

# INSPIRING ISLINGTON

Arts Strategy 2017-2020



ISLINGTON

A FAIRER  
ISLINGTON



“

My life wasn't ever full of flashy colours, it was colourless. Ironically, it has taken two periods of homelessness just to get the will for living – I stood on the Waterloo Bridge ready to jump and cut myself from this lack of fortune. Although, the same thing saved me in the end: the view from Waterloo Bridge.

In that moment I felt the spark, unable to be taken down by anything. It made me go and try, in a completely new environment, with completely new people, something completely new, which made me sick whenever I thought about it. And the greatest product of this was the Speakeasy performance.

Once again, I felt extremely sick just thinking of coping with completely new people unable to figure out who are they and what they are going to do. My trust issues, and all-time doubt, were stopping me from full participation in the workshops. I decided to accept all the “newness” of every happening and decided to push myself more and provide as much of my creativeness as I was able. It was draining me out of energy, but it was worth all the hassle.

The end product – performance changed entirely my viewpoint and made me realise how important is to allow others to work with you and accept their thoughts.

Thanks to the Cardboard Citizens and Speakeasy my life flourishes with colours of the creativity.

”

Cardboard Citizens' Speakeasy? is a project for young people aged 16-25 who are not in employment, education or training (NEET), homeless or at risk of homelessness. Commissioned as part of Islington's WORD Festival participants build confidence, communication and social skills through the creation and performance of a piece of theatre and spoken word based on personal observations and experiences.

# Foreword

## Inspiring Islington through the arts

Islington is characterised by its dynamic and varied arts offer. The borough is home to one of the highest densities of Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations in the country. This is coupled with exemplary grassroots arts organisations which deliver high quality work in the heart of our community. Our theatre offer in Islington is second only to the West End and we are committed to making sure that this extraordinary cultural offer is made as widely available and accessible as possible to our residents.

We have a number of well documented social challenges in Islington and the Council is committed to making Islington a fairer place to live and work. The arts have a key role to play in helping us to deliver on that promise. Culture adds value to the lives of our residents through its intrinsic value as a means of expression and enrichment. Culture is also a vital driver of social change with the power to transform lives and places.

We recognise the role of the arts in bringing together our diverse communities, combating social isolation and giving a voice to our disenfranchised communities. We understand the importance of the sector in shaping not only the physical fabric of the borough but also a shared sense of what it means to be a part of the Islington community.

We also value the significant contribution that the arts sector makes locally to increase residents' life chances by promoting educational attainment, developing economic prosperity, creating employment and improving individual health and wellbeing.

I am therefore delighted to see that in response to the difficult financial climate ahead the arts strategy places emphasis on building the resilience of our arts organisations – through developing a stronger and more collaborative approach underpinned by partnership working – for our cultural infrastructure is the bedrock through which we can deliver our broader agenda and inspire Islington through the arts.

Councillor Kaya Comer Schwartz  
Executive Member



# 1. Introduction



A giant hand crafted puppet in response to Emily Rising, Little Angel Theatre's new co-production with Goblin parades through the crowds at Whitecross Street Party. One of only three building-based puppet theatres in England, Little Angel runs a theatre in Dagmar Passage and Little Angel Studios at Sebbon Street Community Centre. Having transformed the space through Section 106 funding Little Angel Studios is now a multi-use venue for rehearsal, training and education – an exemplar project of community programming and audience development.

Credit: Karis Mackenzie Photography

# 1.

## Introduction

This strategy sets out Islington Council's vision and approach to arts delivery together with the Arts Services' priorities for the next three years, what we will do to achieve them and how we will measure our success. The document does not stand alone but within a portfolio of other integrated culture related strategies including our Voluntary & Community Sector Strategy, Town Centre Management Strategy, Affordable Workspace Guidance Note and developing Public Art Strategy. Together they embed our aim to maximise the social and economic value of arts and culture through increased community engagement and interaction as well as an improved sense of wellbeing for all our residents. The strategy aims to deliver on the Council's key priorities to help residents who are out of work to find the right job, to make Islington a place where our residents have a good quality of life and to provide residents with good services on a tight budget.

Islington's  
theatres generate  
**£24,889,625**  
per year in box  
office receipts

Islington's  
theatres lever  
**£44.6 million**  
local leisure spend  
each year

Islington's  
theatres  
**1,058,454**  
annual  
audience

## 2. Context



Supported by Arsenal in the Community, Almeida Participation worked with 40 local young people who hadn't previously been involved in theatre to develop their stories and experiences into new plays and monologues performed on the Almeida stage by professional actors prior to Leo Butler's sell out performances of 'Boy'.

Credit: Ellie Kurtz

## 2. Context

### 2.1 What defines Islington?

To be effective, the arts strategy must understand and reflect the very particular locality and community which it is to serve – identifying both the future aspirations and addressing the current needs of Islington's residents and cultural infrastructure. It must build on the strengths of the borough as a cultural and arts destination<sup>1</sup> and deliver the Council's commitments to our residents to make Islington fairer and to create a place where everyone, whatever their background, has the opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life<sup>2</sup>.

Our arts strategy is underpinned by a desire to build on and celebrate the distinctiveness of Islington, both as a whole and the unique local areas that make up the borough – the Islington on a human scale, as experienced by those who live, work and study here, rather than simply as part of one of the largest and most populous cities in the world.

Islington stretches from the City of London in the south along Holloway Road to Archway and the borders of Haringey and Camden to the north and west and Hackney to the east. Peppered with fine examples of contemporary and intact Georgian architecture<sup>3</sup> the borough has a number of clearly identifiable town centres and recognisable high street areas – Angel, Archway, Nags Head and Finsbury Park – and a vibrant evening and night-time economy, which includes internationally

renowned theatres as well as bars and restaurants.

The borough boasts 13 theatres and dance venues, ranging from pub theatres such as the Kings Head to the internationally acclaimed Sadler's Wells and the Almeida Theatre. Arts Council England (ACE) is one of the borough's largest investment partners. From 2015 to 2018 ACE will invest £41.6 million in the 26 National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) based in Islington – making Islington host to the third most NPOs in London and one of the highest densities of NPOs in the country. ACE also provides significant funding to local arts organisations based in the borough through its Grants for the Arts programme.

Islington's diversity is also reflected in its people. Islington has the second highest population density in the country with a population of approximately 212,000 people in an area of under 15 square kilometres<sup>4</sup>. The population is relatively youthful with an unusually large proportion of 20–35 year olds, many of whom have moved into the borough having found – or in search of – employment in London. We have a broad multi-ethnic population – over a quarter of residents come from BME communities and a further fifth are white but non-British<sup>5</sup> – from a variety of different faith communities, a significant proportion of disabled people, as well as one of the most concentrated lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) populations in the U.K.<sup>6</sup>.

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1 Islington's core strategy: Your neighbourhood your Islington, February 2011

2 Islington corporate plan 2015–18

3 There are 41 conservation areas in the borough and 1,067 listed buildings

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4 Islington Local Economic Assessment, 2011

5 Islington local economic assessment, 2011

6 Islington's Core Strategy: Your Neighbourhood Your Islington, February 2011

Since 2001 the population of the borough has grown by 11%, and is predicted to increase by a further 12% by 2026.

There are 10,300 businesses in Islington providing a total of 176,000 jobs<sup>7</sup> and a vibrant creative sector which has grown by 47% since 1999<sup>8</sup>.

