

HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM ARTS COMMISSION

BRIEFING PAPER 2: SOCIAL IMPACT-
WHAT CHALLENGES ARE THERE IN OUR
BOROUGH THAT COULD BE (AT LEAST
PARTIALLY) ADDRESSED WITH ARTS AND
CULTURE, AND WHAT STEPS WOULD
WE NEED TO TAKE TO MAKE THIS
HAPPEN MORE?

1. Introduction

This briefing paper is designed to help enhance your understanding of social impact, how this can be delivered through arts and cultural activity, and how this might be amplified across the Borough. It tries to give you sense of the breadth and complexity of research that is underway (whether at national, regional and local levels) and supplements this with on-the-ground insight from local experts and practitioners.

At the end of each section we have added some **discussion points** that might be a good basis for more in-depth conversation at the meeting.

In Briefing Paper 1 we outlined the demographic characteristics of Hammersmith and Fulham and offered a modest sketch of the range of cultural activity underway in the borough. We identified three clusters of activity, four anchor institutions, and a patchwork of affluence and poverty that shaped how people engaged with culture.

For this theme we've structured the paper to:

1. define social impact
2. explore identified social issues in Hammersmith and Fulham
3. focus on local examples showing social impact through arts and cultural activity and where this might be amplified
4. identify leading examples of socially engaged practice from other parts of London, the UK and overseas
5. identify some ways in which arts and culture might positively impact on social issues in Hammersmith and Fulham

1. Defining social impact

Our focus in this paper is on the impact that cultural engagement might have on social issues in the borough. Cultural engagement is an overarching phrase that we feel encompasses a range of opportunities from active participation (someone trying an arts and cultural activity – acting, painting, dancing, singing) to passive spectatorship (someone visiting a museum or watching a theatre performance). It might be defined as everyday creativity (having a go at something fun) or as something more structured (attending a weekly life drawing class or an after-school beatboxing group).

“The arts can enrich people’s experience of life, providing colour, beauty, enjoyment, relaxation and a source of solace and escape... they are also seen to have some wider outcomes or applications, such as bringing people together, creating links between different communities and encouraging people to feel a sense of pride and belonging in their local area.”

What People Want from the Arts, Arts Council England (2008)

Social impact is often described as an instrumental value of arts and cultural activity (as opposed to an intrinsic value). An instrumental value suggests that if you do x or y arts activity, then some outcomes will result. For example, the thinking goes along these lines: if more young people participate in a beatboxing workshop or painting class, then they might be less likely to commit crime or fail their exams.

Some in the arts sector feel this is a corruption of what arts should be about. They favour an “art for art’s sake” approach. This debate about the role and purpose of culture goes back at least as far as ancient Greece, and if Plato and Aristotle couldn’t resolve it then we don’t expect to either!

Forms of Social Impact

There has been a lot of research worldwide in the last ten years into the whole concept of social impacts of culture. It’s something that funders and policymakers want to understand because they recognise that culture is an asset to other areas of society (housing, health, economy, etc.) and sometimes it can be difficult to convince others of its value when merely talking about fantastic concerts or awe-inspiring exhibitions.

In the UK, the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee just completed an inquiry which specifically looked at “the social impact of participation in culture and sport”. [Their report](#) and the evidence submitted by experts and practitioners is a fairly representative picture of our current knowledge on this topic. Nationwide funders like Nesta have used their [Arts Impact Fund](#) to support arts organisations to achieve social impacts. The Arts Council, the

RSA, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Esmee Fairbairn and others have either conducted research into this issue or use social impact as a criteria for funding. Putting all these together there are generally ten overarching areas of social impact through arts and cultural activity:

1. Health and wellbeing
2. Employment/business prospects, skills and confidence
3. Self-determination and increasing individual agency
4. Social mobility and cultural capital acquisition
5. Educational attainment
6. Community cohesion and personal networks
7. Conflict resolution
8. Vibrant and more liveable neighbourhoods
9. Diversity of voices and perspectives
10. Achieving political objectives and changing the world

The strength of evidence for how cultural engagement helps achieve these areas of social impact can be found on resources like [CultureCase](#) from King’s College London and an interactive tool from Americans for the Arts:



We encourage you to click through these links and play around with the tools. Many of the areas of impact mention in the links are ones which are

relevant to live in Hammersmith and Fulham: health and wellbeing, education and community cohesion.

