

2023-26 INVESTMENT PROGRAMME BRIEFING

Darren Henley: Hello everyone. We're just waiting a couple of minutes to allow guests to join the session.

You will be able to submit questions in the session. We might not get through all of them today, but they will all feed into our updated frequently asked questions section on our website and we'll publish a new version of that next week.

Today's session is being live captioned and features BSL interpretation and there will be a recording of the session made available to everyone afterwards.

We'll just wait a few more minutes to allow everyone to come in to join us. Thank you for joining us. Not long to go.

We'll just wait a few minutes to let everyone come into the session.

Good afternoon. Welcome. Thank you for attending this briefing. My name is Darren Henley. I'm Chief Executive of Arts Council England.

Today, we're going to be updating you on our Investment Programme. How it connects to the government's levelling up agenda and specifically, we'll look at the detail of the addendum to the Guidance for Applicants that we've shared with people this morning.

I'd like to invite Lord Parkinson the Minister for Arts at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to talk about the announcement made from DCMS today.

Lord Parkinson joined DCMS in the autumn and he has been a very visible and highly engaged Arts Minister and we're grateful Lord Parkinson for all of your work behind the scenes in helping us deliver this increased settlement and also for your continued advocacy for arts organisations and museums and libraries within government. Lord Parkinson, over to you.

Lord Parkinson: Thank you very much, Darren and thank you for the warm introduction.

I feel very lucky to have become Arts Minister as we're starting to emerge from the pandemic. So I can get out and visit people and see all the brilliant work that they're doing for myself. I think like everybody, I missed it in lockdown and there is clearly a great yearning from the general public and for audiences to get back and to see the work that everybody does.

Thank you for inviting me to join you today for this discussion. It is a real pleasure to be with you and to have the opportunity to speak to you all on what is an important day for the future of the sectors.

The past two years, of course, have been dominated by the pandemic. The survival of the sector over that time wouldn't have been possible without the investment from the Cultural Recovery Fund, but the tenacity, resilience and adaptability that everybody across the sector has shown with their colleagues to carry on doing what you do against all the odds.

We're now emerging from the pandemic, but clearly, we'll still be living with its consequences for quite some time. As you might have seen in levelling up White Paper, the Government's priority is to address inequalities across the country.

Arts and culture can make an immediate difference in people's lives which is why we're taking action to lead the way and make swift progress on this at DCMS. I hope you'll see that the government has proved our commitment to culture time and again through commitments which pre-dated the pandemic such as the delivery of the Cultural Investment Fund. That includes £48 million to projects which will be announced and the fact that culture and heritage is one of the three themes that places can bid for when seeking finance from the £4.8 billion Levelling up Fund.

Culture and the arts are a critical part of Levelling Up for the enjoyment and enrichment they bring to people's lives and the way they enhance our understanding and empathy for different experiences in the world around us.

Wherever you are in the country, whatever background you come from, everybody should have the opportunity to enjoy access to these benefits.

Today's announcement makes this a reality for parts of the country that have been overlooked. Since starting this role, I've seen the wealth of talent and commitment that there is in these sectors as well as seeing people who are already doing brilliant things, I have seen how there is huge potential in areas where there hasn't been previously the same level of cultural infrastructure or let's be frank, the cash, to realise this fully.

I visited lots of organisations which have been supported by the Cultural Recovery Fund, many who have been receiving government subsidy for the first time and heard about their plans for the future and learnt about the things that they're doing differently because of the pandemic and lockdowns.

Today's announcement is aiming to make those plans a reality and to sustain greater culture access for the long-term. So, at our request, the Arts Council will be enabling a £75 million boost to culture and creativity outside London between 2022/23, 24/25. This will include the £43 million to be directed for the benefit of culture outside London.

DCMS and ACE have been working together to identify 109 Levelling Up for Culture Places where additional investment will be focused, but organisations everywhere can benefit from this. We're asking organisations who get the largest public subsidy, that's those who receive over £2 million to add to the work they already do to nationalise their impact. That will include more activity in the 109 places in order to galvanise the potential of these areas which previously haven't had sufficient attention or investment.

Finally, ACE will work closely with organisations that are currently in the London portfolio to explore their potential to move or increase their presence outside of London through new sites or locations.