25% of Islington businesses are in the creative sector collectively providing 20% of local jobs and employing over 34,700 people in the borough.

For every £1 of salary paid by the arts and culture industry, an additional £2.01 is generated in the wider economy through indirect and induced multiplier impacts<sup>9</sup>. In fact in 2014/15 it was estimated that Islington's theatres alone attracted £81 million into the local economy, including £44.6 million in additional visitor leisure spend. Spin-outs from the broader tourism sector also add significantly to local employment opportunities by boosting the local economy and attracting visitors. It is therefore increasingly recognised that the creative economy is a major driver for economic development<sup>10</sup> and sustainable

regeneration in Islington both through community and individual capacity building and by creating a sense of place and improved quality of life for all.

‘There are two Islington – one successful, vibrant and prosperous, the other poor and disadvantaged’

Jack Morris OBE,  
Chair of the Islington Giving Appeal Committee

Despite this thriving business community, where there are more jobs than people<sup>11</sup>, unemployment and worklessness is high<sup>12</sup>. Walk in any direction away from the buzz of Upper Street and you will find the ‘two Islington’ – a borough marked by some of the starkest contrasts in wealth and poverty in the country<sup>13</sup> with extremes of rich and poor living side by side as neighbours but with very disparate experiences in relation to health, education, housing and poverty.

Islington is ranked as the 24th most deprived<sup>14</sup> local authority area in England (out of 326) and the 4th most deprived borough in London with nearly half of our population (44%) living in an area defined as deprived. Almost half (44%) of Islington residents live in social housing – nearly

7 Two Islington: Understanding the problem, Paper 1: What is the picture for Islington? Understanding the Evidence base, 2010

8 Islington Local Economic Assessment, 2011

9 The Value of arts and culture to people and society, Arts Council England, 2014

10 ‘Business in the UK arts and culture industry generated an aggregate turnover of £15.1 billion in 2013’, Contribution of the arts and culture industry to the national economy, Centre for Economics and Business Research, 2015

11 ‘Islington has 1.36 jobs for every person of working age compared with 0.93 for London’, The English Indices of deprivation 2015, Department for Communities and Local Government

12 Islington Employment Commission

13 Two Islington: understanding the problem, Overview and strategy paper, The Islington Fairness Commission

14 The English Indices of deprivation 2015, Department for Communities and Local Government

twice the average for London boroughs.

In Islington 14% of working age adults are on out of work benefits with 12,920 residents in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) – the highest proportion of claims in London (7.8% of the working age population).<sup>15</sup> Since 2014 Islington has also had more young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)<sup>16</sup> than comparable areas<sup>17</sup> of which 95% of these live in families where nobody works<sup>18</sup>. The Council has succeeded in reducing the number of NEET in Islington and will continue to prioritise opportunities for this target group.

Around one in six households have an annual gross income of over £60,000 but a similar proportion has a gross income of under £15,000. 35% of children and young people in the borough live in poverty – the third highest level of child poverty<sup>19</sup> in the country with pupils from these poorer families performing less well at school than their neighbours and playmates from wealthier families. Moreover children and young people in Islington are 36% more likely than counterparts in London/England to experience

mental health problems<sup>20</sup>. As a population as a whole, Islington has the highest diagnosed percentage of patients with mental illness in the country (one in six adults in the borough). In addition there are significant numbers of people with depression (nearly 30,000 people) – the highest rate in London.<sup>21</sup>

In response to the inequality that exists across Islington the arts strategy seeks to maximise the social and economic value of the arts to ensure that Islington becomes a fairer place using the arts to drive social change, improve equality and access and prioritise those currently underserved.

## 2.2 Delivery of support for the arts

Islington Council has consistently used the arts and culture as a mechanism to deliver against core priorities and service objectives. In 2009, following the creation of a new arts service, the Council published 'Cultural Matters' a cultural strategy for the borough which created a framework document for the Council's cultural output.

The Arts Service is a small team of 3 staff (Arts Development Manager, Arts Development Officer and Arts & Partnerships

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<sup>15</sup> The English Indices of deprivation 2015, Department for Communities and Local Government

<sup>16</sup> The largest single NEET group is White (53%) with young white men being disproportionately represented. A high proportion of disabled people have no qualifications and disabled people, particularly those with learning difficulties, are disproportionately NEET, Two Islington: Understanding the problem, Review of Delivery and Action, The Islington Fairness Commission

<sup>17</sup> 8.4% of 16–18 year olds in Islington are not in education, employment or training (NEET), significantly higher than London (4.5%), Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2014/15

<sup>18</sup> Islington Local Economic Assessment, 2011

<sup>19</sup> The English indices of deprivation 2015, Department for Communities and Local Government

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<sup>20</sup> Two Islington: understanding the problem, Overview and strategy paper, The Islington Fairness Commission

<sup>21</sup> Joint strategic needs assessment, 2015/16

Projects Officer) which has built a reputation for its 'people-centred service'<sup>22</sup> providing a fast one-stop-shop service for local artists and arts organisations to access information and advice from across Council services negating the need to negotiate a way through often complex regulatory systems and processes. The focus of the Art Services' work is to enable, connect and support the sector by brokering relationships, negotiating partnership working, researching and sharing intelligence, developing strategy to align limited resources and generating increased inward investment by leveraging-in additional funding into the borough.

### 2.3 Our approach

To be effective the Arts Service needs to be aware of future issues and developments within the wider political, social, local and national contexts that may impact on our ability to deliver, and to develop a strategy that addresses these potential challenges whilst also building on our strengths.

Our primary focus is on improving outcomes for our residents by making Islington fairer and supporting our local cultural infrastructure to thrive by becoming more financially resilient and adaptable to change. In times of austerity we are faced with two options – to make further reductions or to generate increased income through a more entrepreneurial approach to secure resources for the arts. Through need has come the opportunity to seek new partnerships and

alliances beyond the traditional boundaries of the public and the private sector. We intend to think swiftly and innovatively to grasp openings as they arise and to be 'opportunity-ready' to forge future alignments. The establishment of the Islington Film Office through a tri-borough concession contract that maximises earned income through film location fees and associated services, while minimising disruption to residents and ensuring productions are safe, is an example of such agile thinking.

The Arts Service works in close partnership across three inter-related teams – the Voluntary Sector Community, Special Projects and Town Centres Teams – as well as the Libraries & Heritage Service to see beyond any one service's lens<sup>23</sup> to provide opportunities and support for the borough's tapestry of voluntary, arts and business organisations and their audiences, customers and communities of Islington residents.

Looking forwards, the Arts Service will ensure that it makes the best use of its resources to deliver on the things that have the biggest impact on the lives of Islington residents. We will seek to work in new ways forging fresh partnerships and alliances to maximise public sector resources and provide more joined up services. Over the next three years we will become more entrepreneurial in our approach to leveraging funding and develop relationships with a broader set of partners with a view to maximising on the cultural capital we hold in the

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<sup>22</sup> People-centred services and making every contact count are two of Islington's underpinning principles outlined in the Corporate Plan 2015-19 which advocates for 'joint working both across Islington and within the Council' that also 'avoids people having to negotiate their way through complex systems'

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<sup>23</sup> Strong partnerships is one of Islington's underpinning principles outlined in the Corporate Plan 2015-19 'we all need to see beyond our own service lens'

borough. We will actively seek opportunities to work closely with other Local Authorities, corporate and community partners and consortia from both the public and private sector to share resources and secure the use of underused facilities for the arts.

