

We Are Lewisham

A cultural strategy for
Lewisham 2023–2028



Contents

Foreword from the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Communication	3
A cultural strategy for Lewisham – why, what, and how?	4
Lewisham looks ahead – beyond London Borough of Culture 2022	5
Our vision for culture in Lewisham	6
Developing this strategy	7
Imagining and building a better future for everyone in Lewisham	10
Culture and creativity in Lewisham	12
Lewisham’s cultural and creative sector	12
Defining culture and creativity	17
Cultural participation	18
Cultural Strategy engagement – key insights	21
Priority 1: Creative Communities	25
Why is this important?	25
What will have changed in five years?	26
What are we doing already to achieve this?	27
What else will we do in the future?	28
How will we know if it is working?	29
Priority 2: Creative Places	30
Why is this important?	30
What will have changed in five years?	31
What are we doing already to achieve this?	31
What else will we do in the future?	32
How will we know if it is working?	34
Priority 3: Creative Enterprise	35
Why is this important?	35
What will have changed in five years?	36
What are we doing already to achieve this?	36
What else will we do in the future?	38
How will we know if it is working?	39
Priority 4: Creative Connections	40
Why is this important?	40
What will have changed in five years?	41
What are we doing already to achieve this?	42
What else will we do in the future?	42
How will we know if it is working?	43
How we will work	44
Next steps	45
Acknowledgements	46

Cover image: Matt Alexander_PA Wire

Foreword



Cllr James-J Walsh,
Cabinet Member for
Culture, Leisure and
Communications

Our vision for culture in Lewisham is rooted in our people, history, and the values we share as a community that make us a unique and culturally rich place; focussed on our key missions as a borough; and propelled by our commitment and history of effecting positive social change through cultural-led social action and activism.

Our vision and commitment is now captured and planned for, in this our new cultural strategy – a roadmap to securing our place as one of the best cultural hubs in the capital.

Anchored in the learning of Lewisham’s hugely successful year as London Borough of Culture 2022, our year also contained the promise that this was only ever the beginning. We were clear when we were awarded our year of culture that building an enduring legacy laid at the very heart of our plans, and this strategy shares how we will deliver on that promise.

Lewisham is ambitious for its future; we believe we have unharnessed potential that can set us apart from other places. To deliver on our ambitions we have settled on five areas where we believe Arts and Culture can have the biggest effect, and we will focus our efforts on:

- promoting health and wellbeing,
- fostering strong relationships,
- providing access to skills and employment opportunities, and
- embracing sustainability in a world grappling with the climate crisis.

Our ultimate aspiration is for Lewisham to become a beacon for culture, regionally nationally and internationally, through tapping into and sharing our valuable story, diverse culture, rich history, and unmatched community spirit. To unlock that story, we will work in partnership, tapping into local practitioners and institutions, and securing the inward investment that enables Lewisham’s vision as a borough to be delivered. As a borough we know we’ve all the ingredients to that make that vision a reality: prestigious arts and cultural organisations, a passionate local base of practitioners, and a network of pioneering educational arts establishments, are just some of the many assets we can draw upon.

Culture lies in the people of Lewisham, who are the driving force behind its creation and preservation. Our cultural legacy depends on the active involvement of our communities and creatives, allowing them to tell their own stories in their chosen mediums—whether that be through ‘music & dance’, ‘food & cooking’, ‘painting & sculpting’, ‘clubbing & pubbing’, ‘gaming & broadcasting’ or any other artistic form traditional or emergent. We are a young vibrant borough and see collaboration and partnerships that unlock fresh avenues for all types of creativity within Lewisham as central to this agenda, enabling us to elevate our artistic offerings and spreading these far and wide.

Finally, we are committed to carrying forward the Lewisham tradition of effecting change through culture, nurturing a new generation of young creative activists who will continue to shape our borough’s cultural landscape in the years to come

We must give thanks to all those who have contributed to the strategy, including our elected members, community leaders, creatives, and residents, as well as Mayor of London Sadiq Khan who enabled our journey through his belief and investment in Lewisham’s cultural potential as a borough.

London Borough of Culture statistics



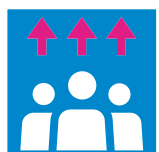
696
events



436,294
taking part



Over £4 million
inward
investment



8,854
young people
supported
to find work
in creative
sector



10,000+
volunteer
hours

A cultural strategy for Lewisham – why, what, and how?



Lewisham looks ahead – beyond London Borough of Culture 2022

2022 was one of the most exciting years yet for culture in Lewisham. **We Are Lewisham** was our year as London Borough of Culture. Together, we celebrated the borough's history, people, and place. The year was inspired by Lewisham's history of activism and highlighted the power of culture to create change locally and globally.

The **We Are Lewisham** Impact Report¹ shows that the year had a significant impact across the borough. It has led to new partnerships and new ways of working. It has shown that investing in culture is investing in the local economy, in people's wellbeing, and in future generations.

Legacy was a fundamental ambition of the original bid to become London Borough of Culture. Although the true legacy of the year will not be clear for years to come, we want to harness these benefits and build on the key outcomes beginning to emerge.

We want to cultivate a legacy that promotes our borough's rich history, culture, and community spirit, bringing in more investment and opportunities, and inviting both private sector partners and visitors to see what Lewisham has to offer.

Lewisham is a young place with a rich musical heritage. Young creatives and music were at the heart of **We Are Lewisham**. In shaping the legacy, we will increase cultural opportunities for children and young people and sustain and grow the music scene.

Our legacy is rooted in **We Are Lewisham**, but we will extend our reach beyond the borough boundaries and across London. We want to form new partnerships with others to open new opportunities for culture and creativity in Lewisham.

This cultural strategy is our plan for keeping the spirit of **We Are Lewisham alive and for building on Lewisham's strong cultural foundations to create the conditions which allow the cultural and creative legacy of 2022 to thrive for years to come.**



Image: Suzi Corker

Our vision for culture in Lewisham

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

Our shared vision for culture in Lewisham builds on what we delivered together during 2022, built on the longstanding and deep foundations for culture and creativity across our borough. The vision is about continuing to make positive social change happen in Lewisham as well as about sharing our rich and valuable story with the rest of London and the world.

It is underpinned by our ambition for a legacy which:

- 1** Improves the big outcomes for our communities: Being healthy and well; building strong relationships with others; developing skills and being able to access jobs; and living more sustainable lives in a world affected by climate change.
- 2** Recognises Lewisham's people as our greatest strength: People make culture happen. There can be no cultural legacy without Lewisham's communities and creatives at the centre. There can be no story of Lewisham without the people of Lewisham telling their own stories, in their own words, and in the way they choose – be that through music, dance, painting, clubbing, cooking or anything else.
- 3** Extends the Lewisham tradition of making change happen through culture into the future and develops a new generation of young creative activists.



Developing this strategy

Our approach

Culture plays an important role in making great places to live, work, learn, and visit. Culture contributes to the economy, a more sustainable environment, health, wellbeing, brings communities together, and can make people feel proud of their local area.

Our approach to developing this strategy is therefore focused on how culture can transform lives and make an even bigger contribution to Lewisham as a place. It is a partnership strategy for Lewisham, not a council strategy. It also incorporates a strategic approach for supporting live music in Lewisham. In developing this strategy, we have been guided by Arts Council England's methodology for Joint Cultural Needs Assessments (JCNA)².

The JCNA methodology has five key objectives:

- Partnership: Linking and influencing the local ecosystem
- Positioning: Placing culture at the core of social, economic, health, environmental goals
- Plurality: Surfacing and celebrating diversity
- Potential: Growing the sector, market, infrastructure, and talent base
- Prioritising: Investing in key outcomes that address selected needs and issues



Irie! Dance Theatre students

Image: Manuel Vason

Convening a cultural partnership for Lewisham

Creating the conditions for culture to thrive so we can maximise its benefits for Lewisham cannot be achieved by any one organisation on its own. It requires the active involvement, resources, and energy of partners in the cultural sector and beyond.

We convened a cultural strategy steering group (see [acknowledgements](#) for details of membership) to oversee the development of the strategy, building on the partnerships we developed during our year as London Borough of Culture. We expanded the membership beyond cultural and education organisations to include planning and regeneration experts, business support and workspace providers.

Now that the strategy has been adopted, we will review the membership of the steering group and develop it into a cultural partnership for Lewisham and integrate it into the wider Lewisham Strategic Partnership.