Understanding what makes for high-quality social impact work

As we discussed in our first paper, there are many ways to think about measuring the excellence of culture. There is the “excellence...”

- of output
- of process
- of reach and relevance
- of impact and outcome

For the purposes of this paper we are looking at examples of where art and culture can have a positive impact on a social issue like education, housing or health.

We know that there are certain “success factors” that make it more likely that a cultural programme or project will have a positive social impact, regardless of which is being targeted. These are:

- Depth and duration: the most impactful arts and cultural activity is meaningful and takes place over a considerable period of time. The converse – short term, light touch interventions – rarely have a lasting social impact.
- Clarity of purpose: having a clear set of objectives about what social impact is being addressed
- A robust theory of change/logic model: simply, having a strong understanding about how your cultural activity will generate the social outcomes you want
- Authenticity: not simply imposing an activity on a community or parachuting in people from outside without proper consultation
- Resources: making sure that people have the resources (financial and otherwise) to fulfil their roles with full attention and high quality work

Discussion point – Do the Commission think that cultural activity in LBHF should be supported because of its chances of having a positive social impact?

Discussion point – Does the list of impact areas that can be influenced by cultural engagement contain anything that is especially relevant to Hammersmith and Fulham in 2019?

2. Exploring social issues in Hammersmith and Fulham

There are some commonly held perceptions about the social issues the Borough faces. Anecdotally people think that issues like knife crime, gang violence, literacy rates amongst immigrant communities, and homelessness are some of the biggest issues faced by Hammersmith and Fulham. These social challenges are amplified by the media (both mainstream and social) and contribute to the impression of a West London borough defined by a narrow range of issues.

The current [Hammersmith and Fulham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) identifies the following four priorities:

1. Enabling good mental health for all
2. Supporting children, young people and families to have the best possible start in life
3. Addressing the rising tide of long-term conditions
4. Delivering a high quality and sustainable health and social care system

Hammersmith and Fulham Borough Council published its [Safety First 19/20](#) budget in February of this year, focusing on a commitment to:

- Investing more than ever in the fight against crime and its causes
- Remaining the only council in the country to have abolished charges for adult home care
- Cleaning our air and making our streets and parks smarter and tidier
- Building record numbers of new genuinely affordable homes for our residents
- Tackling food poverty and homelessness
- Investing more in youth facilities and keeping children safe
- Defending Charing Cross Hospital and protecting our NHS.

These are H&F's priority areas for budget commitments in a climate rendered volatile by Brexit uncertainties. Given this, it is recognised that arts and cultural activity that contributes positively to these issues has a stronger case for support.

The [Ward Profiles](#) we shared in Paper 1 identified stark differences between the richest and poorest neighbourhoods in the borough. As you read the rest of this paper it's worth recalling that what is needed in one part of the borough isn't a priority elsewhere.

London-wide, one of the Mayor's current areas of focus is on social integration. The GLA states:

“Social integration is about how we all live together. It is the extent to which people positively interact and connect with others from different backgrounds. It is shaped by the level of equality between people, the nature of our relationships, and our levels of community participation.”

Improving social integration means helping Londoners to build meaningful and lasting relationships with each other.

It involves supporting them to be active in their communities and to play a part in the decisions that affect them. It also means reducing barriers and inequalities, so that Londoners can relate to each other as equals.

From the stated aims of both the local authority and its social providers, as well as the Ward Profiles and the wider city authority we might conclude that the most pressing social issues are:

- crime
- adult social care
- tackling pollution
- affordable housing
- food poverty and homelessness
- children’s safety
- local hospital provision
- social integration

Discussion point - do you recognise these social issues, living and / or working in Hammersmith and Fulham?

Discussion point - are there specific social issues in your ward that are not reflected here?

3. Local social impact through arts and cultural activity, and where this might be amplified.

The borough is characterised by both arts organisations with a focus on a specific social issue (eg Outside Edge Theatre Company supporting people with alcohol and drug dependency issues) and organisations that support a range of social issues through their programmes (eg The Lyric which works with disabled people, young people, people from specific wards in Hammersmith etc).