We appreciate that might be easier for some organisations than for others, but we want to provide the help to explore that option, particularly as we hold on to some of the things that we've learnt to do differently because of the pandemic.

I want to be clear today, this isn't about levelling down one area of the country to level up another. I know that many of the people on this call are already working across the country, not just in the locals where you're based, but the figures currently are stark. ACE currently spends £21 per head in London and an average of £6 per head elsewhere in England. That means that London-based cultural organisations are getting 40% of the funding available despite having only 16% of the population of England.

Now London is an incredible, world renowned hub and people from all over the country and the world come to London to enjoy or help deliver the incredible culture that's on offer in our capital city, but we want that to continue, but we also need to share the opportunities that come from this more equitably across.

Culture is expected to rise. At the same time, ACE remains committed to providing better access and opportunity for people within London who might currently benefit less than others. So, for example, ACE will also prioritise London boroughs which are already part of their own existing priority places. Levelling Up is about levelling up right across the country. The announcement today and the Investment Programme opening to applications next week will help to make this happen.

I know that the Arts Council have been on this journey for some time and its Let's Create strategy is central to this. Today's announcement will accelerate our shared commitment that parts of the country deserve more investment, deserve to have increased access to the arts and to the incredible benefits that they can bring no matter where people happen to live.

The Government is supporting the Arts Council to realise this vision more quickly and we're working to deliver on it for the benefit of everybody across the country. So, thank you for joining the call today. Thank you for the work that you do.

I look forward to meeting many more of you and to seeing the brilliant work that you do, wherever you happen to do it, and to be helping unleash some of that creativity and brilliance so that even more people can enjoy it in the years to come. Thank you.

Darren Henley: Thank you, Lord Parkinson.

Now, I'd like to start by introducing you to some of my colleagues who will be presenting and answering your questions today.

Joining me is Michelle Dickson director of Strategy, Laura Dyer, Simon Mellor our deputy Chief Executive for arts and museums and Mags Patten.

I want to begin by talking to you about the implications of the Government's settlement and instruction.

Let me take you back to a time before the pandemic when we worked together with so many of you in consultation to imagine something that became Let's Create, our new ten-year strategy.

Together we created a vision to ensure that everyone of us in this country has the opportunity to benefit from creativity and culture. At that time, I said I believed in the power of artists and librarians. Then we had the pandemic. But that didn't diminish the importance of that vision. I'd say it underlined its necessity.

But I know the pandemic has placed a huge strain on our sector, on our freelance community, and on those working in and leading organisations. It is in that tough context that we're sharing more information about our Investment Programme today.

I do realise it means more information to digest and to play into your preparation of your NPO or IPSO application. I know that takes deep thought and care, but we will keep on communicating with you and we'll provide all the support and help we can to you as you begin that work.

All I ask you to remember is our Investment Programme is fundamental to making that worthy vision of Let's Create a reality. The change may well be hard to navigate, but I believe it will offer something powerful to more communities across all parts of England as a result and it will be worth it. In order to make those changes described in Let's Create, we need resources.

So, just as Lord Parkinson has done, I want to put some of the figures mentioned into context.

Our current National Portfolio Organisations budget is £410 million. This increase in government support will give us the opportunity to boost our investment in NPOs outside of London by up to £43.5 million in total across three years of the investment period.

This is very welcome news. Especially because it comes during tough times for public spending. It comes on top of more than £200 million confirmed by the Chancellor for Arts Council England to invest through the Cultural Investment Fund. We will be announcing the first recipients of that separate stream of funding in towns and cities across the country.

That new Cultural Investment Fund money comes on the top of the lion's share of the £2 billion Cultural Recovery Fund that's been distributed through Arts Council England. It has helped, as you know, cultural organisation across the country to deal with the crisis created by the pandemic. And together, this does represent the biggest investment in culture that we've ever seen as a country. It does underline the importance of the work that you do, our artists, our arts organisations, and museums, and the work that you do every day in communities across the country.

Over the next three years, we'll invest £75 million more in areas outside of London. That's funded, as Lord Parkinson said, through a mixture of the £43.5 million new money from government. And by moving existing money away from London and into other parts of the country. By the end of the 2023 to 2026 Investment Programme, we're required to reduce the budget in London by £24 million a year, to be clear, that money will move to other parts of the country. This instruction accelerates the work that we have been doing for many years.