Collecting and understanding data

We assembled cultural and non-cultural data about Lewisham to understand the opportunities and challenges for culture, and where culture can contribute to wider outcomes, such as the economy, health, and cohesion. The data we have assembled has informed the vision, outcomes, actions, and success measures in this strategy. The [Culture and Creativity in Lewisham](#) chapter summarises the data, and each outcome chapter includes an overview of the data that has helped us to identify the difference we want to make and the actions we will take.

Working with communities, the cultural sector, and other partners

Data alone is not enough to understand what a cultural strategy for Lewisham should achieve. We worked with communities, the cultural sector, and other partners to co-produce this strategy.

Our year as London Borough of Culture was the biggest cultural engagement we have ever undertaken in Lewisham. Our 696 events saw more than 436,000 audience members and participants in person as well as more than 474,500 digital visits. We supported 8,854 young people to develop their creative skills and careers, and more than 1,800 volunteers helped to make it all happen.

We tested new ways of working, talked to our audiences, and learned what worked and did not, and what people in Lewisham wanted from culture in their neighbourhoods, communities, and lives. We have used what people told us during the year to inform this strategy – retaining what worked and learning from the challenges.

In addition to listening to people during the last year, we also engaged residents, visitors, the cultural sector, businesses, and other partners during the development of this strategy:

- 360 people responded to our cultural strategy survey for residents and visitors, telling us how and why they engaged in culture.
- 80 people working in the cultural and creative sector as freelancers or for organisations registered for our sector summit at The Albany, identifying what could be done to create even better conditions for culture and creativity to thrive.
- 98 people responded to our cultural strategy survey for those working in the cultural and creative sector, telling us about what the sector needed to grow and how cultural and creative organisations can make a difference in Lewisham.
- Interviews and small group conversations with universities, health services, funders, cultural organisations, and urban planning, regeneration, economic development, and skills departments at Lewisham Council helped us understand how we can best make the connections across and between organisations to make the most of Lewisham's longstanding creative and cultural activism – now and in the future.
- Our intergenerational focus group brought together older people and young people to explore how culture can help build understanding between different age groups.
- The Lewisham Looks Ahead: Cultural Activism Beyond London Borough of Culture 2022 event at City Hall marked the formal end of our year as London Borough of Culture. More than 100 delegates from cultural organisations, businesses, and public sector organisations came together to develop ideas for a legacy from London Borough of Culture.

Like the data we gathered, the key points from engagement are summarised in the **Culture and Creativity in Lewisham** chapter and in each of the outcome chapters.

Imagining and building a better future for everyone in Lewisham

Based on the data we gathered and analysed, the conversations we had, and the ideas and aspirations that people told us about in surveys, workshops, and meetings, we have developed four **outcomes for culture** in Lewisham. We believe that together, these outcomes for culture will create the conditions in which culture can thrive so that we can harness its power to make a difference to Lewisham as a place. Opportunities for children and young people and for Lewisham's live music scene cut across all four outcomes. We have highlighted these in the actions so they can be found easily:

#CYP highlights opportunities for children and young people, and

#music highlights live music opportunities.

We know we cannot plan for everything, and great culture often happens when it is not planned. A strategy will enable us to notice the unexpected things that are easily missed and give them better conditions to grow – even if we didn't imagine anything could grow where it emerged. Our outcomes for culture will help us achieve that by building a stage on which others can create, make, and perform, rather than by us directing what cultural activity should happen.

We have developed our outcomes for culture using a tool that is often used in the health service and in the voluntary sector - theory of change. A theory of change helps us imagine and paint a picture of the future we want to build, the impact we want to create, and the actions we need to take to achieve this.

The list of actions on the following page is a simplified theory of change, showing:

- The actions we will take
- The future we want to see for culture in Lewisham (outcomes for culture)
- Our vision for culture in Lewisham
- The big outcomes that communities and partners in Lewisham want to see – e.g., better health, economic prosperity, and sustainability

The outcome chapters in this strategy explain in more detail:

- Why the outcome for culture is important
- What is happening already to achieve the outcome
- What else we will do together in the future to achieve the outcome
- And how we know the actions we are taking are working

Our actions	Outcomes for culture	Our priorities for culture	Our vision for culture	Lewisham place outcomes
<p>We will build on our partnerships, both formal and informal, to deliver and support diverse and inclusive activities bringing communities together for the benefit of our borough, so that everyone can benefit from creative engagement. We will also share our stories beyond the boundaries of Lewisham.</p>	<p>Everyone has access to the positive benefits of engaging with cultural and creative activities.</p>	<p>Creative Communities</p>		<p>Open Lewisham Children and young people Health and wellbeing</p>
<p>We will secure, safeguard, and deliver a range of cultural spaces – formal and informal – across the borough to foster and promote a diverse range of creative settings for creativity to flourish.</p>	<p>Cultural and creative places meet the changing needs of Lewisham’s communities and creatives.</p>	<p>Creative Places</p>	<p>Lewisham: Our place in London where the power of culture and creativity unite us to imagine and build a better future for everyone.</p>	<p>A strong local economy</p>
<p>We will equip residents with the skills and experience to access opportunities in the creative and cultural industries and work with business and VCS organisations to support the growth of our creative and cultural sector.</p>	<p>The conditions are right for the cultural and creative industries to thrive and be more accessible to a broader range of communities in Lewisham.</p>	<p>Creative Enterprise</p>		<p>A strong local economy Children and young people</p>
<p>We will continue to develop a dialogue with residents, businesses, the voluntary and community sector, public sector organisations, and other partners about the key issues facing our borough and adopt new ways of working together with them, using creative and cultural activities and techniques.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Creative Connections</p>		<p>Cleaner and greener Fair, accessible, and inclusive engagement Collaboration and partnership working</p>

Culture and creativity in Lewisham

Lewisham's cultural and creative sector

Lewisham has a thriving cultural and creative sector, including individual artists and creatives, community arts organisations, nationally recognised cultural institutions, and world-class arts and cultural education providers.

Nationally, regionally, and locally recognised cultural organisations

Lewisham is home to 15 of Arts Council England's (ACE) national portfolio organisations (2023), which receive a three-year funding settlement.

- Apples and Snakes
- Blink Dance Theatre
- Deptford X
- Entelechy Arts
- Heart n Soul
- IRIE! dance theatre
- Jazz re:freshed
- Kali Theatre Company
- New Earth Theatre Company
- Poetry London
- Poetry Translation Centre
- Spare Tyre Theatre Company
- Spread the Word
- The Albany
- The Midi Music Company

Many of these organisations played important roles during our year as London Borough of Culture and they reflect the borough's tradition of creative activism to stimulate debate, make change happen, demand social justice, and create a better future for everyone.

The Horniman Museum and Gardens is a nationally recognised museum with a focus on world cultures and the natural world. It is the largest cultural organisation in Lewisham in terms of staff, users, turnover, and physical footprint. In 2022 it was named as Art Fund Museum of the Year. But the local cultural offer goes far beyond ACE's national portfolio organisations and nationally funded museums. It includes amongst many others Sydenham Arts and Sounds Like Chaos, as well as organisations supported through Lewisham Council's Arts & Culture Fund (see next page). Faith and religious organisations also play an important part in the cultural life of many Lewisham residents.

In 2022, Lewisham Council introduced the Arts & Culture Fund 2022 – 2025. The fund invests in sector capacity building and greater diversity. It funds organisations that tackle inequality and remove barriers to participation in arts and culture. This includes diversifying participation, nurturing talent, and providing progression pathways, including developing outreach links into schools. The fund encourages innovation and the ongoing development of an atmosphere in which new things can emerge. The table below shows the organisations currently receiving council support and shows which organisations are also receiving ACE national portfolio funding.

Organisation	Annual funding – Lewisham Council Arts and Culture fund	ACE National Portfolio Organisation 2023–2026
Deptford X	Yes	Yes
Entelechy Arts	Yes	Yes
IRIE! dance theatre	Yes	Yes
Lewisham Education Arts Network	Yes	
Lewisham Youth Theatre	Yes	
The Midi Music Company	Yes	Yes
Migration Museum	Yes	
Second Wave Youth Arts	Yes	
Heart n Soul	Yes	Yes
Montage Theatre Arts	Yes	
The Albany	Yes	Yes
The Broadway Theatre	Core council funding	

ACE's new three-year investment programme started in April 2023. Lewisham is not an ACE priority place for investment in London. When making decision about investment, ACE considers whether cultural organisations applying for funding are based in a priority place. Lewisham is home to several highly successful companies and a growing cultural infrastructure, which gives us an opportunity to build on for future funding cycles and project funding opportunities.

