



## Arts Council England and LGA: Shared Statement of Purpose

### Introduction and Background

1. As the national voice for local government, and the Government's national development agency for culture, the LGA and ACE enjoy a strong partnership. ACE recognises that outside London local government is the biggest public funder of culture and regards the sector as their most important strategic partner.
2. In 2012, the LGA and ACE signed a partnership agreement that set out how the two organisations would work together to support thriving local cultural services. The agreement provided a framework for our national partnership, set out principles that guided how we worked locally with councils and enabled councils to understand how they could benefit from our joint work.
3. The political and economic context within which the LGA and ACE's partnership operates is very different now. Funding pressures, devolution, public service reform and exiting the EU are all changing how the LGA and ACE work together, and how we support councils to improve their cultural services.
4. This report presents an updated Shared Statement of Purpose (Annex A) that reflects the current landscape and is consistent with the direction of travel set out in the Culture White Paper. It covers:
  - a. **Our shared partnership** – how our partnership adds value to councils
  - b. **Our shared ambition** – how the agreement helps to achieve our respective corporate priorities
  - c. **The context within which we are operating** – the key economic and political trends that are shaping our partnership and how we support councils
  - d. **How we will work together** – a set of shared principles that cover a place based approach, funding, leadership and support
  - e. **What we will do and actions** – how we will monitor and keep the agreement relevant, and a summary of our 2016/17 joint improvement offer for councils
5. As well as setting out how councils will benefit from our national partnership, the agreement will underpin joint advocacy to Ministers and others on the significant economic, wellbeing and social outcomes that culture can help to achieve.
6. The Culture White Paper included an action for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to carry out a Targeted Review of ACE as part of the Government's programme to periodically review all public bodies.
7. The Board discussion is an opportunity for Members to comment upon the Statement of Shared Purpose and to share any wider reflections on how ACE works with the LGA and councils, which will help to shape our response to the Targeted Review.

## **Arts Council England and Local Government Association: shared statement of purpose**

Arts and culture make for great places and help people lead fulfilled lives. Access to opportunities to engage with arts and culture are vital to the cultural, social and economic life of the nation. It is public support that guarantees these opportunities. In England this public support is greatly enhanced by the strength of the partnership between the national development agency for arts and culture, Arts Council England, and local government.

This statement sets out the shared vision of the Arts Council and the Local Government Association (LGA) for the contribution that arts and culture can make, and how the two partners aspire to work together to realise it. It also sets out the principles by which the Arts Council will work bilaterally with individual local authorities.

This statement covers the period 2016 to 2020 and replaces that signed in 2012. It will be reviewed on an annual basis.

### **Our shared partnership**

The LGA and the Arts Council believe that strong and responsive councils, working with their communities, and allied to the work of an expert national development agency, are vital for the health and future sustainability of the arts and cultural sector in England.

- **Local government** is the democratically elected leader of place, bringing deep understanding of local places and communities, and able to lever resources and broker partnerships in order to support the extent and quality of cultural opportunities in a local area. Councils determine local strategic priorities and plans, in which culture can and should play a key role.
- **Arts Council England** is the national development agency for arts and culture, able to bring expertise and a national overview. The Arts Council is able to invest strategically and at scale to maximise opportunities and to address challenges. It can bring expertise and resource to local situations, having regard to issues of quality and of the development of the cultural sector across the nation as a whole. The Arts Council is responsible, in response to government priorities, for setting a national cultural strategy responding to local, national and international opportunities.

Bringing together these attributes, capacities and functions in partnership is a strength that the LGA and the Arts Council will seek to build on – and to enable at the local level.

### **Our shared ambition**

The LGA and the Arts Council will work together nationally to deliver a shared ambition for culturally active, prosperous, cohesive and healthy communities. The Arts Council recognises that councils remain its most important strategic and delivery partnerships. The LGA recognises that the Arts Council can support councils to achieve their ambitions for culture and that it has a key role as an expert national development agency. Both partners recognise and respect the other's strategic priorities.

The Arts Council wants excellent arts and culture to thrive, and as many people as possible to engage with it. It seeks to realise this through the delivery of five goals.

1. Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries
2. Everyone has the opportunity to experience and to be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries
3. The arts, museums and libraries are resilient and environmentally sustainable
4. The leadership and workforce in the arts, museums and libraries are diverse and appropriately skilled
5. Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries

The Local Government Association is the national voice of local government, working with councils to support, promote and improve local government. Its work is undertaken according to its five priorities:

1. Funding for local government
2. Devolution
3. Promoting health and wellbeing
4. Economic growth, jobs and housing
5. Sector-led improvement.

The LGA's Culture, Tourism and Sport Board leads a programme of work that embeds the role of culture in achieving the five priorities and supports councils to lead thriving cultural services.

### **The context in which we are operating**

The Arts Council and the LGA recognise that there are both challenges and opportunities which they can address in partnership. Key amongst these are the following.