Our grant-in-aid has moved from 40% to 60% invested outside London across our most recent investment rounds. Our National Lottery budget has moved from 60% to 75% invested outside London today. All extra funding is a net gain for England's artists, arts organisations and museums and libraries as a whole. It means we can support more people in more places living creative lives. But we can't hide from the fact that redistributing investment will mean some London-based organisations will lose funding or see it reduced.

That doesn't mean we're turning away from our amazing capital city. Our commitment to London will be substantial. London is a global city with many villages within it. It is a leading cultural centre with a historic concentration of culture organisations of all scales. They play an important role in attracting tourists and in building this country's reputation.

This creates work which offers deep meaning to its many diverse local communities. London will remain the place with the largest proportion of Arts Council funding, but there will be a smaller budget. A reduction of approximately 15%. Having said that, we expect that London will still continue to receive one-third of our NPO funding by the end of this investment period.

Let's Create applies to London just like the rest of the country and our challenge will be to ensure a strong and balanced ecology of funding in the capital. As elsewhere, we want the organisations we support to represent London's diverse communities.

We won't shy away from addressing that ambition in spite of the reduced budget. We know that this will be challenging. We should all recognise that reductions in our London budget will have an impact on the lives and livelihoods of some of you working in the capital. Specific decisions about who we fund in London or elsewhere will be decided by Let's Create. Those decisions will be taken in the autumn. We will look at all individual bids before making any decisions.

So I want to finish my section by acknowledging that change is always tough to navigate. Positive for some, threatening for others. But we're clear about our aim - it is to support the most ambitious, inclusive and exciting creative people and cultural organisations, old and new, across all our cities, towns and villages as we make the vision of Let's Create a reality. Everyone, everywhere, where they live in London or outside deserves the very best and most meaningful creative and cultural experiences.

Thank you for listening to me. I'm going to pass over to Laura to talk through in some more detail what this means for the up-and-coming investment process.

Laura Dyer: Thank you, Darren. If we can move to the next slide, please.

So in January, we published the Guidance for Applicants and other supporting material for this Investment Programme. And earlier today we published an addendum to this guidance which sets out clearly how this new instruction, from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, will impact you if you're making an application.

Now, you'll have received this by e-mail this morning, but we recognise that you will not have had time to review it in detail. So, I'm going to take you through the key points in the coming slides. But we do advise you to read the addendum in full before making an application.

Now, we're also holding an additional briefing session for you in March as we appreciate you'll have further questions once you have been able to absorb the information fully. I also want to say now before we proceed that the information in the addendum does not affect any organisation's eligibility to apply to this Investment Programme. Everything we shared in the Guidance for Applicants previously still stands. We're also sharing throughout today a planning figure with all of our current National Portfolio Organisations.

Now, the planning figure is the maximum amount, current NPOs must base their main application and budget on. It is designed to enable us to see what they would offer in return for that level of funding.

Now, it is also worth noting that receiving a planning figure from us is not a promise of funding. We may make offers at this amount, less than this, or indeed, none at all. Depending on the applications we receive.

More information on this is in the e-mail that's being sent across today. So along with today's session, we're also offering a specific session for our London-based applicants on Friday at 2:30pm where we can talk in more depth and answer more questions about what the addendum to the guidance means for organisations based in London.

Looking to the application window, the application portal will open next Monday on 28th February at midday. We'll also be hosting additional digital briefing sessions to support applicants throughout March. The application portal will close at midday on Wednesday, 18th May and decisions will be shared by the end of October.

But I'm going to break down and summarize the addendum for you now. Next slide, please.

As Darren mentioned, the Arts Council will receive a £43.5 million uplift for 2022 to 2025 to support creativity and culture outside of London and where possible, in the 109 Levelling Up for Culture Places. I'll say more about these in a moment. We'll decide how much of this investment to deploy through the NPO programme based on the quality and range of applications that we receive. Next slide.