London Borough of Culture strengthened the position of Lewisham organisations, and this means the impact of changes to funding criteria have been less significant than elsewhere. ACE is investing £3.09m per year in regularly funded organisations based in Lewisham. However, many of the organisations funded have a national remit or focus far wider than Lewisham so the investment made will not necessarily fund activity in Lewisham. The Horniman Museum has moved out of the ACE investment programme and is now directly sponsored by central government.

Over the last three financial years, ACE has invested a total of £4.3m in project funding in Lewisham and a total of £6.5m to support the cultural and creative sector during and after the pandemic.

Radical cultural and creative education

Lewisham is home to two world-class arts universities, producing world-leading creatives and contributing to the local economy. As creative and cultural anchor institutions, they draw students, academics, and professionals from across the world to Lewisham, providing the ingredients for supporting and growing the local cultural and creative sector. Young people come to Lewisham to study and train as cultural practitioners and many students stay in the area after graduating, contributing to Lewisham's status as a cultural hub in London.

Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance (TLCMD) has been recognised by the Office for Students as a world-leading specialist provider for music and dance education. TLCMD supports and develops talented and innovative performers and creators throughout their creative lives, and nurtures their transformation into resourceful, enterprising, and adaptable artistic leaders ready to make a positive change to society.

Goldsmiths, University of London has a distinctive curriculum, with a strong focus on arts, humanities, and cultural studies. It offers a transformative experience, generating knowledge and stimulating self-discovery through creative, radical, and intellectually rigorous thinking and practice. In 2019, it established the Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Arts, which in 2021 was named Time Out's gallery of the year. From 2023, Goldsmiths will be the new national Artsmark Award delivery partner for Arts Council England. Goldsmiths will develop high-quality support and training for Artsmark schools and education settings.

Together, TLCMD and Goldsmiths work with other local partners to develop their positive impact in Lewisham. The Goldsmiths-led Civic University Agreement includes a commitment to improving the cultural life, health, and wellbeing of Lewisham's communities through partnership working.

Cultural and creative industries sector and employment

Sector size and employment

The cultural and creative industries are a growing sector in the local economy and contribute to employment in the borough. UK Business Count and Business Register and Employment Survey data published by the Office for National Statistics provide an insight into the size of the sector, its employment impact, and growth over time.

In 2022 there were an estimated 1,645 cultural and creative industries (CCI) businesses in Lewisham, accounting for 16.5% of all businesses in the borough. In 2012, there were an estimated 900 CCI businesses (13.4% of all businesses) while in 2017 there were an estimated 1,385 CCI businesses (13.9% of all businesses). While since 2017 the overall number of businesses in Lewisham has remained relatively stable, the CCI sector has continued to grow as a proportion. The largest number of businesses (500 businesses) in 2022 was in film, TV, video, radio, and photography followed by music, performing, and visual arts (400 businesses).

In 2021, an estimated 3,095 people worked in CCI jobs in Lewisham, accounting for 4.5% of employment. Five years earlier in 2016, an estimated 2,470 people worked in CCI jobs, which was 3.6% of all jobs. Between them, the following sub-sectors contributed 62% of all CCI jobs in 2021:

- Music, performing, and visual arts (750 jobs)
- Museums, galleries, and libraries (600 jobs)
- Film, TV, video, radio, and photography (565 jobs)

Workforce diversity

Local data on the demographic makeup of the workforce in the cultural and creative sector is not available. ACE collects, analyses, and publishes regional data for the workforce of those organisations that receive national portfolio funding. This data gives an insight into the extent to which those who work in the sector are reflective of the wider population. The data includes high proportions of gaps in data but still provides an indication.

In London, 50% of the workforce is white while only 20% are from other ethnic groups. The ethnic group is not known for 30% of the workforce. In comparison, Census 2021 data indicates that 54% of the Greater London population is white while 46% of the population is from other ethnic groups. 48% of the workforce identify as female, 35% as male, 1% as non-binary, with the remaining 16% unknown. This compares to a much more even gender distribution within the London population.

While it only gives a limited snapshot, the ACE data demonstrates the longstanding diversity challenges within the sector, which we know from talking to residents also exist in Lewisham.

Recent research by the Centre on the Dynamics of Ethnicity identified that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a particular impact on Global Majority workers in the creative and cultural industries. The report found that Global Majority participants in the study had experienced negative impacts including reduced financial stability and job security; obstacles to entry, progression, and retention in the creative and cultural industries; and ongoing forms of racial and religious discrimination within the industry.³

Cultural infrastructure – space for creating, making, and experiencing

The Greater London Authority's Cultural Infrastructure Map⁴ covers all of London and maps the location and type of cultural facilities and venues. We have used this map to identify the distribution of cultural infrastructure in Lewisham. Alongside this, a detailed review of affordable workspace, including creative workspace, was carried out to inform a new Affordable Workspace Strategy.

There are significant clusters of cultural infrastructure in the north in the Creative Enterprise Zone, and in the Deptford Creekside and New Cross cultural quarters. There is a further cluster in the Forest Hill cultural quarter in the southwest.

The south and southeast of Lewisham have fewer specialist cultural facilities. The main facilities in this area are community centres, faith buildings, libraries, and pubs. This is like other more suburban parts of London, including outer London. Maps showing the distribution of cultural infrastructure are included in the insights pack.



Image: Christa Holka

Lewisham Sound System Trail

Defining culture and creativity

Culture means many different things to different people. For this strategy, we are using a wide definition that reflects the diversity and dynamism of Lewisham – our place in London.

Here, we explain what we mean by culture, creativity, art, and the cultural and creative industries.

Our definition of **culture** includes:

- The distinctive ideas, customs, social behaviours, products, or way of life of a particular nation, society, people, or period. Examples might include youth culture, sound system culture, gaming culture, football culture, pub culture, food culture.
- A society or group characterised by such shared customs, social behaviours, or ways of life. Examples might include Roman or Egyptian culture or specific faith cultures.
- The arts and other human intellectual achievements collectively. Arts Council England uses a definition that is closely aligned to this, and their definition includes: collections, combined arts, dance, libraries, literature, museums, music, theatre, and the visual arts. When we say arts, we do not just mean what we see in galleries, theatres, and concert halls – we also mean creative social media content, street art, spoken word, beat boxing, and other activities.

Creativity describes the process through which people apply their knowledge, skill, and intuition to imagine, conceive, express, or make something that was not there before. Creativity is the ability or power to create.

Art is:

- something that is created with imagination and skill and that is beautiful or that expresses important ideas or feelings. Examples include a piece of music, a poem, a painting or photograph, a dance piece, or a social media video.
- an activity or occupation in which creative or imaginative skill is applied according to aesthetic principles.

We use the UK government definition of the **creative industries** which includes those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill, and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property.

Cultural participation

Because culture means different things to different people, it can be difficult to measure who takes part and who does not. There is also a distinction between attending something as an audience member and actively participating, for example making videos or playing an instrument. We have looked at different ways of measuring participation and engagement in culture and creativity to develop this strategy.

Audience Spectrum

The Audience Agency has developed an audience segmentation tool (Audience Spectrum) to help places and organisations understand the different audience groups in an area, what they are interested in, and what characteristics they share. The Audience Agency has provided us with analysis that helps us understand participation levels and interest in different parts of the borough and in different groups. The full analysis is included in the separate insights pack that supports the strategy.

Lewisham's population is split between those who are highly engaged with culture and those who have a low level of cultural engagement. There are relatively few in the population who have a medium engagement level with culture. Those who are less engaged with culture are representative of the diversity of the population: from families who may enjoy local cultural activities to individuals who are perhaps less likely to engage culturally unless there is an offer which feels particularly relevant or inclusive of their needs or interests. The higher engaged population is split between young professionals or students and emerging or older professionals. The latter are more likely to be seeking out traditional cultural experiences, most likely including attendance at central London venues, compared to the former who are particularly attracted by new or unusual cultural opportunities which they can enjoy as an integral part of their social life.

Audience Spectrum is made up of ten different audience segments. The most prominent segments in Lewisham are the lower culturally engaged Kaleidoscope Creativity, and the higher culturally engaged Metroculturals and Experience Seekers. 92% of adults in Lewisham belong to one of these three segments, compared with 79% of adults in Greater London.

- Kaleidoscope Creativity (lower engagement) is 42% in Lewisham compared to 35% in Greater London. This group lives in urban and culturally diverse areas. Their arts and cultural activity happens in their community and outside the mainstream cultural sector.
- Metroculturals (higher engagement) is 26% compared to 29% in Greater London. This group is made up of highly engaged, prosperous, liberal urbanites, with a wide range of arts and cultural interests.
- Experience Seekers (higher engagement) is 25% compared to 15% in Greater London. Experience Seekers are diverse urban audiences, students and recent graduates who are interested in a variety of cultural events. Lewisham is a location of two leading arts and cultural higher education institutions, which may impact the size of this segment locally.