We will, of course, continue to work closely with artists and arts organisations and support them to secure grants and lever in funding. We will do this through the provision of one-to-one surgeries and advice, improving the range and quality of fundraising information available to the local arts sector, investigating the potential for funding the arts through cultural commissioning and social investment financing and supporting the arts sector to capitalise on their own assets.

## 2.4 Current funding and support for the arts

Each and every year Islington's thriving arts sector draws £15 million investment into the borough.

During 2016/17 Islington will benefit from an investment of £13,872,602<sup>24</sup> from Arts Council England in the 26 national portfolio organisations based in the borough plus an additional contribution in excess of £1,700,000<sup>25</sup> each year to local arts

organisations and Islington based individual artists and practitioners through Grants for the Arts project funding.

Through our Community Festivals Fund last year the arts service supported six local groups to deliver community cohesion events and arts festivals across the borough – Whitecross Street Party, Cally Festival, Islington World Mental Health Day, Archway with Words, Angel Canal Festival and Oxjam Islington Takeover – enjoyed by over 84,000 residents over the year. Collaboration with other council services, for example the co-delivery of the WORD Festival with the Library Service and arts partners All Change and Free Word showcased a packed programme of twenty-nine events and new commissions to local audiences of over 30,000. Moving forward we will enhance the funding criteria to ensure that all events involve our harder to reach residents.



Arts Council England invests  
**£13,872,602**  
in Islington each year

Plus a further annual contribution  
**£1,700,000+**  
through project funding

<sup>24</sup> Arts Council England investment in its 26 Islington based National Portfolio Organisations is £41,617,806 over three years 2015–18

<sup>25</sup> Arts Council England investment in Islington based organisations and artists through Grants for the Arts is anticipated to be in excess of £5m over the same period 2015–18 based on previous years' awards: 2013/14 49 awards £1,373,338; 2014/15 95 awards £1,854,911; 2015/16 (part year to end March) 77 awards £1,467,524

During the last nine months alone the arts service estimates it has provided 322 one-to-one surgeries and specialist advice sessions to local artists and organisations.

Since 2013, we have also led a consortium of 18 leading arts organisations to provide 39 new paid creative apprenticeship and internship employment opportunities for young Islington residents.

We also support the sector through in-kind arrangements such as the provision of affordable workspace, advocating for cultural provision within S106 agreements, commissioning new research and steering the strategic alignment of arts provision – for example the development of a music education strategy for Islington and the Islington Cultural Education Partnership.

## 2.5 A harsher financial climate

Since 2010 the Government has cut its funding to Islington Council by half – a reduction of £150 million – putting Islington in the top ten worst hit areas in the country and leaving every household in the borough £1,000 worse off.<sup>26</sup> Over the next four years Islington Council will have to save a further £70 million, although the government's published settlement for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) will mean that the Arts Council England's investment in our local arts infrastructure will continue at its current level providing local residents with continued opportunities to access to world class dance, theatre, literature, film, visual arts and music.

Despite this harsher financial climate we remain resolute to do more with fewer resources by thinking creatively and becoming more entrepreneurial in our activity to increase inward investment and maximise the return on our existing assets by putting under-used space to use for the arts, supporting co-location, promoting shared services and identifying economies of scale. We will embed culture across all departments, increase our range through sharing intelligence and resources, and use creativity as a means to empower our harder to reach residents.

2013-2016  
Arts Team raised over  
**£1.3 million**  
for strategic  
projects

2013-2016  
Islington Film  
Service  
**£790,348**  
generated  
income

26 Towards a Fairer Islington: Our Commitment, Corporate Plan 2015-19, Islington Council



# 3. Vision

Artangel, producers of extraordinary art in unexpected places, collaborated with WORD Festival to commission Lu Kemp's *Have your circumstances changed?* at the former FADS shop in Archway shopping mall. An intimate triptych of performances, the work confronted audiences with the routines of older men's everyday lives inspired by cookery classes run with local older male residents at St Luke's Community Centre in South Islington.

Credit Manuel Vason

### 3. Vision

Over the next four years our vision, as set out in the Corporate Plan 'Towards a Fairer Islington', is to make Islington fairer and create a place where everyone, whatever their background, has the same opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life by building more Council housing and supporting private renters, helping residents who are out of work find the right job, helping residents cope with the rising cost of living, making Islington a place where our residents have a good quality of life and providing residents with good services on a tight budget.

In accord, the vision of our Arts Service is to 'Inspire Islington through the arts' by celebrating the intrinsic value of the arts to illuminate our inner lives and enrich our emotional world whilst simultaneously championing their instrumental value<sup>27</sup> in relation to promoting individual and community capacity building, providing employment and training, contributing to place-shaping and a sense of belonging, building community cohesion<sup>28</sup>, improving the well-being of Islington's residents and driving the local economy.

“The instrumental value of the arts is in direct proportion to their intrinsic value and the greater the former the more significant the latter”

Glenn Lowry,  
Director, Museum of Modern Art, New York

The public arts  
are significant  
employers and  
indirectly a source  
of support for jobs in  
the commercial  
creative industries

27 John Knell and Matthew Taylor advocate for 'artistic instrumentalism' the argument that art is not just there for itself, nor is it there just to deliver other kinds of social good, Arts funding, austerity and the Big Society: Remaking the case for the arts, RSA, February 2011

28 'There is strong evidence that participation in the arts can contribute to community cohesion, reduce social exclusion and isolation and/or make communities feel safer and stronger', Culture and Sport Evidence Programme CASE, Understanding the value of engagement in culture and sport, Department for Culture, Media and Sport



# 4. Arts Strategy Priorities & Objectives

Company Three is a company of 75 young people from Islington aged 11-19, all of whom are nominated by teachers, youth workers or social workers as someone who will benefit from their programme of training and guidance. They make theatre for adult audiences that speaks deeply of what it means to be a teenager, through long-term collaboration between company members and professional theatre-makers. Hot off the heels of Brainstorm which saw the company perform at the National Theatre their new production *The Future* also premiered to critical acclaim at the Yard Theatre. *'The young performers hold the room with stories and experiences excavated from their own lives and experiences; they let us peep inside their heads and see their hidden dreams and fears.'* The Guardian

Credit: Camilla Greenwell

# 4.

## Arts Strategy Priorities & Objectives

### 4.1 Purpose of the arts strategy

The Arts Service will work in partnership with our rich arts infrastructure, voluntary and community sector, private sector and through collegiate working across Council departments to align resources, explore and leverage opportunities for everyone to realise their potential, as individuals and organisations, directly through cultural production and employment and aspirationally through participation, attainment and education.

Through the publication of an arts strategy we seek to articulate our long-standing commitment to the arts recognising the lasting social, economic, educational and health impacts the arts generate for Islington residents. The arts strategy provides an opportunity for us to engage strategically with the cultural community and regional agencies and will ensure a joined up approach across Council services, promoting quality in cultural provision, avoiding duplication, maximising opportunities and resources and aligning them to national agendas and initiatives.

The arts strategy provides a framework for arts development between 2016-2019. The action plan that accompanies this strategy will be updated annually in line with Council service planning ensuring that longer term objectives can be met within a continuously improving and flexible service that is able to adapt to change and address unexpected challenges.