The Arts Council and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport have identified 109 Levelling Up for Culture Places. These places are outside of London. So a longer list than the Arts Council's priority places. It does include all of the priority places outside of the capital. Now, as we make decisions, on how much of this additional money to invest throughout our NPO programme, we'll prioritise the following areas. Investment, increasing our investment in existing NPOs in Levelling Up for Culture Places, investing in new NPOs based in those Levelling Up for Culture Places and investing in new activity in those places delivered by organisations that maybe based outside of those places, but are working in partnership with those places. We'll continue to use the five priority places in London to shape our investment in the capital. Next slide.

So, what this means for you. If you're an applicant based in one of the Levelling Up for Culture Places, we'll take this into account when we consider your application. Including any requests for additional investment you have made and that will be done through our balancing and decision-making process.

If you're an applicant that's based outside one of those Levelling Up for Culture Places and are planning new activity in one or more of those places, you should include that information in your activity plan for 2023 to 2024 and make sure you indicate which of those places you're planning to work in.

As Lord Parkinson mentioned for those NPOs receiving £2 million or more per year, there will be a requirement to increase their collective activity in Levelling Up for Culture Places by the end of the 25/26 financial year. This applies to organisations wherever they're based. We'll agree a baseline of activity for tracking when we come to establishing funding agreements with organisations in the autumn. To achieve the redistribution required, and to make the London portfolio more representative, we will need to remove funding from some existing National Portfolio Organisations, reduce funding to others and explore relocations out of London.

Now, we want to be upfront. This will make an already competitive process even tougher for London-based applicants. It means that by the end of 2023 to 2026 Investment Programme we're required to reduce the budget in London by £24 million per annum. This will be a phased approach as follows: There will be £16 million less budget in London in the first two years of the Investment Programme. That's 2023/2024 and 2024 and 2025. This will be invested in organisations outside London, again where possible in the 109 Levelling Up for culture place.

By 1st April 2025, a further £8 million will be spent outside of London. Making that total of £24 million per year. We aim to do this through relocation. We're developing a process to support relocations right now. But initially, all London-based applicants need to do is to answer a yes or no question in the application as to whether they're willing to relocate outside of London by 31st March 2025. This doesn't mean London-based organisations have committed to relocating, but it will give us an early indication of interest. We'll then follow up on this in the summer with more information and will ask at that point whether applicants want to pursue relocation. Next slide, please.

So, what does this mean for our decision making? As always, in any round of investment, we embark upon, competition will be intense. We expect to face extremely challenging decisions about which organisations to support and at what level across the whole of England.

If you are a London-based organisation, this competition will be felt even more. The decisions we make will also be harder to make. We want to be honest with you about that today. We continue to expect to bring in new entrants and offer some uplifts to National Portfolio Organisations in London where that best serves the vision of Let's Create. Especially where that helps us make the portfolio in London more representative in terms of diversity. But we also want to make it clear that we will be responding to the applications we receive and looking for the best opportunities to deliver Let's Create as set out in the Guidance for Applicants. That will apply across the country.

Now, I hope this information has been useful. I realise that it is an awful lot to absorb. I will hand back to Michelle now who will be opening up for questions.

Michelle Dickson: Thanks, Laura. Thanks to everyone who has posted questions. Thank you for sharing those. We'll try and get through as many of those as we can over the next half an hour. If we don't manage to cover them all, we will feed them through into our FAQs and we'll publish an updated set of frequently asked questions next week, so they won't get lost. We'll focus primarily today on

questions that directly relate to the Government announcement and the addendum just so that we can cover as much of that as possible.

So, I'm going to direct the first question to Darren. Darren, can we talk about the long-established arm's length principle and the question is, ACE will operate with independence of government. Will it be retained throughout this Investment Programme?

Darren Henley: I think it is worth saying that having ministerial instructions is something that's entirely within precedent. There are a number of times we have been directed, instructed and required to spend money in certain ways right the way back to the 1990s I can remember this.

We, to reassure you, we are following the broad direction of government policy and as all governments do, they set government policy around taxpayers money, but the process of making the decisions and looking at the portfolio will be taken by our national council and area council. It is a process that will be fair. It will be very careful. It will be considered. It will be independent. It will be through an open process, and we're very committed to that.

Michelle Dickson: Great, thanks, Darren. I'm going to bring Simon in. Hi Simon.

Simon Mellor: Hi.

Michelle Dickson: Laura kind of answered this. It is a question about planning figures.

Given that NPOs had the funding planning figure, how are they expected to level up with what is effectively less money?