The borough appears to have a particular strength (which could be amplified) around its arts work by, with and for, disabled people. Organisations including This New Ground (focused on work with learning disabled people), Turtle Key (which has focused programmes for people with dyslexia, and with HIV and AIDS), Amici Dance Theatre Company (an integrated company based at the Lyric) and JoyFest (a festival celebrating disability through the arts through a partnership between Turtle Key and ArtsFest each have a specific focus on supporting disabled people through arts and culture.

More widely there are a number of independent charities offering arts activities for children and young people in the Borough and these include but are not limited to:

- [Young Lyric](#)
- The Bush's [Young Writer's group](#)
- [White City Youth Theatre](#)
- [Scariofunk Collective](#)
- [Young Amici](#) Dance Theatre

Other H&F based arts organisations include [The Rena Initiative](#) (an artist-led arts organisation focused on supporting hard to reach women in White City) and the [Koestler Trust](#) (a national arts in prisons charity). We have invited representatives of both organisations to join us as expert witnesses at our next meeting.

Much of this work is demonstrably excellent. Interviews suggest that these strengths in the borough could be far better connected and that there is a clear role for the Council in supporting this ecology of arts providers at all levels, and across all areas of the borough.

Specific case studies of existing work:

Outside Edge Theatre Company

Based in H&F, [Outside Edge](#) is a theatre company that works with people in recovery from substance misuse. The company has had a 20 year relationship with H&F through the Public Health team. This department recognises the impact of the work that the company does and has consistently provided both project funding and physical space in the Borough. The company has also enjoyed Tri-Borough funding from H&F, Westminster and RBKC through Public Health Commissions (this Tri-Borough agreement has now been pulled apart and Matt has individual Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with these (and other) London local authorities. The company bases itself in the Borough and runs workshops out of the H&F Drug Day Programme space on Munster Road. There is a long standing and dynamic relationship with the Public Health team but this doesn't extend to other parts of the Council.

The company continues to make [work](#) by, with and for people in recovery from substance abuse. There is considerable anecdotal evidence of the impact of this work but Outside Edge struggles to find appropriate evaluation methodologies that might prove that it's their intervention that has helped people out of addiction and substance abuse.

Matt Steinberg has been in post as Artistic Director for a year and aims to bring a greater sense of quality to the company's work. Matt's background is in more mainstream theatre (he's worked at the Lyric as a director) and he wants to enhance the public profile of the company. Matt acknowledges that previously the company hasn't aimed to create high quality work, and now wants to see Outside Edge as peers of Clean Break Theatre (women in prison) and Cardboard Citizens (homeless). Next year OE is co-producing with Cardboard Citizens.

Turtle Key Arts

[Turtle Key](#) is a theatre and dance producer. It is one of nine partners based out of Lyric Hammersmith. Founded in early 1990s in H&F, the company relocated to Kensington and Chelsea for 10 years, and for the last four years has been back in Hammersmith and Fulham.

The company works with a range of companies: [Ockham's Razor](#), [RedCape Theatre](#), [Amici Dance Theatre Company](#), [Joli Vyann](#), [Open Sky](#), [AIK Productions](#) and [Oddly Moving](#); and recent collaborations with: English Touring Opera, Royal College of Music, The Wigmore Hall, National Portrait Gallery, Lyric Hammersmith, Opera North, The Royal Court Theatre and

Oxford University.

They have played a role in advancing participation in the arts by disabled, disadvantaged and socially excluded people, and are recognised as a leader in this field, often charting new territories, such as [Turtle Song](#) for people with Dementia, [Key Words](#) for young people with Dyslexia and [Turtle Opera](#), [The Key Club](#), and [Musical Portraits](#) for young people on the Autism Spectrum.

The company has had regular project funding from Fast Track in the borough (under £10k) but struggles to support its work with additional resources from the local authority (both financial and advocacy).

Hammersmith and Fulham Council also offers arts and cultural activity focused at specific communities throughout the borough, through its network of libraries, and through its Adult Learning and Skills service.