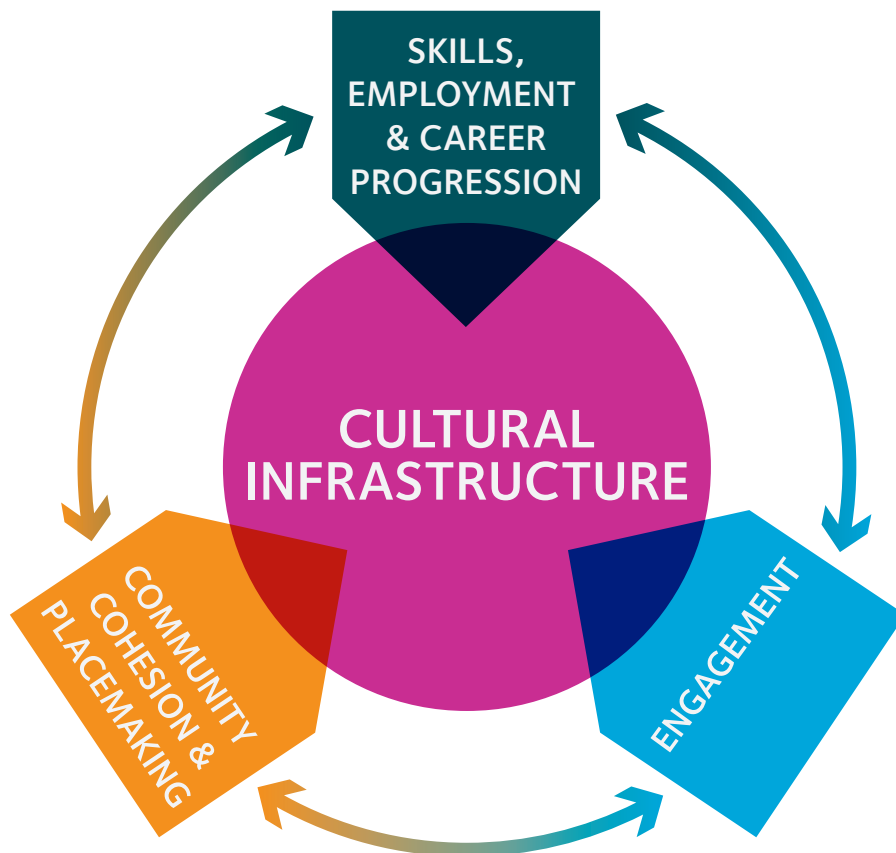
### 4.2 Priorities

The four priority areas of work that will enable us to achieve our vision 'To inspire Islington through the arts' are:

- Increasing opportunities for engagement in the arts – Inspiring Islington through extraordinary arts experiences
- Providing a broad and resilient cultural infrastructure – Inspiring Islington through the delivery of exemplary arts programmes
- Promoting community cohesion and sense of place through placemaking and animation of the public realm – Inspiring Islington through direct engagement in shaping local distinctiveness
- Generating creative skills, employment and career development opportunities – Inspiring Islington through clear progression routes towards employment in the arts sector

These four priorities do not exist nor operate in isolation. The areas of focus are inextricably linked and interconnected. Tackling just one of the areas will not achieve the impact we seek, but together, delivered through a portfolio of strong external partnerships across the sector, they present an opportunity to illustrate the power of the arts to effect change.

7 community  
arts festivals over  
**114,000**  
combined annual  
audience



### 4.3 Engagement

Increasing opportunities for engagement in the arts – Inspiring Islington through extraordinary arts experiences

#### **Objectives: Increasing opportunities for engagement in the arts**

- To provide high quality opportunities for local residents, in particular children, young people, those with disabilities, elders and those from BAMER communities, to actively engage with, and take part in, the arts as audiences, participants and producers.
- To ensure that all Islington children and young people receive high quality music education<sup>29</sup> linked to progression routes outside of formal education settings.

- To support the provision of inspirational and best practice arts education within Islington schools and youth settings.

If the arts are to truly inspire creativity and raise aspirations we need to support artists to provide, and audiences to demand, high quality experiences, productions and processes. At the same time we need to encourage the arts sector to broaden and diversify its audience by, for example, valuing work that is rooted in local communities. We will focus our efforts on fully engaging our broad and diverse population in an equally diverse range of high quality cultural programmes. In particular, we will strive to ensure equality of access by targeting those residents within sections of our community who are hardest to reach, with a particular focus on ensuring programmes are delivered and devised with residents from low income families.

<sup>29</sup> 'Music education must not become the preserve of those children whose families can afford to pay for music tuition', The importance of music: A national plan for music education, Department of Education, November 2011

‘A great arts and cultural education gives children and young people the confidence and creative skills to thrive, as individuals, as members of our society, and as the next generation of creative talent.’

Darren Henley,  
Chief Executive, Arts Council England

All children and young people, wherever and whatever their start in life, should have the opportunity to have an arts and cultural education that nurtures innovation and unlocks the vital skills that are helping to drive our world leading creative industries<sup>30</sup>. We know that children born into low income families with low levels of educational qualifications are the least likely to be employed and succeed in the cultural and creative industries, to engage with and appreciate the arts, culture and heritage in the curriculum or to experience culture as part of their home education<sup>31</sup>.

To address the disenfranchisement of our culturally underserved children we seek to adopt a broad cultural education for all through arts skills acquisition, participation in arts and cultural events and enhanced appreciation

– an education and a curriculum that is infused with multi-disciplinarity, creativity and enterprise and that identifies, nurtures and trains tomorrow’s creative and cultural talent. Launched by Arts Council England in October 2015 the Cultural Education Challenge aims to make sure that all children and young people everywhere have access to great arts and culture and that every child can create, compose and perform; visit, experience and participate in extraordinary work; and be able to know more, understand more and review the experiences they have had.

We will capitalise on the existing arts education strategic work within Islington spearheaded by AESAG<sup>32</sup> and the Music Education Steering Group<sup>33</sup> to develop an Islington Cultural Education Partnership to enable local arts organisations, Council services, schools and higher education institutions to share resources and create joined-up local arts education provision.

The benefits of arts engagement and participation are not limited to the young – research has evidenced that a higher frequency of engagement with arts and culture is generally associated with a higher level of subjective wellbeing with a number of studies reporting positive impact on specific health conditions.

30 Darren Henley, Chief Executive, Arts Council England

31 Enriching Britain: Culture, creativity and growth, Warwick Commission on the Future of cultural value, University of Warwick

32 The Arts Education Strategic Advisory Group was established in 2013 with representatives from Islington Schools Improvement Service, Arts Service, Heritage Service and local arts organisations to steer arts education strategy and provision in the borough through advocacy, research and project delivery

33 A Music Education Steering group was established in 2015 to commission a comprehensive music education strategy and implementation plan for Islington to ensure that all children receive a comprehensive music education

## Applied arts and cultural interventions can have a positive impact on specific health conditions which include dementia, depression and Parkinson's disease<sup>34</sup>.

In fact research amongst those who had attended a cultural place or event in the previous 12 months were almost 60 per cent more likely to report good health compared to those who had not, and theatre-goers were almost 25 per cent more likely to report good health<sup>35</sup>.

