

London Culture Forum

The London Culture Forum is a strategic alliance of local authority officers from London's 32 local authorities and the City Of London, who are committed to transforming people and places through arts and culture.

The Forum brings together senior officers from across local government departments with additional cultural representatives from key agencies operating in the capital.



The Forum's membership includes officers from all local authority cultural services – across arts, culture, events, libraries and heritage - and representatives from organisations including Arts Council England, Historic England, London Parks and Gardens Trust, the Greater London Authority (GLA), London Councils and London & Partners.

The officers who attend the forum have a responsibility for a wide range of local cultural services including programming festivals, delivering workshops and participatory events, commissioning public art, working with local social, health and economic development agendas, and supporting local arts and culture organisations and creative businesses through capacity building and other support services. Many officers also have responsibility for running arts venues such as local theatres, museums and galleries. All Officers are in key positions to influence wider policy initiatives [such as public health & communities, transport, education, housing, economic development and planning] embedding a clear role for arts/culture in wider agendas, securing new funding and linking artists to other cultural commissioning opportunities.

Leadership

In response to a growing clamour for more joined up engagement, a group of officers from across number of London Boroughs joined with London Councils, GLA, and Arts Council England to set up the London Culture Forum (previously the Arts & Culture Forum) in autumn 2013.

Strategic Voice

The Forum's strategic aims are to enable cultural officers:

- to lead discussion around emerging policy areas where arts and culture is essential to drive change and growth
- to share information and best practice
- to identify areas for cross borough collaboration
- to build links between the arts/cultural sector and wider policy areas creating opportunities for cultural commissioning.
- to support advocacy work for local arts and culture services

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Key Achievements

The Forum has successfully lobbied for the Chief Executives of London Committee to appoint a theme lead on arts and culture for the first time. From 2013-2016 this role was held by Paul Martin, Chief Executive of Wandsworth Council. The Forum has also been endorsed by Munira Mirza, former Deputy Mayor for Culture and Dominic Lake, Head of Arts at DCMS. A number of senior politicians/leaders and creative producers/arts organisations have attended meetings since our inception. We have also:

- Hosted 8 Forums since November 2013 and established the Forum as a place to discuss hot topics, share best practice and keep updated on key issues
- Secured £600,000 funding for The Streets, a new roving music festival (led by a sub-group of London boroughs)
- Set up and led 4 series of Action Learning Sets in 2016
- Secured funding to support the Forum's ongoing activities - £11,750 from Central Arts Partnership, £12,785 from Arts Council England and in-kind support from London Councils and the GLA.
- Established links with the World Cities Culture Forum in November 2015
- Produced a monthly e-Newsletter since January 2014

Next Steps (2017 onwards)

The London Culture Forum wants to build on our recent successes and continue to provide opportunities for local government and the arts and culture sector to come together, share ideas and develop skills. We are developing our plan for the future and want to continue to grow the forum by:

- Becoming a bigger voice for culture in London
- Developing links with other international forums that focus on neighbourhood development
- Extending the popular Action Learning Sets programme
- Exploring opportunities to develop a research programme with a major HE partner
- Continuing to deliver regular Forum meetings and a biennial conference

Current Advisory Board Members

Paul Hogan, LB Barking & Dagenham

Nick Bodger, City of London

Tracey Sage, RB Greenwich

Jen Wood, RB Kensington & Chelsea

Rachel Tranter, LB Richmond

Sara O'Donnell, Enable (LB Wandsworth)

Carol Boswarthack, Association of London Chief Librarians

Sophie Lancaster, Arts Council England

Clive Lyttle, Arts Council England

Jamie Saddler, London Councils

Chenine Bhatena, Greater London Authority

Olivia Bellas, Greater London Authority

Graham Saunders, Historic England

The London Culture Forum would also like to thank former steering group members Souraya Ali (London Councils), John Hampson (RB Kensington & Chelsea), Helen Renwick (LB Wandsworth), Coral Flood (LB Southwark), Aida Esposito (Carillion) and Lorna Lee (LB Waltham Forest) and for all their work over the last few years in helping to establish and develop the Forum.

For more information about the Forum, to join our mailing, list or to hear about future meetings please contact Jamie Saddler Principal Policy & Project Officer: Economy, Culture and Tourism, London Councils on

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