Audience Spectrum also shows some significant differences between wards. More than 90% of adults in Bellingham and Downham are from low engagement segments with Catford South at 73%. Lewisham Central is the ward with the largest proportion of adults in the high engagement segments – 82%. More than 2/3 of adults in Blackheath, Brockley, Crofton Park, Forest Hill, and Lee Green are from high engagement segments.

Audience Finder – local music audiences

The Audience Agency also holds and analyses box office data for many cultural organisations and venues. This data is based on actual sales and then applies the Audience Spectrum segments to provide greater insight into who buys tickets for different cultural activities. While this does not capture non-ticketed events or ticketed events in more informal venues, it does provide an insight into audience behaviours and preferences.

Music is a cross-cutting theme in this strategy, so we used Audience Finder data to understand more about music audiences in Lewisham. The data is based on people who live in Lewisham and have booked for music events anywhere in England.

Looking at data from the last five years for Lewisham based bookers, music ticket bookers account for the second highest proportion of bookers (23%) after those who book tickets for plays and drama (26%). There is then a substantial gap to the bookers of contemporary visual arts (14%).

Across the same five years, 70% of all music bookers were in the high engagement groups that are represented in Lewisham. Metroculturals accounted for 41% and Experience Seekers for 29% of music bookers. 18% of music bookers were in the Kaleidoscope Creativity group, the main lower engagement audience segment in Lewisham.

The data indicates a significant interest in live music among Lewisham-based bookers, with the potential to attract audiences to high quality local music events. Metroculturals tend to engage with culture within communities of interest beyond their local area so the local live music offering would need to take this into account. Experience Seekers tend to engage with culture as part of their social life and any local offering would need to extend beyond the live music event, such as a local hospitality and night-time economy offer.

Participation Survey

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport runs an ongoing survey to understand participation and engagement. The survey is aimed at people 16 years of age and over and it covers being an active participant as well as being an audience member. From 2023/24 this survey will be carried out at local authority level once every three years. Currently, data is only available at national level and sub regional level (for inner East London). More detailed analysis of the Participation Survey is included in the separate insights pack.

Nationally, engagement with the arts in the previous 12 months is broadly in line with the national average of 89% for all age groups except for those aged 85+ when the participation level drops to 73%. There is also little variation in participation in terms of gender or disability. Engagement does, however, vary for different ethnic groups. 91% of white respondents engaged in the arts in the previous 12 months, while 82% of black respondents and 79% of Asian respondents did so. For Inner East London, overall engagement is 88% and just one percentage point below the national average and one percentage point above the London average (87%).

Nationally, there are greater variations in using libraries. The national average for having used a library in the past 12 months is 20%. Women are more likely to use libraries (22%) than men (17%). 26% of black respondents have used a library over the last year while 18% of white respondents did so. The greatest variations exist between age groups. Those of retirement age and those in their early 20s to mid-30s are engaging broadly in line with the national average. Those under 20 and between 35 and 44 are most likely to use libraries (26% and 27%). Those between 45 and 64 are least likely to have used libraries. Usage in Inner East London is at 26% for all groups compared to 23% for London as a whole.

Nationally, 68% of Participation Survey respondents had engaged with a heritage site over the previous 12 months. There are no significant differences when looking at this by gender, disability, age – again except in the oldest age group of 85+. 70% of white respondents have engaged in the last 12 months while this drops significantly to 52% for black respondents. In Inner East London, the rate of engagement was 70% compared to 67% for the whole of London.

Nationally, 33% of respondents had engaged with a museum over the past 12 months. There is little variation between different age groups, except for those over 75 when engagement drops. There is also little variation for men and women. There is some variation between different ethnic groups. 28% of black respondents had engaged with a museum, while this was 33% for white respondents. In Inner East London, engagement is significantly higher (55%) than nationally (33%) and in London as a whole (47%).

While data is not available for Lewisham, we can draw some conclusions from national data based on the demographic makeup of Lewisham's population.

According to the Census 2021, Lewisham has the highest proportion of residents who are Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African of any local authority area. This main ethnic group accounts for 26.8% of the population. Together with the Participation Survey data, this indicates that a significant proportion of the population may not be engaging with arts, heritage, and museums regularly. It also indicates that libraries play an important role for Lewisham.

Lewisham has a relatively young population but is ageing in line with the national picture. It is expected to grow older over the next two decades. This suggests that unless action is taken, there will be more older people who are not engaging with culture.

Cultural Strategy engagement – key insights

As part of developing this strategy, we engaged with residents, visitors, organisations and individuals in the creative and cultural sector, local universities, and other partners, including in the NHS, the Greater London Authority, and Arts Council England. The engagement has identified key themes which have informed the outcomes we want to achieve and the action we will take.

Visibility, accessibility, and potential of the local cultural offer

In our surveys we asked residents, visitors, and local creative practitioners to describe Lewisham’s cultural offer in three words. While there was some overlap between the responses, there was a clear difference in how potential audiences and those working in the sector perceived the offer. The top five words, in priority order, for each group were:

Cultural and creative practitioners	Residents and visitors
Diverse	Diverse
Limited	Limited
Varied	Varied
Vibrant	Poor
Eclectic	Lacking

Responses from those working in the sector included three positive, one neutral, and one negative word in the top five. Responses from potential audiences included three negative, one neutral, and one positive word in the top five. This points to a possible disconnect between what is on offer and what potential audiences see or experience.

We also asked whether there were any reasons why people were not engaging with culture in Lewisham. The main reason given was not knowing what was on offer (56% of respondents).

Asked about the cultural events or venues they attended locally, residents and visitors identified parks and open spaces (89%), outdoor events (66%), libraries (61%), food and drink events (54%), film screenings (53%), museums/galleries (51%), art exhibitions (43%), live music (42%), plays or musicals (34%), and street performances (34%) as their top 10.

We also asked residents and visitors to identify their top three events or venues they would like to go to more. They chose plays or musicals (51%), live music (38%), and film screenings (29%).

We asked those who work in the cultural and creative sector what they thought the greatest strengths of Lewisham’s cultural offer were. They identified many different strengths in their responses with some clear themes emerging:

- The diversity of the Lewisham population and the local creative community.
- The density of creatives in the area and the breadth and variety of creative practice.
- A cultural offer that is local, community-focused, and community-created.

Why people engage with culture

We asked residents and visitors to tell us why they engaged in cultural activities as audiences and active participants (being creative themselves). The top five reasons were:

Reason for engaging	Percentage of respondents
It is good for my mental health	95%
It is fun and entertaining	92%
It helps me connect with people	88%
It helps me make sense of the world	82%
It gives me a sense of belonging in my community and neighbourhood	81%

A thriving cultural and creative sector

A great local cultural offer requires a thriving cultural and creative sector. As part of our engagement activities, we wanted to understand more about the conditions that make culture thrive. The engagement identified many detailed ideas and opportunities, which we will explore in more detail when we start to deliver the strategy. To inform this strategy, we have looked at the main themes that emerged from the engagement.

Space to make, create, perform, and show

The lack of spaces for creativity, the risk to existing spaces, and the affordability of space were recurring themes. When asked which factors were important to support Lewisham's cultural offer, 96% of survey respondents identified space to create or make and 93% identified space to show or perform. These were the top factors chosen in the survey. We also asked practitioners to tell us what was stopping them from growing their practice. We did not give options to choose but space was mentioned in many responses. At the cultural and creative summit, there was broad consensus among those who attended that space was one of the most important factors to consider in the strategy.

Cultural and creative practitioners have told us that it can be difficult to find out when spaces or properties, which might be suitable for their needs, are being offered for lease, rent or sale by the council and other public sector organisations. Practitioners also said that it is not clear who they should approach within organisations with proposals to bring vacant properties into temporary or permanent use. Finally, they would like to understand the criteria used to allocate property so that they can put forward the most effective case.



Opening night at the Broadway

Image: Jeff Teader

Financial resources, including funding

Money and funding were also identified as important to a thriving sector – for organisations as well as individual practitioners. In the sector survey, 93% of respondents identified investment in culture as important and 91% identified that funding opportunities were important. Alongside space, lack of funding and money were also mentioned by many as stopping them from growing their creative practice. While funding was also identified as a challenge at the cultural and creative sector summit, there was a recognition that in the context of shrinking public sector budgets, local funding may be limited. In 1-2-1 interviews, a recurring theme was a need for a more collaborative approach to seeking funding and investment – crossing organisational boundaries and focusing on projects that deliver the strategy together.