- **Continued funding challenges** – Local government has had to make significant savings, and future funding pressures mean that this will continue to be the case. Pressures include costs arising from general inflation, cost pressures in the care sector and increases in demand for everyday services as the population grows. This creates an urgent need to find more efficient ways of working and for innovative long term solutions. The LGA and the Arts Council will collaborate to find ways to support this, and in local areas local government and the Arts Council can work together to the same end.
- **Devolution** – Deals continue to be signed with councils across England, and existing deals are being expanded upon. As devolution in England continues to develop, we are likely to see more opportunities for local services such as culture. 100% business rates retention might open up new funding models for culture. The Arts Council and the LGA will work together so that the national policy environment is conducive to finding ways that the arts and cultural sector can benefit from the opportunities of devolution and improve sustainability. In particular, those presented by new powers and competencies, as well as the chance to work across combined authority geographies<sup>1</sup>.
- **Public service reform** – How councils deliver local services is changing in response to funding pressures and a desire to improve services for communities and businesses. Many councils are working in different and new ways to deliver services, including culture. The Arts Council is committed to supporting and promoting a resilient sector that is able to grow and provide more opportunities for people to engage with arts and culture. The LGA and the Arts Council will work together to ensure that as public sector reform develops, the arts and culture sector is at the heart of new thinking.
- **Exiting the EU** – EU laws and regulations have an impact on many council services, including culture. The cultural sector is also a recipient of EU funding. The LGA and the Arts Council will work together to understand the impact of leaving the EU on the cultural sector and to provide appropriate support.

## How we will work together

The Arts Council and the LGA will adhere to the following principles in how they work together.

### *A place based approach and funding*

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<sup>1</sup> The Arts Council has published a note setting out how it will engage in the process of devolution to local government within England [http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Arts\\_Council\\_England\\_and\\_devolution.pdf](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Arts_Council_England_and_devolution.pdf)

- Support councils and their partners to set out **shared place-based approaches to cultural investment and provision** that will help places to target specific local challenges, such as low levels of participation, and build the sector's capacity across the whole of England, urban and rural. We will recognise and respond to different local circumstances and the Arts Council will provide a range of support as appropriate.
- Strengthen the resilience of the cultural sector by setting out a **coordinated approach to dealing with the funding challenges facing local government**. This will include how we will support and share new ways of working, in line with sector-led improvement, to secure efficiency savings or sustainable delivery models, and new financial flexibilities and instruments.

### *Leadership*

- Support **effective local political leadership** of cultural services to enhance the contribution of culture to **place making, economic growth, cohesion and wellbeing**.
- Recognise that democratic local government brings **an understanding of local need and ambition**, as well as an ability to plan and facilitate delivery.
- Encourage councillors, who are representative of their communities, to **support the diversity of cultural leadership**, through their engagement with the sector.
- Acknowledge the **full range of support that local government** can provide through a broad portfolio of services and activities. For example, brokering commissioning opportunities and assisting bodies such as Local Enterprise Partnerships and Health and Wellbeing Boards to understand the contribution of culture to their priorities.
- **Jointly promote the role and value of culture** to central government, councils and other partners, helping to embed culture across policy agendas.

### *Improvement and support*

- LGA and the Arts Council will offer councils a **joint programme of support** that helps the locally-led transformation of cultural services.
- Help councils access the **full range of expertise, advice, funding opportunities and support that the Arts Council can offer**.
- Continue to **encourage collaboration and partnerships** within and beyond the cultural sector to support innovation, and further develop evidence of impact.
- Support cultural services to make the most of the **opportunities and challenges from wider public service reform**. For example, changes to local government funding and health reform.
- Help councils and the cultural sector **take advantage of devolution** to increase opportunities for people to engage with arts and culture, to realise the potential benefits of culture for local areas, and to sustain and grow the cultural sector. We will also find new ways for the Arts Council to collaborate with places receiving devolution deals.

## **What we will do**

- This shared statement will be the framework governing the relationship between the LGA and Arts Council England until the end of March 2020.
- On an annual basis the LGA and the Arts Council will agree a small number of joint actions to deliver the ambitions of this statement.
- The chair of the Arts Council and the Chair of the LGA's Culture, Tourism and Sport Board will meet at least once a year to review progress against these actions and to agree any revisions to this statement.

## Appendix Actions 2016/17

- The Arts Council will attend the LGA's Culture, Tourism and Sport Board meeting in September 2016 to discuss our shared ambitions and this statement
- The Arts Council and the LGA will hold two Leadership Essentials Programmes for elected members with responsibility for arts and culture by the end of 2016. The Arts Council will grant fund the LGA to deliver these.
- The Arts Council and the LGA will deliver culture peer reviews by the end of March 2017. The Arts Council will grant fund the LGA to deliver these.
- The Arts Council and the LGA will develop an online toolkit to help local authorities plan and deliver support for culture, in line with the ambitions of this statement. This will be published before the end of March 2017. The Arts Council will grant fund the LGA to deliver this.
- The LGA's Culture Tourism and Sport Board will raise awareness amongst the other Boards about the role of arts and culture in delivering key outcomes for local communities. In particular, education and learning, children and young people, health and wellbeing, and economic growth. The Arts Council will support this as appropriate.
- The Arts Council and the LGA will hold a meeting early in 2017 to share learning emerging from existing and projected devolution deals.