

Minutes

SE Area Council

Date: Tuesday 6 December 2022
Time: 13:00 – 16:00
Location: Arts Council England, 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge
Attendees: Prof. Roni Brown (Chair)
Kate Adams (joined via Teams)
Stephen Crocker
Cllr Victoria Harvey
Cllr Michael Gbadebo
Bruce Leeke
Pamela Roberts (joined via Teams)
Gurvinder Sandher (joined via Teams)
Cllr Daniel Schumann
Paul Stacey
Cllr Alan Waters

For Arts Council:
Laura Dyer (Deputy Chief Executive)
Hazel Edwards (Area Director, South East)
Peter Heslip (Director Brighton)
Glyn Huelin (South East Senior Manager, Operations)
Natalie Jones (Head of Communications, London and South East)
Hannah Lake (Director Cambridge)
Claire Toogood (Senior Relationship Manager)

Apologies: Cllr Jacqui Burnett, Celia Davies, Sho Shibata
Observers:
Minutes: Megan Hogg (PA to Area Director, South East)

1. Welcome and apologies

- The chair reflected on the morning's visit to new NPO Kettle's Yard with director, deputy director and curator. Request for further visits to new NPOs at future Area Council meetings.
- Apologies from Sho Shibata, Celia Davies and Jacqui Burnett. Gurvinder Sandher, Kate Adams and Pamela Roberts joined the meeting via Teams.
- The chair reminded the council of the importance of completing the diversity survey.

1.1 Declarations of interest

- Reminder to review the Declarations of Interest and send revisions to Megan Hogg. No conflicts recorded.

2. Advisory Group Updates

- National Race Advisory Group and National Disability Advisory Group last met on the 4 and 5 October respectively. The groups have not met since the Area Council last met on 10 October.

National Race Advisory Group

National Disability Advisory Group

- Report from Director for Diversity given at the meeting. Presentation highlighted analysis for 23-26 programme which will be shared with Area Councils.
- Director, Brighton attended as co-chair of the Disability Network at the Arts Council. Reported disappointment at low levels of disabled-led organisations applying for NPO and queried whether there is a network of organisations whose board members are disabled-led, but not identifying as such.
- Council members discussed including disability focussed organisations as disabled-led, representation of all disabilities, DAG not including non-disabled with experience of living or engaging with those who have a disability, and considered low-social economic groups.
- Council member also reported on the DAG meeting noting the discussion on the demands of NPO assessment reading, and encouraging those who do not identify as disabled to engage.

Action: PR and PH to relay points to DAG, equality analysis action plan to be discussed at the next Area Council meeting.

- Council member questioned the NPO threshold of 51% disability-led board members. Was decided that leadership majority was important and although not inclusive it provides consistent data to enable clear reporting.
- The next DAG and RAG meetings will consider the after-action review. Diversity team led work will be presented to Area Councils in the Spring.

Action: February Area Council meeting to focus on the action plan.

3. NPO Wash Up

New portfolio summary

- Reported on constructive meetings with organisations leaving NPO portfolio.
- Area Council members thanked Arts Council for their work and suggested follow up meetings with organisations during time of adjustment.

Gurvinder Sandher joined the meeting via Teams.

- Area Council member noted feedback from artform colleagues.

Cllr Daniel Schumann joined the meeting.

- Area Council member noted strong spirit of support within artforms.
- Area Council member questioned funding streams for those leaving the portfolio. Organisations can apply for Transition Fund, Project Grant funding is also available.
- Reported letters and meetings with Local Authorities detailing successful applications in their area.
 - Area Council members noted impact of cost of living crisis on Local Authority budgets.
 - Area Council member noted importance of relationships with key council personnel. Arts Council are working with national teams on devolution announcements.

Funding agreements

- Reported early conversations with organisations.
- Rag-rating system reported to Area Management Teams, an update will be included at a future Area Council meeting.
- Area Council member noted some NPOs are more transparent with funding uses than others. Requested making transparency a condition of funding. Noted that offers are conditional.
- Noted that value for money in funding is difficult to gauge consistently.

Communications

- Head of Comms provided verbal updates including positive response from NPO announcement day. Statistics are still being collated but include 138 pieces of coverage in the media, tweets received and 47k impressions.

Action: Circulate communications presentation via email.

