



# Minutes

## SE Area Council

Date: Tuesday 26 September  
Time: 13:00 – 15:30  
Location: The Forum, Southend-on-Sea  
Attendees: Louise Blackwell (Deputy Chair)  
Cllr Victoria Harvey  
Paul Stacey  
Celia Davies  
Gurvinder Sandher  
Bruce Leeke

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

Apologies: Roni Brown (Chair), Sho Shibata, Stephen Crocker, Cllr Jacqui Burnett, Paul Stacey, Pamela Roberts

Observers:  
Minutes: Megan Hogg



## 1. Welcome and apologies

- Apologies from Roni Brown (Chair), Sho Shibata, Stephen Crocker, Cllr Jacqui Burnett, Paul Stacey, Pamela Roberts

### 1.1 Declarations of interest

- Updates to Megan Hogg

## 2. Priority Place

- Presentation from Senior Relationship Manager, Strategic Partnerships
- Ten Priority Places in the South East:
  - Basildon
  - Crawley
  - Dover
  - Fenland
  - Great Yarmouth
  - Luton
  - Medway
  - Peterborough
  - Slough
  - Tendring
- South East is divided into seven sub-regional place groups each chaired by a member of Area Management Team, with a Relationship Manager as Priority Place co-ordinator. Plans are formed around shared objectives with a variety of stakeholders including Local Authorities, visitor economy and Business Improvement Districts.

[.....]

*[Information has been withheld here in line with the requirements of **section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 – information intended for future publication**. Under section 22 we are entitled to withhold information until the intended publication date as long as there is a clear intention to publish the details in the future, and where it is reasonable in all the circumstances to maintain the original timetable for publication.]*

- Priority Places have been categorised to provide National Council, Area Council and external stakeholders with a snapshot of investment.
- Reported on which of the new categories each SE Priority Place has been allocated to.
- Area Council Member comments -
  - Asked for a definition and specifics of 'lack of infrastructure'. The Arts Council responded that some places lack a unified infrastructure i.e.



venues, creative spaces, cultural officers, active creative ecologies, which makes investment and development work more challenging.

- To what extent do organisations in a Priority Place understand the category they have been assigned? How do categories help externally?
- Opportunity to link Priority Places with other sectors, for example Integrated Care Boards.
- Area Director also noted opportunity to build upon creative industries with universities.

- Area Council Members present approved the Priority Place categorisation.

**Action: e-decision from two members needed for formal approval.**

### **3. Project Grants**

- Presented by Senior Manager Operations.
- Annual improvement cycle with the latest refresh based on an all-staff survey, stakeholder conversations with area teams and investment centre colleagues, and two external consultations.
- Headline outcomes include a clearer applicant experience and better information captured against Let's Create.
- Changes include a scaled approach to applicants and more space to talk about projects, a clearer structure for priorities and how they are used, a new suite of resources for advice giving, clear expectations for match funding.
- Guidance will be shared on 28 September, the current Project Grants programme closes 30 October and the new programme goes live on 1<sup>st</sup> November.
- Area Council Member comments:
  - Appreciate the change in language to make the process clearer to new applicants.
  - Request feedback on the changes at the March 2024 meeting.
  - Offer to share key messages to networks once the new programme is in place.
  - Noted some applications will fall between closing of current and opening of new programmes. The Arts Council responded that mitigation plans are in place.
  - Noted expecting a spike in applications when the new programme opens and therefore a decrease in success rate for a time.
  - Questioned the level of feedback given to unsuccessful applicants. The Arts Council responded that they will be informed of the reason

and given a tailored development statement, and advice if a priority group.

**Action: Feedback from new programme requested at the March meeting.**

## **BREAK**

*Davina Christmas left the meeting*

### **4. Inclusion Review**

- Deputy Chief Executive reported on the current update of the NOUS report.
- Discussed at RAG and DAG meeting 11 September. Gurvinder Sandher reported as a member of RAG.
- The review is being externally published this week to demonstrate how we are holding ourselves to account, as shared learning and a resource for other organisations.
- Noted report has been available internally since July 2023.

### **5. Chair's Report & Members' Update**

- The Chair and Cllr Jacqui Burnett's last meeting will be the joint Area and National Council Away Day in November.
- Interviewing for new Area Council members this week. Area Director expressed thanks for encouraging applications. Another recruitment round for Local Authority members may be needed to reach capacity.
- Recruitment for the new SE Area Council Chair is with government for approval.
- Outcomes from the NPO/ IPSO post action review will be shared with Area Council at the March 2024 meeting.

### **6. Executive Director's Update**

#### **6.1 Area Director's Update**

In addition to reports included in the meeting papers:

- Cambridge Director reported that she and the Brighton Director chair a place group but assist with other place groups where difficult conversations or strategic help is needed. Also noted the Cambridge team are keen to see more works and visit organisations around the area.
- Brighton Director reported on work around Local Authorities facing financial risk.
- Senior Manager Operations reported on the risk update included in the papers. Second risk review since the 23-26 portfolio began.
  - Area Council Member questioned how organisations within financially challenged Local Authorities are being supported. The



Arts Council responded it depends on the individual circumstances and the level of Arts Council England funding.

- DCMS Creative Industries Sector Vision report includes funding for one Grassroots Music 0.5fte Relationship Manager in each area in addition to more investment.
- The application portal for Music Education Hubs closes 12 October.

**7. Minutes from the last meeting**

- Comments to Megan Hogg

**8. AOB**

- Nothing to report

National and Area Council Away Day – itinerary includes welcome from Nick Serota, talk by Carlos Acosta and performance of Black Sabbath ballet. Reported on themes for Away Day and optional tour for Black Country Living Museum.

The next SE Area Council meeting is 4 March 2024 – suggested venue Towner Art Gallery in Eastbourne to view the Turner Prize Show.

**Actions**

- **Approval from two Area Council Members needed via e-decision for formal approval of Priority Place categorisations.**
- **Feedback on new NLPG programme at March meeting**