Collaboration and stronger relationships

Creativity and culture thrive through collaborative practice, the ability to connect to others effectively, and the sharing of ideas.

When asked about the conditions that support a thriving cultural offer, 90% identified opportunities for collaboration and 88% identified effective marketing of the offer.

Those who came to the creative and cultural summit valued the opportunity to network with others and the ability to influence the plans for culture in Lewisham. They identified a need to continue the conversation throughout the strategy implementation. This was echoed by others in 1-2-1 meetings and focus groups who wished to see creatives being at the heart of delivery and shaping the detail over the coming years.

There was a recognition that different ways of working and competing priorities can make it difficult to build collaboration between those in the cultural and creative sector and those in public sector organisations, including the council and the NHS. Possible ways of addressing this were identified, including:

- improving the understanding of creative practice in public sector commissioning and funding roles and the other way around
- identifying ways of communicating opportunities for culture more clearly (e.g., spaces, funding, contracts)
- reflecting on partnership working during London Borough of Culture to build on what worked best and learn from the challenges

Priority 1: Creative Communities

Why is this important?

Culture has positive benefits for people and places. It helps people make sense of the world and explore their own creativity, makes places more vibrant and attractive to live in, brings communities together, is good for physical and mental wellbeing, contributes to the local economy, and enables people to develop new skills.

We know that a large proportion of Lewisham's population (42%) is from groups that have lower engagement with culture. We also know that there are significant differences in participation between different parts of the borough. The parts of the borough where participation is lower, tend to be those that experience greater levels of deprivation, including poorer health and lower income levels. It is in these areas that culture could potentially have the greatest impact on people's lives.

Involvement with culture is important to the imagination, self-expression and creativity, resilience, confidence, and transferable skills development in children and young people. It also develops the skills to grow the next generation of creative talent in Lewisham and beyond. Schools have many competing priorities, and this can mean the cultural experiences of children can vary depending on the school they go to.

Dalmain Primary School took part in National Poetry Day, writing poems about the environment



Image: Suzi Corker

What will have changed in five years?

Outcome 1

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

We would like Lewisham to be a place where barriers to engaging with culture are reduced and where our residents have access to the positive benefits of engaging with creative and cultural activities.

In five years' time, this will mean we would like to see:

- the gap in creative and cultural participation reducing between different communities and different parts of the borough
- children and young people having creative opportunities in their everyday lives
- culture and creativity making a positive contribution to health, wellbeing, and happiness, especially in those parts of the borough where people are experiencing poorer health
- cultural and creative activities bringing people together to celebrate Lewisham's many cultures



Close To Home: The Mass Dance Event

Image: Ellie Kurtz

What are we doing already to achieve this?

- The local arts and culture fund invests in supporting diversity in the sector, tackling inequality and barriers to participation in arts and culture. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**)
- We recruited 168 Cultural Connectors in 88% of Lewisham schools to increase young people's participation in culture and creativity as part of their everyday lives. Local Education Arts Network (LEAN), the Lewisham Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP), will continue their relationship with Cultural Connectors, providing them with support on making the best of creative and cultural opportunities for schools. (Lead: **LEAN**) #CYP
- Through the Civic University Agreement partnership, led by Goldsmiths, University of London, we are working with partners and local communities to research and tell the stories of Lewisham's diverse history, sharing these stories widely through digital, public realm and other projects. (Lead: **Civic University Agreement** partners)
- We have developed Black History Lewisham 365 which is our commitment to offering a platform for Black voices and understanding Black lived experiences beyond Black History Month in October. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**)
- Cultural organisations in Lewisham, Black-led or organisations working with Black and Global Majority associates, are accelerating their work to partner with, support, grow, and showcase Black and Global Majority creative talent.
 - Award winning theatre collective Nouveau Riche, whose co-founder grew up in Lewisham, have become associate artists of The Broadway in Catford. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**)
 - The Midi Music Company nurtures the musical talent of vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and empowers them with the skills and confidence to seek careers in music and the creative industries. (Lead: **The Midi Music Company**) #music #CYP
 - IRIE! dance theatre continues to offer the only degree course in Europe that places equal emphasis on African, Caribbean, Contemporary and Urban dance techniques. (Lead: **IRIE! dance theatre**)
 - The Horniman Museum and Gardens are creating musician in residence and outdoor music event production opportunities for young creatives. (Lead: **Horniman Museum and Gardens**) #CYP #music
 - The Albany supports a diverse range of artists and young creatives (over half are Black and Global Majority), including 12 new Associate Artists. (Lead: **The Albany**)
 - Jazz re:freshed continues to increase the exposure of the diverse, vibrant, and growing local jazz movement, promoting underexposed music and talented artists. (Lead: **Jazz re:freshed**)

- Lewisham is the UK's first Borough of Sanctuary. The work to be a welcoming place for sanctuary seekers is supported by a dedicated role within Lewisham Council. They will work with schools to promote applications for Schools of Sanctuary, embedding the creative sanctuary work developed during London Borough of Culture in schools across the borough. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**) #CYP
- The Community Fundraising and Development Manager (Arts), funded by the council, working alongside other community fundraisers, and hosted by Lewisham Education Arts Network (LEAN), has built capacity in the arts and culture sector and increased access to external funding for local arts and culture organisations. (Lead: **LEAN/Lewisham Council**) #CYP

What else will we do in the future?

- Building on our London Borough of Culture experience, we will come together in a new Lewisham Cultural Partnership to collectively harness the capacity of culture to drive social change. We will work towards increasing cultural participation among all communities, and especially those who are less likely to experience the health, social, skills, and wellbeing benefits of cultural participation now. (Lead: **Lewisham Cultural Partnership**)
- As part of the Lewisham Cultural Partnership, LEAN (Lewisham's existing Local Cultural Education Partnership or LCEP) will develop a wider forum to bring together schools, youth and children's services, and cultural organisations to collectively understand and address the cultural needs of children and young people and increase opportunities for culture and creativity in their lives. (Lead: **LEAN**) #CYP
- We will elevate the Lewisham cultural offer and make it more visible across London through forward planning and aligning programmes around specific themes or events in future years, building on our collective programming work during our year as borough of culture, and tapping into the wider London cultural scene and networks. We will build connections between the programmes of individual organisations and seek funding together, so that we make a bigger impact together. (Lead: **Lewisham Cultural Partnership**)
- We will work together across cultural, voluntary, and public sector organisations to improve access to cultural and creative activities and events in parts of the south of the borough where people have fewer opportunities to participate. (Lead: **Lewisham Cultural Partnership**)
- We will work together to identify ways of making it easier for people in Lewisham to find out about the exciting cultural activities and venues, including live music venues, on their doorsteps and how they can get involved. (Lead: **Lewisham Cultural Partnership**) #music
- We will bring commissioners from different organisations and with different specialisms together so they can develop a better understanding of the outcomes each other are seeking to achieve and how they can collaborate to achieve greater impact. We will improve their understanding of the benefits of culture and creativity to their work. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**).

- We will build on A Big Conversation, a youth-led research project that brought together Sounds Like Chaos, Lewisham Music, Heart N Soul, Lewisham Youth Theatre, and the Albany, to understand the role arts and creativity play in the mental health of young people. Council and NHS commissioners will use the learning from the project to understand how they can improve the mental health of children and young people through prevention and early help services provided by creative and cultural organisations. (Lead: **Lewisham Health and Care Partnership**) #CYP
- We will improve links between health services and cultural organisations through a new creative health programme of social prescribing, to draw on the power of creativity and cultural engagement in addressing health inequalities and the costs of looking after an ageing population. This includes a focus on tackling loneliness and poor mental health among older people. We will also explore opportunities for culture to promote greater independence in later life. We will build on the successful creative activity programmes for older people developed by Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, Entelechy Arts, and others. (Lead: **Lewisham Health and Care Partnership**)
- As part of recommissioning youth services in the borough, the council will explore how culture and creativity can play a greater role in youth work. This will include year-round youth services as well as holiday schemes. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**) #CYP
- Together with Lewisham's Black and Global Majority creatives and communities, we will co-design, co-curate, and co-produce a Black Arts Festival, telling the story of Lewisham and showcasing local Black and Global Majority creative talent and voices to Londoners and beyond. (Lead: **Lewisham Cultural Partnership**)
- We will work in partnership with communities to co-produce cultural activities and events which bring people together to showcase Lewisham as a great place to live and to celebrate the many communities that call it home. This will be supported by micro grants, enabling communities and artists to develop their own events and celebrations. (Lead: **Lewisham Cultural Partnership**)
- As part of the transformation of Lewisham Library, we will work with partners to improve access to the rich heritage and archive collections that tell the stories of all of Lewisham's communities. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**)
- We will work with schools to build on the Cultural Connectors programme to further develop the way schools embed culture and creativity in the curriculum and in after school activities. We will support them to build relationships with cultural organisations in the borough. We will work with schools, through LEAN, to gain Artsmark Award status, the only creative quality standard for schools and education settings, accredited by Arts Council England. (Lead: **LEAN**) #CYP

How will we know if it is working?