In conclusion, we have begun to identify a range of arts and cultural provision across the borough that aims to support social impact. Some of this is very focused on a specific community or issue, while the larger and regularly funded organisations deliver a broader range of social impacts through their programmes. Interviewees have reflected that all of this work could be better funded, longer-term, and that a more robust and sustainable ecology could be far better networked and integrated with existing Council activity. We reported in Paper 1 a desire amongst providers of arts and culture in the borough for a more coordinated and networked set of opportunities, and these desires – for support for greater connectivity – are echoed here through those seeking to have a social impact through their work. There are also a range of national and international exemplars of social impact through arts and cultural activity that Hammersmith and Fulham might learn from, and adapt and adopt for the borough. A snapshot of some of these examples is included next.

Discussion point - how might Hammersmith and Fulham amplify the impacts of companies like these in the borough?

Discussion point - what other artists and companies might contribute positively to social impact in the borough?

Discussion point – to what extent should the major arts and cultural providers in the borough (eg The Lyric) be expected to deliver social impact for Hammersmith and Fulham?

4. Leading examples of socially engaged practice from other parts of London, the UK and overseas

Arguably the UK leads the world in socially engaged arts and cultural practice.

There are many professional artists and companies making socially engaged work from the UK and further afield. In considering this practice it might be useful to look across a spectrum of activity from work that is artist-led to activity and practices that are artist-facilitated. Both types of practice are equally valid:

Artist-led: this describes socially engaged work driven by an artist or companies creative practice. Example:

[Cardboard Citizens](#)

Led by Artistic Director Adrian Jackson, Cardboard Citizens has been making life-changing theatre with and for homeless people for 28 years. They:

- tell stories that need to be told, through theatre performed on the stage, in the street, in hostels, centres and prisons.
- offer a creative hub for excluded people, through workshops, training, support and progression to grow confidence, community and skills

Artist-facilitated practice: this describes a more democratic approach to the making of work where the artists' (or companies') role is to facilitate the ideas of others. This style is often referred to as cultural democracy.

Example:

[Shopfront Theatre, Coventry](#)

‘Cultural spaces are normally seen as bastions of culture and lots of people don’t feel like they belong there, those spaces alienate people. We’re not interested in numbers, we’re interested in real relationships.’

Chris O’Connell from Theatre Absolute

The Shopfront Theatre, managed by Theatre Absolute, is a performance, workshop and exhibition space based in an old shop in a dilapidated shopping centre in the centre of Coventry.

The space is designed so that anyone can use and feel comfortable in it, and now their users range from The Belgrade Theatre to community groups, local breakers and artists from a range of disciplines.

Key principles:

- the space is deliberately lo-fi and informal — a few lights, nothing precious, very flexible. It's a blank canvas so you can make it your own
- it feels 'like having a living room in the city centre,' people can pop in and feel welcomed throughout the week
- there are no rules about how the space should be used, there are no curatorial decisions made centrally, anyone who wants to can use it
- everyone participates on an equal footing

Outcomes: Marius, a local breaker, came to the space in 2016 and uses it for rehearsal with his group. As a migrant to the UK, the community around Shopfront made him feel part of something and has been a bridge into 'mainstream culture' — being booked at festivals and local arts centres. Grapevine, a local community organisation, have worked with a group of local fathers. Young people have taken over the space and they've brought together social workers, local authority staff, students and community to debate big issues. The fact that the building doesn't feel like a council space, or a typical cultural space means that everyone can take part on an equal footing.

[The Newbridge Project, Newcastle](#)

The NewBridge Project is an active and vibrant artist-led community supporting the development of artists and curators through the provision of space for creative practice, curatorial opportunities and an ambitious artist-led programme of exhibitions, commissions, artist development and events.

Their work confronts the public with big political issues of the day: climate change, austerity, Brexit with provocative and playful activities that are designed to get into the fabric of the city.

[Fun Palaces](#)

Fun Palaces is an ongoing campaign for cultural democracy, with an annual weekend of action every October.

The campaign promotes culture at the heart of community and community at the heart of culture.

The weekend of action uses the combination of arts, craft, science, tech, digital, heritage and sports activities, led by local people for local people, sharing their own passions and skills, as a catalyst for community-led transformation, with active participation for all ages.

In 2018 over 110,000 people participated in 433 Fun Palaces, delivered by over 9,000 local people.

