Hammersmith & Fulham to tackle poverty, deprivation and disadvantage, building on legacies, wisdom, learning and experience gained over 400 years. They offer grants to organisations working to prevent or relieve hardship or distress in the north of the borough against the following criteria:

- Meeting basic needs (food, shelter, advice etc)
- Work with families and children
- Countering isolation (in any group and for any reason)
- Building confident individuals and communities

The Grants committee meets three times per year to make funding decisions on a budget of £250,000. The latest round of grant giving (May 2019) saw the following arts and culture grants made:

- Friends of Wormhole Park - Summer celebration in the park - £3,000
- White City Theatre Project - Participate in the National Theatre Connexions Programme - £6,000
- This New Ground - Music making workshops for people with learning disabilities - £5,000
- The Flying Gorillas - Grenfell Rainbow: Classical music and break dancing concert in honour of Grenfell - £2,000
- Art West Open Studios - Outreach in Kenmont and Old Oak - £1,000
- Rava Music Foundation - Towards the cost of performance of a local choir made up of people from a Farsi speaking cultural background - £1,000

### **Dr Edwards & Bishop King's Fulham Charity**

This is a local charity that helps provide for the needs of people living in the old Metropolitan Borough of Fulham.

In the year to March 2018 expenditure on grants and donations to organisations totaled £263,327 against the following criteria:

- We supply essential items to Fulham residents on low incomes who may be referred by local welfare agencies or who may apply direct

- We give grants for running costs, or for projects, to organisations who are helping local people in need
- We support summer schemes for children who would not otherwise have a break during the summer holidays

In 2017/18 the following arts and culture grants were made:

- Hammersmith and Fulham Arts Fest - £5,500
- Musiko Musica - £4,900
- The Doorstep Library Network - £5,012
- H+F Action on Disability - £4,470

## ARTS COUNCIL INVESTMENT

There are six Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations (ACE NPOs) in LBHF. The investment made by in those six between 2018 and 2021 looks like this:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Portfolio funded in 2015-18?</b>	<b>Annual ACE grant 18/19 – 2020/21 £</b>
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Ltd	Music	Yes	128,999
Koestler Trust	Literature	Yes	75,000
Ockham's Razor	Theatre	Yes	181,044
The Alternative Theatre Company Ltd. [The Bush]	Theatre	Yes	595,281
The Lyric Theatre Hammersmith Limited	Theatre	Yes	1,100,000
Youth Music Theatre UK	Theatre	Yes	77,519

These figures add up to just over £2m of investment per year. You can see that ACE supports a lot of theatre via their NPOs in the borough.

The same artform is also supported via their project grants, along with many others. Some of these projects below are ongoing and will be familiar to you, others are smaller scale and perhaps not on your radar. ACE project funding in the borough last year totalled just over £350,000:

Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants awards made between 01 April 2018 - 31 March 2019			
Recipient	Activity name	Award amount	Main discipline
Hakeem Onibudo	AuthentiCITY	£15,000	Dance
Thomas Mallender	Write-London #Voices from Landmarks	£10,597	Literature
Rebecca Humphries	Final R&D Prom Kween the Musical	£14,999	Theatre
Jonathan Mansfield	Elftet Tour 2018	£14,926	Music
Freddie Gavita	Transient Album Tour	£5,507	Music
Damsel Productions Limited	FABRIC	£14,703	Theatre
Gilane Tawadros	Global Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Difference	£14,589	Visual arts
Carolyn Lilly	Afro Dance Xplosion 2018: Les Femmes	£15,000	Dance
Ensemble Hesperii	The Pheasant's Eye: R&D, showcase & 7-date English tour of a new collaborative Scottish Baroque music project with a Highland dancer & audience participation	£5,718	Music
Arawak Carnivals	Flight	£10,000	Combined arts
Chris Hildrey	Space Gap	£8,000	Visual arts
Katie Gibson	Steel and Iron	£5,400	Theatre
Fulham Opera	Don Carlo 2018.2	£5,843	Music
Katriona Lewis	Migrants Organise Writer in Residence	£14,961	Literature
Joe Hill	Joe Hill's North Ark Tour	£6,484	Music
Hakeem Onibudo	Org Development	£49,339	Dance
Thomas Mallender	Write-London Unheard Voices	£12,931	Literature
Sarah Chew	Lipstick: a fairy tale of Iran	£13,995	Theatre
HF ArtsFest 2017	HF ArtsFest 2019	£45,000	Not discipline specific
Jo Ingabire	Kwibuka - 25 Years On.	£14,435	Literature
Damsel Productions Limited	The Amber Trap	£15,000	Theatre
Annabel Williamson	Double Bill Killymuck and Box Clever	£15,000	Theatre
Tim Luscombe	Western Alliance	£14,024	Theatre
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Libraries	Storycircles	£14,790	Literature