- The gap in cultural participation level reduces (DCMS Participation Survey)
- More schools embed arts, culture, and creativity in the curriculum
- The proportion of social prescribing referrals to cultural organisations increases

Priority 2: Creative Places

Why is this important?

Culture makes cities, towns and neighbourhoods come to life. It gives a place its distinctive character that sets it apart from other places. For culture and creativity to thrive, there need to be places to make, create, and experience culture.

We know from what creatives have told us and from our research, that access to affordable creative workspace in Lewisham is difficult for many. We also know that spaces are not always suitable to meet the specific needs of different types of creatives.

Existing cultural and creative spaces are often clustered together in specific areas. There is a difference between the variety and number of spaces in various parts of Lewisham, with fewer dedicated spaces in the south of the borough. These are also the areas where participation and engagement in culture is lower.

There is significant interest from property developers and investors in Lewisham. Development pressure can pose a risk to existing cultural spaces – but it is also an opportunity to secure private sector investment to grow and improve Lewisham’s cultural infrastructure.

Investors are increasingly recognising that culture is a key ingredient for designing great places to live, work, and enjoy and are integrating culture into developments. There is an opportunity for local cultural organisations to influence and shape development, connecting it into Lewisham’s existing cultural scene and communities.



What will have changed in five years?

Outcome 2

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

We would like Lewisham's creatives and communities to have access to a range of cultural and creative places where they can create and participate. Spaces for culture can take many different forms. They can be dedicated spaces such as artists' studios or theatres, they can be community centres or shops, and they can be outdoor spaces, including parks and town centres.

In five years' time, this will mean we would like to see:

- an increase in creative workspace to meet existing and future demand from creative individuals and businesses
- cultural spaces and venues operated by different organisations being improved across the borough, securing investment from a range of sources
- more community venues being used for cultural and creative activities across the borough and in areas where there are fewer cultural spaces and venues
- cultural spaces being recognised by all communities as spaces that are for them and where they feel at home
- existing cultural spaces and venues in Cultural Quarters and the Creative Enterprise Zone being protected through Local Plan policies
- cultural organisations becoming more engaged in the planning and development process
- the agent of change principle in the Local Plan protecting music venues from the impact of new development in their vicinity

What are we doing already to achieve this?

- The draft Local Plan for Lewisham designates the Lewisham North Creative Enterprise Zone (CEZ) and cultural quarters in Deptford Creekside, New Cross, and Forest Hill. The draft Local Plan includes policies to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of these areas which are of particular importance to the local creative and cultural economy. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**)
- The draft Local Plan also sets out policies and requirements for specific sites in the borough. It includes policies to develop new or enhance existing cultural and creative venues when sites are developed, including Ladywell Playtower, Catford town centre, Convoys Wharf, The Albany, the Laban Building, and other sites in the designated CEZ and cultural quarters. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**) #music

- The draft Local Plan recognises that pubs are unique and integral features of Lewisham's neighbourhoods and cultural identity, and perform important community, social and economic functions locally. Pubs play an important role as venues for live music. The draft Local Plan sets out policies to protect pubs as cultural and community venues. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**) #music
- Goldsmiths, University of London, established the Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA) as Lewisham's newest contemporary art space in 2019. The CCA is taking major strides in establishing itself as a destination gallery in London. (Lead: **Goldsmiths**)
- The Catford Town Centre Framework seeks to attract new entertainment, cultural and performance venues, and places to meet and eat. Alongside this will sit a new civic hub and a cluster of affordable creative and cultural workspaces which will secure more day to evening footfall. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**) #music
- The Broadway Theatre in Catford reopened in early 2023 after a £7m restoration as an inclusive creative space to bring people of all ages and backgrounds together. The new Catford Library at the heart of the shopping centre opened in July 2022. Together, they mark the start of the work to develop a vibrant cultural offer in Catford town centre. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**)
- We supported the development of the Triangle LGBTQ+ Cultural Centre, providing a dedicated space for LGBTQ+ history, culture, performance, exhibitions, and other events. The centre is now running a regular events programme, including a range of events during LGBTQ+ history month. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**)

What else will we do in the future?

- We will progress the implementation of the Catford Town Centre Framework:
 - We will start with the redevelopment of the Thomas Lane car park. The development will include new creative workspace and studios. The restored Catford Constitutional Club, the oldest building in Catford, will include a flexible events and performance space. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**) #music
 - The Brookdale Club will become a new community-owned live music venue in the heart of Catford. Lewisham Council has agreed a lease with Sister Midnight for meanwhile use of the site while the Catford regeneration programme is underway. The venue will include rehearsal and recording facilities. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**) #music
- We will work with private sector partners who have secured planning permission to bring new cultural opportunities and creative workspaces to Lewisham, including new cinemas and cultural uses at the Lewisham Gateway development and as part of the Ladywell Playtower restoration, an 800-person capacity auditorium at New Bermondsey, and meanwhile and permanent uses to Convoys Wharf. We want to ensure by working in partnership, we can make those new cultural spaces accessible to local organisations and businesses through a community wealth building approach. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**)

- We will collaborate across partners to progress improvements and expansions to major cultural facilities in the borough, including the Laban Building, Cockpit Deptford, and The Albany to provide additional and enhanced making, performance, teaching, training, production, outdoor and workspace. (Lead: **TLCMD, The Albany, Cockpit, Lewisham Council**) #music
- We will work together, including with the Greater London Authority, to map our cultural and creative infrastructure to target our collective action to protect and enhance infrastructure, including live music venues. This will also help us see the impact of the new Local Plan policies. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**) #music
- We will collectively support cultural spaces to ensure they are truly accessible, including physically, to all communities in the borough, achieving an environment where people feel welcome, at home, and see spaces that are for them. We will do this through learning from each other, sharing best practice, and challenging each other to do more to deliver truly inclusive cultural spaces, in partnership with those with different lived experiences. (Lead: **Lewisham Cultural Partnership**)
- Lewisham's award-winning parks and open spaces are significant assets and great places for cultural activity to take place in neighbourhoods across the borough, including the south where Beckenham Place Park provides a great opportunity. We will explore options for bringing new and exciting cultural opportunities to our parks, including commercial and live music events that can help us generate income for community and non-profit activities. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**) #music
- We will develop and implement an Affordable Workspace Strategy to address the shortage of creative workspace and protect existing workspace. We will begin by improving and creating creative workspace in public sector buildings through our Creative Lewisham Enterprise Workspace project (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) and the development of a flagship culture and business hub at Lewisham Library (Levelling Up Fund). (Lead: **Lewisham Council**)
- We will work together to identify places in the south of the borough where cultural activity can take place, including libraries, family hubs, youth centres, parks and other outdoor spaces, pop-up venues, and community centres. We recognise that cultural venues and spaces operate well in clusters, and this is reflected in their locations in the borough. We will identify community and other spaces in areas where there are fewer cultural venues so that cultural activities can spread to all parts of Lewisham, outside dedicated cultural venues and spaces. (Lead: **Lewisham Cultural Partnership**)

- Lewisham Council openly markets assets and has previously sought community and cultural partners to bid for key assets within the borough (such as the Ladywell Playtower). The council is committed to making this process more open and transparent and will carry out a review of all council-owned properties to make sure we are using assets effectively to deliver impact against the council's strategic outcomes, including outcomes for culture. Alongside this, we will review the council's community asset portfolio to understand how these buildings are used to achieve wider social impact. We want to ensure that when appropriate properties become available, for permanent and meanwhile use, these opportunities are effectively communicated to the cultural sector and wider voluntary and community sector. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**)
- We will be ambitious for Lewisham and creative in the way we support cultural enterprise to thrive in unusual and unique space, being flexible and responsive. (Lead: **Lewisham Council and other public sector landowners**)
- We will take a more focused approach to interacting with the planning system and developers from the earliest stages of the development process to maximise the positive impacts of development for culture. This will be facilitated through Lewisham Council's culture team, who will build closer working relationships with those working in planning and regeneration. Initially, we will focus on developments which are under active consideration, including Lewisham Shopping Centre, Catford town centre, and various sites in the Deptford area. We will also put in place arrangements for monitoring the development, allocation, and use of infrastructure secured through planning obligations. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**)

How will we know if it is working?