Estimates of common mental health problems among adults in Islington suggest that 28,452 residents were expected to be experiencing depression and anxiety disorders during any week in 2009/10. In 2010/2011 GP registers showed that 5,315 adults were living with diagnosed chronic depression, 759 people had dementia and 3,019 people had psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia.<sup>36</sup> These figures are unusually high and in response we will actively seek to support projects and initiatives that promote arts engagement for residents suffering from mental health problems in particular local elders with dementia. In addition, we will work with colleagues within social care and health services to use

the arts as a tool to prevent local residents at risk of falling into ill health and social isolation by co-ordinating, facilitating and supporting local cultural responses to the borough's health inequalities and promoting wellbeing.

### 4.4 Placemaking

Promoting community cohesion and sense of place through placemaking and animation of the public realm – Inspiring Islington through direct engagement in shaping local distinctiveness.

#### **Objectives: Promoting community cohesion and sense of place through placemaking and animation of the public realm**

- To maximise the role the arts can play in placemaking and engage local residents in actively influencing the changing face of the borough
- To animate the public realm bringing the streets alive by taking work out of venues to places where people are

Cities and their communities are constantly in flux and Islington is no exception. The number of people moving in and out of the borough is high. In 2014, an estimated 20,650 people moved into the borough and 21,640 moved out – about 10% of the population. Movement is particularly high in those aged 16–24 years old<sup>37</sup>.

Significant regeneration projects are underway

<sup>34</sup> The value of arts and culture to people and society: An evidence review, Arts Council England, 2014

<sup>35</sup> The value of arts and culture to people and society: An evidence review, Arts Council England, 2014

<sup>36</sup> Health in Islington: The facts (update 2011)

<sup>37</sup> Joint strategic needs assessment 2015/16

at Archway and Finsbury Park, with a potential new Business Improvement District earmarked for Farringdon and Clerkenwell to provide for the influx of workers and visitors to the area once the Crossrail development is complete in late 2017. Farringdon will be the only station from which passengers will be able to access all three networks (Thameslink, Crossrail and London Underground) and therefore is set to become one of Britain's busiest train stations bringing passengers from outer London to the business hubs in the City.

The ambitious plans for the development of the Upper Street Post Office and sorting depot will create a new town centre in Islington with a double-sided parade of shops enclosing a major public art commission by an internationally renowned artist and refurbishment of Milner Square Gardens. These schemes will have a significant impact on the local economies and sense of place creating new focal points for social gathering and bringing significant numbers of additional visitors to the borough.

Culture brings diverse communities together to enjoy our public spaces and it encourages local communities to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the borough's rich physical, social and political heritage.

Culture has a key role in animating, enhancing and improving the local environment. Our focus on place making extends to a wider discussion of the role that culture plays in creating places that people want to live, work and visit<sup>38</sup> acknowledging the range of spaces that make up our public realm and the diversity of approaches to animate these spaces<sup>39</sup>. Through the commissioning of high quality works in the public realm we will work with the Town Centre Management service to strengthen the identity of our key town centres (Archway, Nags Head, Angel, Finsbury Park) creating a sense of local distinctiveness and promoting Islington as a cultural destination.

We will commission artists to develop bespoke visual identities to demarcate and celebrate place, enhance the physical infrastructure to create a sense of place and renewed local pride and engage local residents through artist-led consultation to support those without a voice to articulate their views and have their voices heard<sup>40</sup> in relation to local developments and improvements. Working in partnership with developers the Arts Service will actively champion the allocation of S106 contributions for cultural infrastructure and development of creative skills and employment for young people in the borough. Similarly through

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38 Placemaking is one of four key themes explored in The Culture White Paper – the first White Paper on the arts in 50 years which aims to set out a vision and agenda for the future of the arts, culture and heritage sector, published 2016

39 The Fairness Commission Recommendation 11 states 'We need to reclaim, protect and maintain communal spaces in Islington for community use'.

40 Co-production is one of Islington's underpinning principles outlined in the Corporate Plan 2015-19 'we will work together with service users as equals to develop policy and services'

managing the contract for Islington Film Office – a one-stop-shop for film and TV production in the borough – the Strategic Projects Team and Arts Service will work in partnership to promote and enhance the profile of Islington as a cultural destination.

#### 4.5 Skills Development & Creative Employment

Generating creative skills, employment and career development opportunities – Inspiring Islington through clear progression routes towards employment in the arts sector

##### **Objectives: Generating creative skills, employment and career development opportunities**

- To promote the role of literacy and the arts in developing employability skills
- To provide progression routes for Islington young people to secure employment in the arts and cultural sectors
- To develop the workforce of the future through the provision of work experience, entry level jobs and skills development opportunities

We have stated clearly in our Corporate Plan that over the next four years ‘supporting people into employment should be at the heart of everything we do’.<sup>41</sup> Our ambition is to ensure that everyone is given the help that they need to get the job and career that they want, deserve, and that they will ultimately enjoy this includes supporting residents who

are out of work to find the right job, skills and training.

Young people are more likely to be unemployed than other age groups in the borough<sup>42</sup>. Many young people aged 16–18 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) have complex lives and are more likely than their peers to have learning difficulties or disability, be supervised by the Youth Offending Service or be an ex-offender, be a teenage parent and/or have mental health problems. It is also more likely that NEET young people have grown up and live in a household where there is no one working. A large percentage are young white men, who have under-achieved at school and want to find employment, rather than undertake further education, but are lacking the qualifications and skills to find jobs. Similarly, although education attainment levels have risen significantly in BAMER communities, this success is not reflected in those able to secure employment locally.

A lack of basic skills including literacy, numeracy, time-keeping and self-confidence make it difficult for many young people to succeed in the workplace should they find a job. In England 14.9% of the population aged 16–65 lack functional literacy<sup>43</sup> creating obstacles to fairness across society. The arts have a key role to play in both formal and informal education and broader community settings to help young people to develop a wide range of soft, transferable skills that translate well into the working environment.

<sup>41</sup> Towards a fairer Islington: Our commitment, Corporate Plan 2015–19, Islington Council

<sup>42</sup> State of equalities in Islington, Annual Report 2015, Islington Council

<sup>43</sup> The 2011 Skills for life survey: A survey of literacy, numeracy and ICT Levels in England, Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, 2011

## The workforce in the cultural and creative sector is growing over four times faster than the UK's workforce as a whole<sup>44</sup>.

The Arts Service will build upon its track record of establishing creative employment opportunities with local arts organisations<sup>45</sup> by working closely with the Youth Employment Team to develop bespoke opportunities for NEET young people providing them with an entry point and understanding of the potential of a career in the arts, offering them the opportunity to undertake a paid creative apprenticeship or internship and supporting them to develop the tools required to secure employment in the arts and enhance their life chances. We will broaden our portfolio of potential employers to include arts related services and industries and develop relationships with arts organisations beyond the borough's borders to increase the range of relevant opportunities we can offer Islington's young people. We will support borough-wide initiatives to ensure that all Islington young people have the key skills including literacy<sup>46</sup> required to improve employability and offer alternative career progression routes in contribution to tackling poverty in the borough.

In association with our colleagues in the Learning, Skills and Employment Service we will work closely with our creative employers to engage them in a portfolio of schemes to offer employment opportunities that match disenfranchised Islington residents with local employment opportunities, whether part-time roles for adults with learning disabilities, Saturday jobs for young adults or 'back to work' placements for long-term unemployed adults to learn new skills and become employment ready.

## 518,000 people are employed in the Creative Industries across London – 11.4% of all employment in London<sup>47</sup>.