## GLA INVESTMENT

GLA investment in culture (beyond the London Borough of Culture) is largely through the [Culture Seeds](#) grants. Of the 50 or so projects funded so far, only one has been in LBHF: Somali Deaf Centre was funded for ‘Let’s Sign Together’ designed to ‘support Somali deaf people to plan a one-day event to celebrate their culture’ (funded August 2018).

The [new Cultural Strategy](#) from the Mayor of London is built upon the goals of fostering a more equitable cultural life in the capital as well as supporting social cohesion and connectedness. It’s four objectives are:

**Love London** - more people experiencing and creating culture on their doorstep

**Culture and Good Growth** - supporting, saving and sustaining cultural places

**Creative Londoners** - investing in a diverse creative workforce for the future

**World City** - a global creative powerhouse today and in the future

Essentially, what are the ways that communities can be brought together through culture?

We haven’t been able to detect many ways in which the GLA’s cultural strategy relates to what is happening in Hammersmith and Fulham. Other boroughs (often in the Outer Borough group) where there is greater demonstrable need for investment, are attracting the attention of the GLA and are working harder to be better integrated into GLA thinking.

## LOCAL ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Participation statistics are available at a borough-level thanks to a nationwide survey called [Active Lives](#). LBHF is high up in the national rankings, similar to Kensington and Chelsea but higher than neighbours Ealing and Brent.

Done in past 12 months	Spent time doing a creative, artistic, theatrical or music activity or a craft	Attended an event, performance or festival involving creative, artistic, dance, theatrical or music activity	Used a public library service	Attended a museum or gallery	Dance	Creative or artistic dance
Hammersmith and Fulham	41.1%	70.4%	32.2%	69.8%	28.7%	7.9%

It's also clear that there are different levels of arts engagement across the borough:

Data from the Cultural Infrastructure Map that indicates different levels of household's ticket-buying for cultural events and activities in 2016/17 (the data comes from the Audience Agency who pool together different box office systems across the country). It is visualised here, where darker areas show greater levels of ticket-buying for cultural activities:



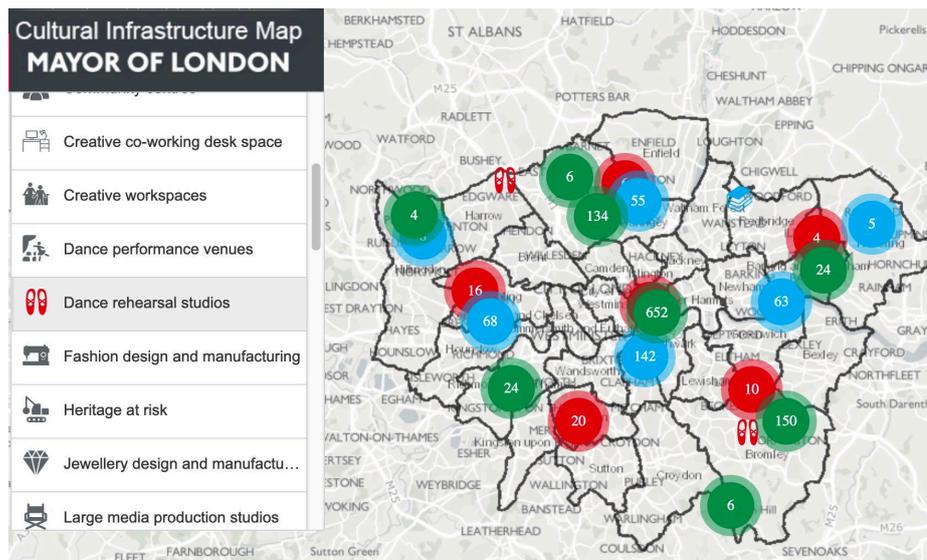
We'll talk more about participation rates in later Briefing Papers, but this highlights the way that the borough is sandwiched between wealthy boroughs to the east and south, and poorer boroughs to the north and west. This affects the way it is viewed at a London-wide perspective. Furthermore, wards within the borough are home to different communities each with their own cultures and privilege and deprivation is more concentrated in some parts than others.