- There is a positive trend in affordable workspace as a share of total light industrial floorspace in planning approvals, along with planning contributions secured towards affordable workspace
- Cultural infrastructure is not lost in the planning process
- Planning contributions investment in cultural infrastructure increases through on-site, in-kind, and financial contributions
- Public houses are retained in line with planning policies

Priority 3: Creative Enterprise

Why is this important?

The cultural and creative industries play an important role in the local, regional, and national economy. The government has identified them as one of the sectors that will shape the UK's future. With a vibrant local creative economy and two world-class cultural and creative universities in Lewisham, we are in a great position to take advantage of the growth opportunities.

We know that the workforce in the cultural and creative industries is not reflective of the people of Lewisham. We recognise that there are barriers that stop people from accessing the economic opportunities that come with a thriving cultural and creative economy. Cultural and creative industries succeed when different voices and perspectives come together to challenge the existing and generate new ideas. Lewisham's diverse communities are a great asset for the future growth of the local creative economy.

Children and young people are the future generation of creatives. We know that nurturing creative talent from an early age is important, but we also understand that schools have many competing priorities.

Cultural and creative organisations attract visitors who spend money with local businesses while visiting. They are important for the night-time economy in Lewisham, especially as the use of town centres is changing to a greater focus on leisure and culture.



Job Fair

What will have changed in five years?

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.

We would like Lewisham to be a place where the creative and cultural industries as a UK growth sector continue to thrive and grow. We developed new pathways into the industries during London Borough of Culture and we would like everyone in Lewisham to be able to pursue a creative career in a growing sector.

In five years' time, this will mean we would like to see:

- more young people from all backgrounds choosing to study creative and cultural subjects in Lewisham schools, colleges, and our leading cultural higher education institutions Goldsmiths, University of London and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
- creative and cultural industries businesses in the borough recruiting and training local people
- creative and cultural industries leaders reflecting the diverse communities of Lewisham
- Lewisham being recognised as one of London's most exciting cultural hubs
- clear and accessible routes into the creative and cultural industries that meet the needs of people and businesses

What are we doing already to achieve this?

- The Lewisham Creative Enterprise Zone programme started before London Borough of Culture and continues. We are working across a range of delivery partners, including higher and further education, local government, and private sector to provide business and enterprise support for creative and cultural businesses and entrepreneurs. The Shapes Lewisham Networking online platform connects creatives within the CEZ and across the wider borough (www.shapeslewisham.co.uk). We will review our CEZ delivery to respond to the demand for networking and collaboration opportunities. The CEZ programme includes a range of projects to grow and support the local creative and cultural sector and to open pathways into the sector for local communities. (Lead: **Shapes Lewisham partners**)
- We launched the Skills Highway platform, bringing together the post-16 creative and cultural skills education offer for young people in south-east London. We are working towards expanding the platform into hospitality skills and training, which will support the local night-time economy. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**) #CYP

- We are working together in the Goldsmith's led Civic University Agreement (CUA) partnership to:
 - strengthen the work of Lewisham's Strategic Learning Partnership and Lewisham Education Arts Network to deliver a creative skills pathway, understanding and breaking down the barriers to careers in the Creative Sector. (Lead: **Civic University Agreement partners**) #CYP
 - mobilise research and innovation expertise to support local businesses and freelancers, especially those in the creative and digital sectors as well as those led by female and/or Global Majority entrepreneurs. (Lead: **Civic University Agreement partners**)
- Inspire Lewisham (Goldsmiths, Lewisham College, The Albany, Lewisham Council) supports young residents who are not in employment to develop careers in the creative and cultural industries. It also supports creative and cultural businesses through student placements and business development workshops. (Lead: **Goldsmiths**) #CYP
- We are investing in better facilities to support creative learning. The Brockley Rise Centre, part of Lewisham Adult Learning, is a key venue for creative adult learning, with a strong focus on wellbeing and skills development. We have improved the creative and arts teaching facilities to provide a better experience for learners and we have developed an area to host learner and community curated exhibitions. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**)
- Responding to Creative Enterprise Zone research, during the London Borough of Culture year, LEAN developed an Army of Creatives: 30 Lewisham creatives with diverse backgrounds who were recruited and trained to deliver talks and workshops on their creative career journeys. They visited 12 secondary schools, engaging with around 3,300 pupils. (Lead: **LEAN**) #CYP
- We are supporting schools in Lewisham to find work experience placements for their students in year 10 and 12 of secondary school. As part of this, we are working with businesses in the creative and cultural sector, including architecture and graphic design. (Lead: **Lewisham Education Business Partnership**)
- We are working with the British Library to provide access to the Business and Intellectual Property Centre at Lewisham Library. The centre supports entrepreneurs and innovators, including those in the creative and cultural sectors, from the first spark of inspiration to successfully launching and growing a business. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**)

What else will we do in the future?

- We will develop a campaign with our local partners, aimed at highlighting the vibrant cultural scene and live music offer, attracting visitors, and promoting Lewisham as a place to invest. The campaign will build on the successful **We Are Lewisham** brand during the London Borough of Culture year. (Lead: **Lewisham Strategic Partnership**) #music
- We will seek to maximise our creative training and education provider partnerships, through existing partnerships such as the Civic University Agreement (which includes Goldsmiths, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, Lewisham College, The Albany, Horniman Museum and Gardens), and through new ones. (Lead: **Civic University Agreement partners**) #music
- We will promote Lewisham as a premier filming location by collaborating more flexibly, making our varied locations, both outdoors and indoors, more accessible to the sector, and showcasing the borough on screen. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**)
- As part of our future business support to the sector, we will seek funding to develop a local cultural leadership programme. This will enable better succession planning and accelerate the journey towards greater diversity in senior positions within creative and cultural organisations in the borough. (Lead: **Lewisham Cultural Partnership**)
- We will work with the cultural sector to better understand the combined impact of the Covid pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis on local creative and cultural organisations. We recognise that to achieve the outcomes within this strategy, we need a thriving sector. We also recognise that as organisations within the cultural partnership we are subject to the same cost pressures. (Lead: **Lewisham Cultural Partnership**)
- During London Borough of Culture, we developed new ways of widening access to the creative and cultural industries through our Creative Futures programme, especially for 16 to 30-year-olds from groups who are underrepresented in the workforce. We will embed our learning in our mainstream employment, enterprise, and skills work:
 - We will develop a cultural and creative industries focus within our careers fairs, drawing on the highly successful **We Are Lewisham** careers' festival. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**) #CYP
 - We will embed the format of industry talks piloted during London Borough of Culture into our ongoing programme. Industry talks were delivered by successful creative and cultural leaders and entrepreneurs. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**) #CYP
 - We will expand our local apprenticeship programmes into the creative and cultural sector, providing pathways into the industry for those who do wish to take a vocational route. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**) #CYP
 - We will work with other cultural organisations across London to develop pathways into the creative industries for young people in Lewisham and elsewhere. We are currently starting to develop plans for a partnership between The Albany, Battersea Arts Centre, The Roundhouse, and Hackney Empire. (Lead: **Lewisham Cultural Partnership**) #CYP

- We will bring the National Saturday Club movement to Lewisham, starting with a craft and making Saturday Club in the new learning centre at Cockpit Deptford. The National Saturday Club gives 13 to 16-year-olds across the country the opportunity to study subjects they love at their local university, college, or cultural institution, for free. (Lead: **Cockpit**) #CYP
- We will work with universities, councils and regional agencies across east London, north Kent, and south Essex, to research, innovate, and test policies, projects, and programmes that support creative and cultural production along the Thames Estuary. (Lead: **Lewisham Cultural Partnership**)
- We will actively participate in cultural and creative networks across London to share, learn, collaborate, and elevate Lewisham's role regionally. (Lead: **Lewisham Cultural Partnership**)

How will we know if it is working?

- The number of arts subjects available at KS4 and post-16 to take as accredited qualifications in Lewisham schools, further and higher education providers increases
- Apprenticeships in the creative and cultural sector are offered and taken up by local young people
- Employment and business numbers in the creative and cultural sectors in the borough rise



Apprentice
photographer

Image :istock.com

Priority 4: Creative Connections

Why is this important?

Councils and other public sector organisations engage with local communities on a wide range of issues to inform what they do and how they do it. Engagement can take many forms, and some are more effective than others. Using traditional ways of consulting and engaging can mean that we do not hear all voices.