The creative industries are larger than the financial, manufacturing and construction sectors in London<sup>48</sup>. Given that 30% of the UK's creative industry jobs are based in London<sup>49</sup> and that employment in the creative industries in London has continued to increase at a rate well beyond that of the overall economy since 2011<sup>50</sup> the sector will be an increasingly important source of jobs for local residents.

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44 Creative industries economic estimates, January 2015, DCMS

45 Since 2013 the arts service has brokered 39 paid creative apprentices and internships within local cultural partner organisations for Islington NEET residents aged 16–24 years

46 'The ability to read is essential for a fairer Islington,'  
The Fairness Commission

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47 Creative industries in London, Creative Skillset, 2014

48 Creative industries in London, Creative Skillset, 2014

49 Creative industries in London, Creative Skillset, 2014

50 Creative industries in London, Creative Skillset, 2014

Currently 25% of Islington businesses (2,559) are in the creative sector accounting for 20% of the workforce (34,775 employees).<sup>51</sup>

In order to retain local young talent within Islington and nurture our growing creative industry we will work closely with colleagues across the Council to secure and retain existing creative workspace and artists' studios within the borough and seek to secure the development of additional affordable workspace through S106 negotiations or, for example, our flagship project at Dingley Place which will see a disused Council asset transformed into a thriving hub providing new approaches to affordable workspace, skills development and employability support for the creative sector and local residents.

#### 4.6 Cultural Infrastructure

Providing a broad and resilient cultural infrastructure – Inspiring Islington through the delivery of exemplary arts programmes

##### **Objectives: Providing a broad and resilient cultural infrastructure**

- To support arts organisations to remain in or move into the borough
- To build the resilience of the sector
- To resource the sector through shared intelligence and information

The key to delivering the other priorities outlined in this strategy – skills, employment & careers; engagement; cohesion & placemaking – is maintaining Islington's strong and vibrant cultural infrastructure. An infrastructure which is reflective and representative of the communities it serves is the bedrock on which we can build a dynamic and transformative cultural offer that has the power to effect positive change in terms of the economic, social and emotional wellbeing of our residents. A resilient and well-resourced cultural infrastructure with a strong and diverse leadership will also ensure the quality of artistic experience to inspire Islington's residents to engage as participants, producers and audiences.

The UK is in a period of embedded austerity that has reduced levels of public spending and investment in the arts and culture<sup>52</sup>. This trajectory will continue for at least the next four years and at a local level we are beginning to see the effects with smaller arts organisations, particularly those with a narrow funding base or reliant primarily on project funding, shutting down. With austerity comes the stagnation of the jobs market and, often, decreasing innovation in artistic programming in a vicious circle that narrows the arts offer and opportunities for engagement. This situation will be exacerbated by a shift in focus of Arts Council England strategic and Grants for the Arts Programme funding to the regions and outer boroughs and has the potential to alter the ecology of the arts infrastructure in the borough towards the dominance of larger established organisations by removing the substratum of emerging talent. Over the

<sup>51</sup> Islington Employment Commission: Labour market analysis: Islington & London, January 2014

<sup>52</sup> There has been a 36% cut to the Arts Council England's government grant since 2010

next three years we intend to work closely with arts organisations to build the resilience of the Islington's cultural infrastructure through the development of business skills and enterprise.

‘Publicly funded organisations must be supported and incentivised to develop the business skills and enterprise needed to access additional funding streams and maximise their commercial potential.’

The Warwick Commission

We recognise the value of retaining established organisations and cultural providers in the borough and are determined to also identify support for the next generation of emerging talent to ensure that Islington nurtures a seedbed of ideas and smaller scale activity that is supported to remain in borough. We will also work closely with our partners, in particular Arts Council England to encourage our resident arts organisations to diversify their workforce and leadership.

In collaboration with the Strategic Projects Team the Arts Service will negotiate workspace within new developments and pilot entrepreneurial solutions to make best use of Islington's empty properties and underused Council buildings<sup>53</sup>. Our approach will provide affordable workspace opportunities<sup>54</sup> which promote employment and training, engage artists to animate and protect temporarily vacant premises through 'meanwhile use'<sup>55</sup>, support artists to regenerate our town centres through Culture on the High street<sup>56</sup> and develop new integrated arts and community offer within our existing property portfolio.

As the austerity cuts deepen the voluntary, community and arts sectors grow ever closer. The Arts Service will work in tandem with the Voluntary Community Sector Team to build the sectors' resilience identifying organisations that are facing crisis to provide early intervention and support<sup>57</sup> – we will actively seek opportunities for the sectors to work together, to co-locate, to share services and will support the development of joint bids and funding applications.

The Arts Service prides itself on its ability to network and broker partnerships between artists and arts organisations but limited

53 'Ensuring our property and assets are used efficiently, raising income where practical' is an objective within the Corporate plan to meet the aim of 'generating new income'

54 Generally a workspace managed by a not-for-profit organisation, with a rental value below the market rate

55 MillCo's Art Guard is a new guardian service which trains artists to provide protection for vacant properties in exchange for the provision of temporary live/work space

56 Culture on the High Street, GLA, 2013

57 Early intervention and prevention is one of Islington's underpinning principles outlined in the Corporate Plan 2015-19 'moving services to address problems before they become too ingrained to manage'

staffing means that there can be an invisible barrier preventing access to this support. The pace of technology and innovation is leading to different expectation of services. We are therefore committed to improve the way we communicate about our service and partnership opportunities through an increased digital offer. Over the next three years we will strive to replicate our face-to-face service through our digital offer providing an immediate and up to date information service so that artists and arts organisations can access the Council in a way that suits their needs<sup>58</sup>. We will redevelop our digital offer to make our website accessible on smart phones and tablets providing tailored user pathways to direct artists and arts organisations to specific information from across council services that can support their needs.

The Arts Service can only be as good as the value it adds to the local arts sector in terms of intelligence and horizon scanning.

With arts organisations focused on the urgency of day-to-day delivery the Arts Service's role in horizon scanning and information sharing will become increasingly important providing a much needed regional and national overview of policy, practice and emerging ideas to inform, shape and co-ordinate the work within the borough.

Please refer to Appendix I for a full summary of objectives and how they will be delivered. A detailed action plan has also been drawn up as an accompanying document to the arts strategy identifying service leads, partners and key milestones. A working document updated annually, the action plan will provide a flexible and responsive blueprint to guide service delivery.



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<sup>58</sup> Digital Islington – Digital Strategy 2014-17



# 5.

## Relevance to regional and national arts policy

Islington's WORD Festival, a dynamic collaboration between the Arts Service, Libraries Service, Free Word and creative producers All Change, is an annual celebration of reading, writing and the freedom of expression. Held throughout June WORD draws audiences of over 30,000 to a series of 35+ events with a specific focus on engaging participants who are suffering from mental health issues, older residents, children and young people. In 2016 circus pioneers Upswing performed 'Between the Stacks' to mesmerised families and young children in Islington Central Library.