- All MPs and Local Authorities were contacted and following up for meetings or visits.
- Received third-party complaints for some decisions and a general FOI. Complaints process is being followed.
- Narrative is currently focussed on Opera but from January the team will work on new joiners with an external comms plan highlighting the positive

stories. Noted successful applicants can be reluctant to advertise success to protect unsuccessful peers.

- Darren Henley, Tonya Nelson and Pete Massey are attending DCMS select committee on Thursday 8 December.
- Noted contrast in media response in the different areas of the UK.
- Area Director is visiting Dover and Ashford for the launch of Jasmin Vardimon Dance Building. Meeting NPO leads, MP for Ashford and Kent, Music Education Hub and Future Foundry in Dover.

2023-26 Investment process review and timetable

- Scope is still being finalised and an approach will be agreed in the new year to take place in Spring 2023. Plan to integrate into next NPO round. Will include comments from area and national councils.
- Chair requested assistance in structuring feedback for the review.
- NPOs and non-joiners will be included in the review.
- Council member questioned the scope and impact of the previous action review.
 - Feedback from previous review was included in the current NPO round including better and increased use of data for Area Council, more time with the assessment pack.
 - Council member noted the balancing process could be more discursive. Suggested pre-balancing meeting before getting to the critical moment but agreed process had improved.
- Council member questioned approach to non-joiners. Noted place groups are starting to plan communications.

Break

Cllr Michael Gbadebo left the meeting

4. MEH Update

Claire Toogood presented presentation

- National Plan for Music Education - Early years included, focus on inclusion, role of schools has been strengthened and partnerships. statement Aligns with partnership focus and Let's Create.
- National vision for Hubs largely consistent with the previous one. Chair questioned how it will be enforced. Noted there will be more focus on performance management as well as risk.
- Commitment to establish national centers of excellence.
- New Hubs investment programme was launched in November 2022.
- Consultation phase for external and internal focus groups will inform geographies and guidance.

- 123 Hubs with 21 in the South East. Department for Education would like fewer lead organisations as Hubs. £17m investment in SE, £76m nationally for 5-18 years old.
- Council member noted African/Asian music in their area provided by community organisations.
- Chair requested more detail on new NPO portfolio and their roles.

5. Chair's Report and Members' Updates

SE Area Council Member Extensions and Future Recruitment

- Chair announced she will step down at the end of her term in November 2023. Preference for new members to be brought in by the new SE Area Council chair. Seven members' terms are coming to an end within the next 18 months. Looking at timelines for recruitment. Chair asked council members to extend application to their networks.
- Three council members' first terms will end in 2023 and are able to take on a second term.
- Extended thanks to the council for bringing their experiences to the meetings.
- Cllr Alan Waters announced his term as Norwich City Councillor expires in May 2023 after over 30 years and will be standing down as SE Area Council member in May. February 2023 will be his last meeting.

6. Executive Director's Update

MEH Update

- Creating structures for the application process with Department for Education's desire to reduce number. A drop-in can be arranged for Area Council.

Levelling Up report

- Noted the focus of national versus regional is currently unclear.
- Next step is for DCMS to respond to the report.

6.1 Area Director's Update

Area Director's Report

- The Area Director provided a verbal update including Area Towns Group meeting in October with other Arm's Length Bodies which discussed the emerging devolution deals and Levelling Up Fund applications. Visits to NPOs have started again with Kent and Brighton in the next few weeks. NPO negotiations are ongoing and the wider team are updated regularly. Theory of change working group is continuing with its connections to arts and health. Reported on recent Birmingham City University reception at



House of Lords, cross-party event hosted by Labour peer. Reported invitation to be on the reading panel for Queen's Anniversary Prizes.

Action: Invite Claudia West and Hollie Smith-Charles to speak on Arts and Health at a future meeting.

6.2 Risk Report

- Included in papers, nothing to further to report

7. Minutes from the last meeting

- Revisions made. Any further revisions to be emailed to Megan Hogg by 17:00 7th December 2022.

Cllr Alan Waters left the meeting

8. AOB

- Nothing to report

The next meeting is February 28 2023 – suggested new NPO organisation as venue for the meeting.

ACTIONS

- **PR and PH to relay points to DAG, equality analysis action plan to be discussed at the next Area Council meeting.**
- **February Area Council meeting to focus on the action plan.**
- **Circulate Communications presentation to Area Council**
- **Invite Claudia West and Hollie Smith-Charles to speak on Arts and Health at a future meeting.**