Simon Mellor: The first is just to remind all applicants that if they have a planning figure, they are still able through their application process, to ask for additional funding. There is a question within the application form that asks them, that gives them an opportunity to make the case for what they would do with additional funding in helping to achieve Let's Create. Obviously, within that, we will be particularly interested in proposals to do additional activity in the Levelling Up for Culture Places.

The second thing is to say that we recognise that for many organisations, in responding to Let's Create, they're going to have to do things differently. They're not necessarily going to have more money, but they'll need to re-think and re-plan the way they work in order to make a strong application.

So, it is worth bearing those two minds in mind when you're looking at the application forms and thinking about how you're planning your activity over this period.

Michelle Dickson: Great. Thanks, Simon. And another question for you.

Can you explain how organisations based in London, but delivering activity primarily outside of London will be judged within the NPO 23 application process. Will there be a separate National Portfolio?

Simon Mellor: There won't be a separate National Portfolio. We do look at the location of the applicant in determining which part of the country they're based in and therefore, which part of the budget they're allocated funding from. But as we have been explaining today, in relation to organisations in London, we're particularly interested in trying to see what we can do to increase our investment in the priority places within London. So encouraging London-based organisations to consider that, but we also recognise that many of our London-based organisations play an incredibly valuable role in the national ecology through their touring work and other work and we will be taking that into consideration as we consider their application.

So you should be setting out in your application forms of what you're intending to do. Where we see that happen, we will take that into account when considering those applications.

Michelle Dickson: Great. Thanks, Simon. Laura, I'm going to bring you back in to talk about Levelling Up for Culture places. Lots of people asking, where are they?

We put a link in the chat there so you will be able to look at the whole list there. Laura, could you explain a little bit about how they relate to the priority places that we've already identified?

Laura Dyer: Yes. So the link is there. Do go and have a look at that and included in the link is the methodology for how those places were selected. Just to be clear, for those of you that have already looked at our 54 priority places, which include the five in London, we had a methodology that was a two-stage process.

The first stage looked at need. We used a range of data to extrapolate that kind of need score. We then did what we called an opportunity score that set a series of prompts to look at where we thought need was high, but also where there was an opportunity to make a significant shift and difference. That's what created our 54.

For the 109 list, what we have done is just looked at the need score. So, the ones that are in addition to those priority places are the ones that had a high need score on a kind of national basis.

So, what we will be doing there is responding to strong applications that come through from those places or indeed, as we said, to organisations delivering activity in those Levelling Up for Culture places.

Michelle Dickson: Great. Thanks. And then a question which is about what it is like to be in a Levelling Up for Culture place. Will there be additional funding from government for the identified 109 Levelling Up for Culture places to support them with engaging with the increase in activity taking place in their areas. Many of them don't have the resources to engage in additional offers for engagement or activities?

Laura Dyer: I guess that's a question about how do you built capacity. There isn't additional funding.

The resource that we've got is very much focused on what we can do through the investment process. Obviously if we're not able to allocate all the resource, we will look at other opportunities. Many of those places cross over with other government funds, Levelling Up Funds, Towns Funds and there will be a potential to cross over and look at some of the support that may be coming through those and how those places can use that investment to lever more capacity and more cultural investment.

Michelle Dickson: Thanks, Laura. Whilst you're there, one more. So, there is a question about organisations that are national. This one is a Sector Support Organisation. So, this organisation works with organisations across the country including priority areas. Is there an expectation to enhance support in priority areas in any way?

Laura Dyer: I think there are two sort of answers to that. So if you're an organisation that has more than £2 million a year then yes, absolutely. We will be asking you to look at those places and say how you can enhance your activity there. If it is under £2 million, I think we would be interested to see what your plans are and certainly if you're looking to increase your funding, if you're a current NPO then it would need to be linked to either activity in those Levelling Up for Culture places or in terms that you're diverse-led or greater representation in terms of the work that you do.

Michelle Dickson: Great. Thanks, Laura. I'll just answer one of these. Will new NPO applicants be given a guidance figure to apply for? In your slide it seemed to be only for current NPOs. Current NPOs will get a planning figure to base their application on, but new NPOs or new applicants to be an NPO will need to have an introductory conversation and in that conversation the Arts Council member of staff will talk about what an appropriate level of funding might be, but that's a two-way conversation and you as a new applicant will be able to decide how much in the end you apply for.