We know quite a lot about the profile of each ward within Hammersmith and Fulham thanks to analysis by experts inside the borough. We've created this map to allow you to click on a ward and view/download the current profile of residents:



WHAT CULTURAL ACTIVITY IS HAPPENING ACROSS THE BOROUGH, **WHERE ISN'T IT HAPPENING**, HOW MUCH OF IT IS EXCELLENT AND WHAT WOULD IT TAKE FOR IT TO BE BETTER SUPPORTED AND DEVELOPED?

Another way to map culture is by counting and describing the various cultural assets in the borough. Luckily for us, the Mayor of London has built an interactive Cultural Infrastructure Mapping tool for us to play with:



Rather than simply supplying you with lots of read-outs from data, we would encourage each of you to visit <https://maps.london.gov.uk/cim/index.html> and play around with the tool. As you are doing so, you might think about the categories of assets that you're able to include and about the parts of the borough that are rich or poor in those forms of cultural infrastructure. Click on the link above and explore for yourself, since there is too much information there for us to unpack here.

This is what we think the picture tells us:

- There are four hubs to the borough (running north-south): Old Oak Common, Shepherd's Bush, Hammersmith, Parsons Green
- Artist studios are clustered up in Hythe Road area NW10 (eg [NWStudios](#) and [Light Factory](#))
- There are nationally important organisations like [Koestler Trust](#) and [ACAVA](#) located in the borough
- There are culturally specific organisations in the borough (serving [Irish](#), [Polish](#), and [Iranian](#) communities)
- The borough is rich with music businesses (major and indie record labels, management, publishing, etc.)

- Similarly, there are lots of music venues in the area, especially between Hammersmith and Shepherds Bush

In all this data there are some missing parts of the puzzle that are worth bearing in mind: commercial cinemas or concert venues, and universities, schools, faith buildings. It can be hard to get good data on these places because they are private commercial entities or because they are 'unofficial' and not well documented.

Since we are committed to ensuring the Arts Commission is well-informed of this aspect of culture in the borough we plan to continually speak with people on the ground throughout this process: people who are experienced, networked, and qualified to talk about the rhythms of culture in the borough.

We've been supplementing this data on known, documented and official culture by talking to a broad range (but not an exhaustive list) of experts on the ground. We've spoken to the following people across the borough:

- 1. MATT STEINBERG, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CEO, OUTSIDE EDGE THEATRE COMPANY**
- 2. NATHALIE CARRINGTON, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, THIS NEW GROUND AND ARTS COMMISSIONER**
- 3. ALISON KING, CEO, TURTLE KEY ARTS CENTRE**
- 4. MELLEZIA NATASHA, MANAGING DIRECTOR, THE RENA INITIATIVE**
- 5. LAUREN CLANCY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE BUSH**
- 6. PETREA OWENS AND FLORA HERBERICH, ARTS FEST**
- 7. REBECCA PELLY-FRY, HEAD CURATOR, ELEPHANT WEST AND ARTS COMMISSIONER**
- 8. CHRIS TRANCHELL, ARTS COMMISSIONER**
- 9. SIAN ALEXANDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LYRIC HAMMERSMITH**

Contributors confirmed a picture of a strong performing arts offer within the borough, anchored around the four major venues. Beyond this there was widespread agreement that excellent grassroots activity is being driven by a number of dynamic individuals – but that this work is being overlooked by both the major players and the local authority. A strong sense within LBHF of an implied hierarchy contributed to a feeling held by many interviewees that high quality work at the grassroots was overlooked, under resourced and under valued. Many interviewees expressed concern that rhetoric from elected officials wasn't being matched by financial or human resources on the ground within the Council.

“If Hammersmith and Fulham Council is serious about its manifesto commitments, it needs to properly resource a range of grassroots activity.”

Appropriate and on-going support, access to networks, and brokering services were seen as priorities for officers right across the Council. Interviewees consistently expressed a desire for some simple levels of support that might reflect practices in other boroughs eg an up-to-date online directory of spaces (both meanwhile and longer term) that might be deployed for arts and cultural activity. Several interviewees noted that vacant space in shopping centres and in town centres might be made available for cultural activity, as a short-term solution for artists and arts organisations, and as a longer term driver for regeneration in those parts of the borough that need it most.

