

We Are Lewisham

A cultural strategy for Lewisham 2023 – 2028 (summary)

Why do we need a cultural strategy?

Lewisham was the London Borough of Culture (LBoC) in 2022. The theme for the year was **We are Lewisham**. The programme celebrated our history, people, and place. It was created by the people of Lewisham. The year was inspired by our history of activism. Meaning standing up for what we believe is right. It showed how culture can change lives.

The year had a big impact across Lewisham. It has created new partnerships and new ways of working. It has shown that culture supports the local economy and taking part can improve people's wellbeing.

In the bid to become LBoC we said that we wanted to create positive change after 2022. We called this the legacy. This report explains how we have worked with partners to write a cultural strategy. The cultural strategy explains how we plan to deliver the legacy.

The strategy is about more than culture. It explains how culture helps the local economy grow and how it can be good for people's health. This strategy is not just for the council. It is a partnership strategy, and we will deliver it with Lewisham's communities.

How did we develop this strategy?

We wrote this strategy together with universities, cultural organisations, businesses, and the council. As London's Borough of Culture in 2022 we learned a lot. We used what we learned to write this strategy.

We also asked others for their views. We spoke to residents, visitors, the cultural sector, the council, the NHS, and universities. We used surveys, interviews, and workshops to find out what they thought. We have included what people told us in the strategy.

We collected and looked at information on:

- who takes part in culture – and who does not
- what people are interested in
- how big the cultural sector is

Imagining and building a better future for everyone

We know that taking part in culture has many benefits. It brings people together. It helps people learn new skills. It helps people understand the world. It helps us understand who we are.

We have developed four **outcomes for culture**.

- Creative Communities
- Creative Places
- Creative Enterprise
- Creative Connections

Together, they will create the conditions for culture to thrive. When culture thrives, everyone can enjoy its benefits. Opportunities for children and young people and for Lewisham's live music scene are included in all four outcomes.

The outcomes help us achieve our vision:

Lewisham: Our place in London where the power of culture and creativity unite us to imagine and build a better future for everyone.

Creative Communities

Outcome 1: Everyone has access to the positive benefits of engaging with cultural and creative activities.

In five years:

- people from all backgrounds take part in culture
- children and young people can be creative every day
- culture helps people to become healthier
- culture brings people together

We will:

- support cultural activities that bring people together
- work with schools, youth services, and family hubs to increase activities for children and young people
- use culture in health and care

Creative Places

Outcome 2: Cultural and creative places meet the changing needs of Lewisham's communities and creatives.

In five years:

- there will be more workspace
- cultural spaces will be better
- more spaces in the south of Lewisham are used for culture
- everyone feels welcome in cultural spaces

We will:

- raise money to improve cultural spaces
- work with landowners to create new spaces for culture
- bring cultural activities to community spaces
- learn from each other to make cultural spaces even more welcoming

Creative Enterprise

Outcome 3: The conditions are right for the cultural and creative industries to thrive and be more accessible to a broader range of communities in Lewisham.

In five years:

- more young people study creative subjects
- creative businesses recruit local people
- cultural leaders reflect our population
- Lewisham is a cultural hub in London

We will:

- train people in creative skills
- support creative businesses to expand
- support the next generation of cultural leaders

Creative Connections

Outcome 4: Creative ways of connecting public sector organisations and communities tested during our year as London Borough of Culture will become part of the way we work together.

In five years:

- culture is part of how the public sector engages with people
- cultural organisations help deliver engagement

We will:

- train public sector workers in cultural engagement
- work with artists to understand what people think about big issues like climate change

Next steps

We have finished writing the strategy. Now we will:

- set up the Lewisham Cultural Partnership
- write annual action plans
- raise money
- deliver the actions in the strategy
- measure how well we are doing
- tell people about our progress