Fun Palaces is rooted in a simple manifesto statement:

“We believe in the genius in everyone, in everyone an artist and everyone a scientist, and that creativity in community can change the world for the better. We believe we can do this together, locally, with radical fun – and that anyone, anywhere, can make a Fun Palace.”

Elsewhere there are artists and organisations making a difference to the urban communities in which they operate. A few recent placemaking projects in the US sponsored through the [‘Our Town’ Programme](#) that feel to us like they might be of interest to Hammersmith and Fulham:

FLOW (Indianapolis, IN)

Conceived by visual artist Mary Miss, [“FLOW: Can You See the River?”](#) is a city-wide public art project in Indianapolis that reveals how the ordinary activities of citizens affect the health and future of the White River water system. As a collaboration of artists, community organizations, scientists, and city planners, “FLOW” engaged the citizens of Indianapolis through physical installations along the river, an exhibition, and an online interactive mapping tool (trackaraindrop.org) in order to enhance Indianapolis residents’ awareness of the waterway and many of the river-related issues that affect their lives.

My Story (Portland, OR)

Working to put a human face on the City's changing demographics, a local arts-related organization called [My Story](#) developed a project—“We Are Portland”—to teach communities the fundamentals of photography. Using these new skills, community members took family portraits, simultaneously

presenting how they see themselves and documenting the diversity of Portlanders. Displayed in public spaces throughout the city, the photographs reached a broad audience and helped to increase public understanding about the changing nature of the City.

Watts Towers, CA

Located in southern Los Angeles, the Watts neighbourhood is home to the [Watts Towers](#), a vernacular art sculpture made by Simon Rodia. The towers serve as a major cultural asset in the area and are within walking distance of a metro rail public transit stop and other cultural spaces in the neighbourhood. However, because of a lack of signage and promotion, visitors and many LA residents do not realize that these connections exist. Partnering with the city, a [local neighbourhood development organization](#) set out to design and program a visitors centre at the train station in a historic building and design a network of walking paths with public art that would stitch together the neighbourhood's different cultural anchors.

Discussion point – what can we learn from these (inter)national examples that might be useful to consider for Hammersmith and Fulham?

5. How arts can help address areas of social concern in Hammersmith and Fulham

In reviewing the current concerns in the borough and the ways in which social impacts are generated through arts engagement, we have identified a handful of specific activities that the Commission should consider:

Activity that draws together disparate communities to collaborate on a shared civic project like a mural or documentary or performance or piece of public art

Who would run it	Who would benefit	What should be kept in mind
The local authority, through a commission of a local artist	Participants drawn from the community, those who would feature in it and those who would experience it	It needs to be about a subject that binds not divides
It might look something like: the 'People of Southwark' or 'Hackney Peace Carnival Mural' https://www.timeout.com/london/blog/five-ace-london-community-murals-092316		

Micro-budgets to commission arts activity that are placed in the hands of community organisations to distribute and spend themselves, without interference by the Council.

Who would run it	Who would benefit	What should be kept in mind
A local community trust or (if needs be) the local authority	Small scale community organisations that would receive the funding and their audiences	The benefits of community budgeting can be snuffed out by too much control or oversight
It might look something like: the U Decide events run by Stonecrabs in Lewisham https://stonecrabs.co.uk/u-decide/		

Activity which provides people with therapeutic relief from their present troubles. This might be through painting, dancing, singing or writing – but it must be active and structured.

Who would run it	Who would benefit	What should be kept in mind
A local hospital or care home or arts organisation	The individuals participating and their friends/families/carers	Needs to be structured and not a one-off
It might look something like: sessions from the Dance for Parkinson's team https://www.communitydance.org.uk/creative-programmes/dance-for-parkinsons		

Arts activity that gives people (especially young people) the skills and capabilities they need to succeed in life – arts activity is known to build confidence, and the softer social skills that help people form networks and be resilient.

Who would run it	Who would benefit	What should be kept in mind
A local cultural organisation	The children and young people who participate in the scheme(s)	Needs to be accessible to young people of all backgrounds and abilities
It might look something like: My Primary School is at the Museum http://myschoolatthemuseum.site/		

Discussion point – what might we recommend the Council adopts or adapts from these provocations?

Discussion point – are there any quick wins that might be started this year, and what are the areas of intervention that should be given more time to develop?