Credit: Mark Robson / Inept Gravity

# 5.

## Relevance to regional and national arts policy

The most significant imminent impact on arts policy will undoubtedly be the Department for Culture, Media and Sports' The Culture White Paper which aims to set out a vision and agenda for the future of the arts, culture and heritage sector. Published in March 2016, this first White Paper on the arts for 50 years sets the agenda for future public spending on the arts. The paper focuses on four key themes: the role that culture plays in creating places that people want to live, work and visit; building financial resilience in cultural organisations through new funding models to enable them to survive and prosper in a tough economic and financial climate; ensuring that everyone can learn about and through culture, and get the right encouragement and opportunities to experience and participate in cultural activities throughout their lives; promoting Britain abroad. These themes resonate with the priority areas of work that underpin Islington's arts strategy and the accompanying action plan is well placed to deliver against this new national agenda including a number of specific objectives within the White Paper namely: increasing participation in culture especially among those who are currently excluded and in particular to ensure that children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are inspired by and have meaningful relationships with culture; encouraging cultural organisations to provide creative employment opportunities including more creative apprentices; supporting the development of a more diverse leadership and workforce across the cultural sector; promoting the contribution of the cultural sectors to regeneration and improving health and wellbeing; promoting the cultural use of meanwhile space; improving the resilience of the cultural sector by promoting new models of funding.

A new Mayor of London was elected in May 2016 and his cultural strategy for London is expected to be published in early 2017. To date the London Cultural Strategy Group has championed the intrinsic value of the arts with flagship projects such as the Fourth Plinth commissions. Sadiq Khan's cultural manifesto outlines his vision for 'London to continue to be the world's artistic and cultural capital'<sup>59</sup> by protecting the capital's workspaces and cultural venues. Several of the manifesto pledges are in train including the commissioning of a cultural infrastructure plan and vacant building register – an initiative which the Arts Service has been lobbying for regionally since 2015 – and establishing Creative Enterprise Zones to provide and retain artists' workspace. The Mayor also plans to launch the London Borough of Culture – to shine a spotlight on individual boroughs celebrating their unique character, stories and people. The aim is to deliver an ambitious cultural programme with the voice of local people at its centre highlighting the powerful role culture can play in generating community cohesion and increasing participation. The development of cultural tourism and animation of the public realm are also anticipated to remain high on the London agenda.

There looks to be considerable synergy between Islington's arts strategy and the developing Greater London Authority cultural strategy and we will continue to work strategically with key partners including the GLA, Arts Council England (ACE) and A New Direction to deliver shared agendas and collaborate on specific programmes of work including the GLA Artists' Workspace Taskforce and Cultural Infrastructure Plan and ACE's Cultural Education Challenge.

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<sup>59</sup> Making the most of arts, culture and creativity, Sadiq Khan, 2016

6.

## Next steps



Supported by Islington's Community Festival Fund Oxjam Islington brings live music and bands to over ten venues along Islington's Upper Street showcasing the borough's finest musical talent. Impromptu and pop-up events throughout the year, including their Piano Jam at the Business Design Centre featuring Islington pianists and pianos painted by local artists, supports the Arts Service's strategy to bring art out of venues to where local people gather and meet.

Credit: Barry Causton

## 6. Next steps

This is an ambitious strategy spearheaded by a small but energetic service designed to enthuse, engage and support our education, cultural, private and voluntary sector partners to collaborate and work in synergy to maximise the social and economic impact of the arts for all of our residents. We have outlined a robust framework for the arts which will help us to build a cohesive, resilient and diverse cultural infrastructure and related offer that will inspire and shape the lives of current and future generations of Islington residents.

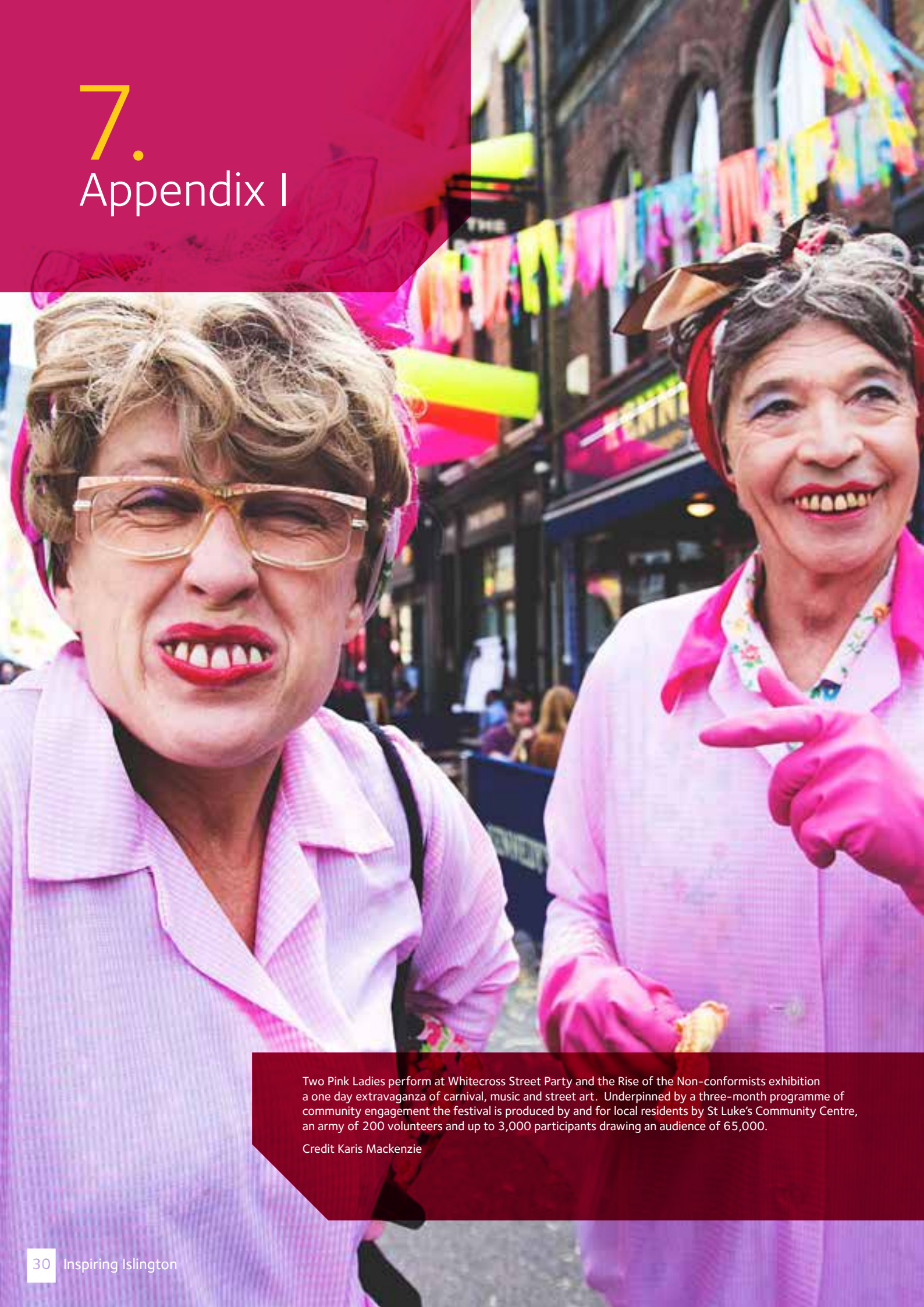
**30%**  
of the UK's  
creative industry  
jobs are based in  
London

The creative  
industries are  
larger than  
the financial,  
manufacturing  
and construction  
sectors  
in London

For every £1  
of salary paid by  
the arts and culture  
industry an additional  
**£2.01**  
is generated in the  
wider economy

# 7.

## Appendix I



Two Pink Ladies perform at Whitecross Street Party and the Rise of the Non-conformists exhibition a one day extravaganza of carnival, music and street art. Underpinned by a three-month programme of community engagement the festival is produced by and for local residents by St Luke's Community Centre, an army of 200 volunteers and up to 3,000 participants drawing an audience of 65,000.