A consistent theme from interviews centred on excellence as a focus not just for cultural product but of process too. It is felt by many that if LBHF better valued excellence of process, it would be able to better support a thriving arts and cultural ecology across Hammersmith and Fulham.

“I’d like to see the Council support an ecology that values equally excellent work with disadvantaged communities in the north of the borough and work on the main stages of one of our leading theatres.”

It was widely felt that London Borough of Culture was an opportunity to better integrate ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top-down’ arts and culture through a year long celebration in H+F. However, several interviewees felt insufficiently involved in the 2019/20 bids, and those that did felt the proposal poorly reflected the potential of a Borough of Culture year. A bid for 2021 or 2022 should be bold, distinctive, more ambitious and should realistically and demonstrably match the rhetoric of the Arts Strategy. Given an October 2019 deadline for submission of bids, interviewees expressed a keenness to be involved in the next bid at the earliest opportunity.

Many interviewees sought more information and clarity about local authority investment in arts and culture. There is a widespread feeling that Section 106 funding from developers, for arts and cultural activity, is not

appearing as a resource through grants. Many interviewees felt there was a mismatch between the perception of how much money was coming in to H+F for the arts, and how much was being spent on arts activity. Improved and transparent communication of income and expenditure from Section 106 sources would be widely valued by arts professionals working across the borough.

Having looked at the data and spoken with our borough voices, it's clear there are some parts of the borough that aren't benefitting from the rich cultural offer that's concentrated through the anchor institutions, or, to put it another way, there is work underway (especially in the north of the borough) which is not adequately supported to be visible and sustainable.

So... although there is much activity, it is not well resourced by the local authority or other funders. This means there's a lack of:

- A thriving culture of independent artists and small arts organisations in the borough
- Well-resourced grassroots/ diverse-led/ community-led initiatives in the borough
- High quality and ambitious community/participatory arts projects in the borough
- Accessible and inclusive arts hubs belonging to the people that live in the borough
- Cross sector exchanges between local arts and health, social, education services

We reached these conclusions through a synthesis of what we heard from informants on the ground in the borough, calibrated by our comparisons of LBHF with other boroughs using the cultural infrastructure map. We aren't identifying what the causes for these gaps might be (it's clear that constrained resources hamper a flourishing participatory arts scene in the borough). Nor is it clear to us what is feasible, given the geography of the borough, but an ecology which is better connected within LBHF and between neighbouring boroughs, which links into agendas at the GLA level would make existing infrastructure work better for a greater number of residents.

Q: DOES THE COMMISSION AGREE WITH THIS ASSESSMENT? WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK IS MISSING THAT WE NEED TO CAPTURE?

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There is no Ofsted or Care Quality Commission for the cultural sector, no agency charged with accrediting or ranking the work of theatres, galleries, dance venues, etc. Therefore, we are nervous in this first paper to make quality judgements about what is or isn't excellent in the borough (or even aggregating other's opinions of that). Quite often people use the language of quality when they are really talking about taste. They will say "that was excellent" when what they mean is "I liked it a lot". That habit has been the source of much criticism in our sector as old traditional hierarchies about art and culture begin to fall apart. Nonetheless there are domains of excellence that are worth considering:

Excellence of output: this could be measured by audience reaction, by looking at the cultural or artistic influence the work has on others, or by press and peer reviews.

Excellence of process: this can be evaluated to reveal whether the work of a cultural organisation remains true to its goals, is accountable and transparent for its stakeholders, is an effective use of resources etc.

Excellence of reach and relevance: this is often measured through audience numbers or word-of-mouth buzz (or other popularity metrics). Relevance is a key dimension here as something might be popular to visitors to the borough, but a relevant work will be popular among locals.

Excellence of impact/outcome: some arts organisation care about the difference they make (over and above whether or not they put on a good show) and this can be measured by the difference that an organisation's work has on aspects of people's lives like their health, education, social network, etc.

We know there is data held by cultural organisation that would help the Commission appraise their activity according to the dimensions outlined above. This data would be in the form of audience figures and composition, whether audiences were from the local area or elsewhere. Audience feedback forms, evaluation reports, peer review assessments, Arts Council annual reviews are also crucial. However, before the Commission decides to ask local cultural leaders to be expert witnesses, we can also make a more subjective assessment of the current provision.