During London Borough of Culture we tested creative engagement techniques, embedded artists within public services to change the way we work, and we explored different ways of talking about the big and sometimes difficult issues facing Lewisham and the world.

Trusting relationships are central to successful and open engagement that is focused on people's experiences, wants, needs, and hopes. We know that trust in public institutions can be low, and culture can play a part in building stronger, genuine, and impactful relationships.



Image :istock.com

Sculpture of Stella Headley by artist David Johnson – Liberty festival

What will have changed in five years?

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.

We would like creativity and culture to be central to the way we work in partnership with our communities to co-produce solutions to the big challenges Lewisham faces, including the climate emergency, regeneration, educational attainment, and inequalities. During London Borough of Culture, we developed new ways of having conversations between communities and local public sector organisations. We would like this approach to be the norm in Lewisham.

In five years' time, this will mean we would like to see:

- staff in public sector organisations being confident in using creative and cultural approaches as a method of choice when they engage with communities
- more inclusive engagement, generating richer insights and more innovative solutions
- creative and cultural organisations being active in the design and delivery of engagement



What are we doing already to achieve this?

- Creative activism was at the heart of our programming, with a focus on climate change, air quality, and social justice. We are supporting schools to continue creative climate conversations through Lewisham's Schools Climate Network, an online, termly meeting for school environment leads, open to primary and secondary schools. Climate conversations with and between young people will continue through Lewisham's Pupils Climate Network. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**) #CYP
- Lewisham's arts organisations lead the way in the civic arts movement in the country. The Gulbenkian Foundation Award for Civic Arts celebrates organisations that are rethinking the relationships with the communities they serve and using the transformational power of art for individual and societal change. Three Lewisham organisations made the shortlist of ten out of 336 applicants: Entelechy Arts, the Migration Museum and The Albany. (Lead: **Civic arts organisations in Lewisham**)
- We have developed Climate Home, a reimagined adventure playground as a space for engaging children and young people creatively in conversations about sustainability and the environment. Climate Home includes a media suite and an upgraded kitchen to complement the Climate Home stage and performance area, sanctuary garden, and accessible paths. (Lead: **The Albany/Lewisham Council**) #CYP #music
- The Horniman Museum and Gardens is the only museum in London where nature and culture can be seen side by side, and so it plays a unique role in engaging communities in the climate and biodiversity crisis. Its aquarium is the first in the world to successfully breed coral in captivity and is now selectively breeding coral more tolerant of warmer waters with the aim of repopulating bleached reefs. The Environment Champions Club brings together people who want to live more sustainably, and visitors have crowdfunded a micro-forest of 900 trees to act as a barrier to noise and pollution on the South Circular Road. (Lead: **Horniman Museum and Gardens**)

What else will we do in the future?

- We will work across the Local Strategic Partnership with engagement and communications colleagues to develop a new engagement toolkit which will be launched to support a big conversation about the future of Lewisham as a place. The toolkit will include learning from our London Borough of Culture experience on how to design engagement involving creative and cultural practice, how to commission and embed artists as part of engagement work, and how to be confident in using creative and cultural engagement techniques. (Lead: **Lewisham Strategic Partnership**)
- The learning from Climate Home has informed our play strategy. When we plan future investment in play spaces, including adventure playgrounds, the council will consider options for building creativity and cultural activity into the design. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**) #CYP
- We will seek funding to create opportunities for young people to develop, research, plan, produce and present creative ideas that make change happen, covering issues, including inequality, education, health, or relationships. (Lead: **Lewisham Cultural Partnership**) #CYP

- The Horniman Museum and Gardens will deliver its major Nature + Love project, which will refurbish the natural history gallery and develop two new spaces in the gardens to engage people in positive actions around the climate and biodiversity crisis. (Lead: **Horniman Museum and Gardens**)
- The council is bringing together all its youth engagement and participation activities in one place in the organisation. As part of this, the council will co-produce a youth participation plan and build the creative engagement approaches tested during London Borough of Culture into the plan. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**) #CYP
- We want to make sure that engagement about new developments in the borough is inclusive. Creativity and culture are a way of achieving this. We will develop new guidance for property developers, setting out expectations and best practice for community and stakeholder engagement as part of the pre-application design process. (Lead: **Lewisham Council**)

How will we know if it is working?

Measuring the impact of this outcome is more difficult as it is about the way we work rather than the difference we want to make in Lewisham. We will therefore be looking at individual projects and activities to understand whether we have changed the way we work. For example, we may look at whether:

- Those taking part in engagement activities are reflective of the Lewisham population or the people who use specific services
- Staff in public sector organisations have been trained in creative engagement techniques
- Creative techniques are used for major engagement activities across public sector organisations

How we will work

This strategy sets out our ambition for culture in Lewisham and it cannot be delivered by one single organisation. We will work together across organisations, creatives, and communities to make our vision become a reality.

We will:

- Put the people of Lewisham at the heart of delivery, creating the conditions for culture in all its forms and origins to thrive, and for the unexpected and unplanned to surprise, challenge, and delight.
- Focus our efforts on breaking down barriers and achieving greater equity, diversity and inclusion in the cultural offer and sector, working with those with lived experience to deliver change.
- Set up the Lewisham Cultural Partnership to oversee implementation and co-ordinate work across partners. We will build on the cultural strategy steering group to form the partnership and we recognise that in doing so we need to make sure we have a diverse range of views and voices around the table.
- Connect the work of the Lewisham Cultural Partnership to the wider Lewisham Strategic Partnership, making sure that culture is seen and heard by decision-makers across the public, private and voluntary sectors.
- Champion creative engagement activities to complement more traditional ways of engaging across the Lewisham Strategic Partnership.
- Continue to work with and have conversations with creative communities, making sure we hear the voices and ideas of those who make culture happen every day.
- Focus on creating the conditions to attract and sustain high quality, valued activity right across our borough by being seen and known as a leading cultural partnership that delivers.

Lewisham Council has refocused its culture team to ensure that the legacy of **We Are Lewisham** 2022 is felt in a myriad of ways. To support a partnership approach to delivering the cultural strategy, Lewisham Council has created dedicated cultural partnership and income generating roles.

Next steps

In developing this strategy, we completed the first three stages of Arts Council England's Joint Cultural Needs Assessment cycle: we convened partners to develop the strategy, we collected and analysed data to understand opportunities and needs, and we consulted and engaged residents, visitors, creative and cultural organisations and practitioners, universities, and other partners.

As we implement the strategy, we will be guided by the next three stages of the cycle:

- Co-ordinating – We will formally establish the Lewisham Cultural Partnership which will co-ordinate the development of more detailed annual actions plans to expand on our strategic actions, including potential cultural activities and outputs that deliver the outcomes for culture.
- Commissioning – We will seek funding for our ambitions and implement our action plans, including working with artists and producers to co-design implementation.
- Capturing – We will develop our success measures (performance metrics) further, identify the baseline performance, and capture and monitor progress towards the outcomes for culture.



Lewisham Shopping Centre promoting We Are Lewisham

Acknowledgements

Everyone who shared their thoughts and ideas with us by participating in focus groups or interviews, attending the creative and cultural summit, or responding to the cultural strategy surveys.

Arts Council England for supporting us in testing the Joint Cultural Needs Assessment guidance. The JCNA methodology was developed by Coventry City Council and University of Warwick as part of Coventry's year as City of Culture. We are grateful to Arts Council England, who allowed us to use the guidance and assist them in updating and refining it in response to recommendations in Cornerstones of Culture⁵, the Commission on Culture and Local Government's final report. We are also grateful to Arts Council England for assisting us in accessing a range of data sets from government departments, and for allowing us to inform their development of place-based data sets for culture.

Cultural Strategy Steering Group

Endnotes

¹Lewisham Council and The Albany (2023) We Are Lewisham, London Borough of Culture 2022: Impact Report. Available at: www.wearelewisham.com/our-year (Accessed: 5 May 2023).

²Arts Council England (2019) *Joint Cultural Needs Assessment Guidelines*. London: Arts Council England.

³Centre on the Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE) and Creative Access (2022) The impact of Covid-19 and BLM on Black, Asian and ethnically diverse creatives and cultural workers. Available at: www.ethnicity.ac.uk/discover/briefings/creative-industries (Accessed: 10 May 2023).

⁴Greater London Authority (2023) Cultural Infrastructure Map. Available at: apps.london.gov.uk/cim/index.html (Accessed: 13 April 2023).

⁵Local Government Association (2022) Cornerstones of Culture. Available at: www.local.gov.uk/topics/culture-tourism-leisure-and-sport/cornerstones-culture (Accessed: 5 May 2023).