Credit Karis Mackenzie

## Summary of arts strategy priorities, objectives and delivery mechanisms

Full details of associated targets, outputs, resources and partners are identified in the annually updated Arts Service Action Plan.

### Engagement

Increasing opportunities for engagement in the arts – Inspiring Islington through extraordinary arts experiences	
<b>Objective</b> To provide high quality opportunities for local residents, in particular children, young people, those with disabilities, elders and those from BAMER communities, to actively engage with, and take part in, the arts as audiences, participants and producers	<b>Delivered through</b> <b>Islington Word Festival</b> – a borough-wide celebration <sup>60</sup> of reading, writing and freedom of expression with a specific focus on projects for young families, young people and elders in the borough with mental health issues
	<b>Community Festivals Fund</b> supporting a year round programme of community festivals across the borough which develop community cohesion through arts engagement
	<b>Subsidised and relaxed performances</b> encouraging all Islington residents to experience the breadth of arts provision on their doorstep and remove the invisible barriers to access including for those with learning difficulties
To ensure that all Islington children and young people receive high quality music education linked to progression routes outside of formal education settings	<b>Islington Music Education Strategy &amp; Implementation Plan 2016–2020</b> addressing local need and ensures all Islington children and young people achieve their academic, social and economic potential
To support the provision of inspirational and best practice arts education with Islington schools and youth settings	<b>Artsmark</b> accreditation scheme celebrating schools that champion the arts and strive for excellence in arts provision by helping schools to strike a balance between EBACC and STEM priorities
	<b>Islington Cultural Education Partnership</b> a network of leaders from the arts, heritage and education sectors and Libraries within Islington who have committed to work in partnership and to align resources to ensure that children and young people who are currently underserved, including our harder to reach residents, have access to high quality opportunities for meaningful engagement with and learning through the borough's extensive arts and heritage offer

<sup>60</sup> Islington Word Festival is delivered in partnership with the Library Service, core arts partners All Change and Free Word Centre plus a wider network of arts delivery partners

## Placemaking

Promoting community cohesion and sense of place through placemaking and animation of the public realm – Inspiring Islington through direct engagement in shaping local distinctiveness	
<b>Objective</b> To maximise the role the arts can play in placemaking and engage local residents in actively influencing the changing face of the borough	<b>Delivered through</b> <b>Public Art Strategy</b> embedding the vision for arts in the public realm and its role in placemaking within Islington planning policy with clear mechanisms identified for the consultation, commissioning, maintenance and decommissioning of works
	<b>Affordable Workspace Development</b> increasing the volume of affordable workspace <sup>61</sup> available in the borough for individuals and organisations across the cultural and creative sectors to retain local talent and grow Islington's creative economy
	<b>Arts Friendly Borough</b> lobbying locally for the removal of invisible barriers preventing artists and arts organisations from remaining in or moving to the borough
	<b>Artists commissions for the public realm</b> creating a sense of place, reflective of our diverse community, through the commissioning of bespoke works evolved through community consultation and engagement
To animate the public realm bringing the streets alive by taking work out of venues to places where people are	<b>Busking and live performance</b> at key transport interfaces and town centres to animate the streets and improve community safety
	<b>Town centre development</b> promoting local distinctiveness, a sense of ownership and community cohesion and a true reflection of our diverse communities

<sup>61</sup> Affordable workspace is a term covering work and studio space for the arts, creative and voluntary sectors

## Skills Development & Creative Employment

Generating creative skills, employment and career development opportunities – Inspiring Islington through clear progression routes towards employment in the arts sector	
<b>Objective</b> To promote the role of literacy and the arts in developing employability skills	<b>Delivered through</b> <b>Islington Word Festival</b> – a borough-wide celebration of reading, writing and freedom of expression with a specific focus on projects for young families, young people and elders in the borough with mental health issues
	<b>Islington Reads</b> steering group, working with libraries to increase literacy across our diverse communities
To provide progression routes for Islington young people to secure employment in the arts and cultural sector	<b>Providing pathways to employment in arts &amp; culture to those furthest from the jobs market</b> working in partnership with Learning, Skills & Employment Team and Youth Services to create a range of creative apprenticeships and internships within local arts and related cultural services for Islington residents age 16–24 years to learn key skills and secure meaningful employment whilst encouraging employers to recruit locally
To develop the workforce of the future through the provision of work experience, entry level jobs and skills development opportunities	<b>Dingley Place Creative Hub and Skills Development Programme</b> provision of new affordable workspace and programme of networking, skills development and employability support for the creative sector and local residents
	<b>Saturday Arts Jobs</b> launch of a Saturday and after school work scheme for over 16s with host arts organisations
	<b>Get set for work</b> provision of temporary part-time 3 month placements within the arts service to support unemployed residents with the experience they require to secure employment
	<b>Part-time roles for people with Learning Disabilities</b> within the arts and cultural sector
	<b>Arts Award</b> to work with schools, arts organisations and youth settings to provide opportunities for young people to gain accreditation enabling them to progress into further education and employment

## Cultural Infrastructure

Providing a broad and resilient cultural infrastructure – Inspiring Islington through the delivery of exemplary arts programmes	
<b>Objective</b> <b>To support arts organisations to remain in or move into the borough</b>	<b>Delivered through</b> <b>Co-location, shared services and creative enterprise</b> promotion of strategies to make the best of limited resources and capitalise on arts assets
	<b>Development of meanwhile use</b> bringing back the Council's and other empty and underused building assets into use
	<b>Aspiring Islington</b> providing a two year programme of mentoring to three Islington based arts organisations and their emerging leaders ensuring the next generation of arts producers is diverse, inclusive, connected to and able to remain in the borough <sup>62</sup>
<b>To build the resilience of the sector</b>	<b>Building a broader funding base</b> investigating the viability of alternative forms and sources of funding for the arts in Islington, facilitating relationships between the subsidised and commercial arts sectors
	<b>Advice and guidance surgeries</b> providing intelligence, horizon scanning, project development support and fundraising advice to practitioners and arts organisations
	<b>Capital development</b> supporting major arts related building projects in the borough to support arts organisations to expand their footprint or move in to the borough
	<b>Environmental sustainability</b> support local arts and cultural organisations to become more environmentally sustainable
<b>Resourcing the sector through shared intelligence and information</b>	<b>Maintaining databases</b> of arts and cultural infrastructure
	<b>Networking and sectoral representation</b> – including increased sharing of intelligence and communications across council departments and beyond in particular the Voluntary and Community Sector and Town Centre Management Team, increasing our reach to artists from diverse backgrounds, and ensuring they are integrated into the main stream cultural offer
	<b>Improved dissemination of information</b> rationalising and improving our digital offer to increase the range of information available to artists, schools and arts organisations

<sup>62</sup> Islington's arts sector is dominated by Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations. Whilst this brings significant benefits including world class productions and £41.6 million investment to the borough 2015-2018 it also creates an empty layer beneath these established organisations.

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# Islington's Cultural Infrastructure



**INSPIRING  
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Arts Strategy 2017-2020