A couple of questions I think for Simon on relocation. Would a proportion of the costs for a company relocating away from London be supported by ACE?

Simon Mellor: We are looking through the details of how this relocation programme will work. There is new legislation going through government to do with subsidy control. We need to work out how do we design a programme that is compliant with that legislation, but certainly one of the things we are looking at is the ability to provide support for organisations with feasibility studies who want to explore the possibility of relocation, but we can't directly fund relocation. We'd need to do it through a feasibility process.

Michelle Dickson: Great. Thank you.

Simon, we talked about, we will decide how much will be deployed through NPO, could you explain what we meant by that?

Simon Mellor: Yes. That reflects the fact that we will be making our decisions based on the applications we receive. If we don't get good enough applications to support through the NPO process and use all that additional funding we may decide to use that funding in different ways, but we are expecting to use the large majority of that uplift through the NPO process, but until we have seen the quality of those applications, we won't make a final decision on that.

Michelle Dickson: Thanks. Simon, there are a few questions from applicants who aren't based in a Levelling Up for Culture place and aren't expecting to focus their activity in those places either. What does this mean for them?

Simon Mellor: Well, obviously in your application, you should set out and you're asked to set out where you will be delivering your activity. We will take that application seriously. Assess it against other applications. It is just that when we come to the balancing process, which is this process by which we decide which of all those strong fundable applications we have in front of us that we're going to decide to support.

If you're not doing activity in those Levelling Up for Culture places, you won't score as strongly through that balancing process, but that by no means - there is still a strong chance that you could well get funded, but we will be using that Levelling Up for Culture as an important part of our balancing process when we look at the applications we've got in front of us.

Michelle Dickson: Great. Thank you. Do you want to stay there? There is a question about inflation.

So, it is tough with the level of inflation. How can organisations plan to do things differently and more cost effectively when the cost of living and inflation are rising steeply?

Simon Mellor: We recognise is an enormous challenge for lots of organisations. It is why we have been saying right from the very beginning when you come to think about our applications, you must propose programmes of activity that are sustainable and that means focusing on depth rather than range. Don't for instance try to contribute to all of our outcomes and all of the elements within the outcomes.

Focus on those things that you're particularly good and strong at and do that as well as you possibly can within the resources that will be available rather than proposing over ambitious Propks which you won't be able to sustain. We recognise how challenging this is going to be for all of you in putting together programmes that both take into account inflation, but the challenge of building confidence again in audiences as you go forward. Please be realistic in your plans.

Michelle Dickson: Great. Thanks, Simon. I'll answer this one.

Some applicants have already had their introductory conversation and are asking what do they do next?

So, what we are saying is that take away all this material. Digest it and then come to the digital briefing sessions in March where we will have time to do more Q and A and that will span the range of the guidance, not just focusing on this addendum as we are doing today. Customers services will be available to you if you have further questions beyond that.

I'm going to bring Laura in. Laura, there is a question here about the London portfolio. It says "the London portfolio may also be skewed towards certain types of art forms.

Laura Dyer: Our guidance is clear in terms of the areas that we're particularly focused on is representation in terms of demography. We want to get an ecology that reflects the whole ecology of arts and culture, but priorities are around place and diversity.

Michelle Dickson: Does ACE value smaller organisations in Levelling Up for Culture places as there might be a tendency for larger current NPOs to offer stronger competition?

Laura Dyer: I think what we want to see is how organisations make strong applications and that will work well at different scales. So there are some organisations we know that are small, fleet of foot, work in depth and work very collaboratively with communities. I think again, we'll want to see that mix of work and it will be on the strength of applications.

Michelle Dickson: Great, thanks. Simon, there is a question here for you.

If your NPO organisation already works with an inclusion and diversity, can you make a case for an uplift to increase this work rather than additional work in the 109 Levelling Up places?

Simon Mellor: Yes. What we're interested in doing is building a portfolio that's more representative of this country. We mean representative as Laura was saying through two lenses. How do we support more activity in the 109 places? But also we want a portfolio whose leadership and workforce is more representative of all of the communities of this country.

So if that is something that you are able to demonstrate through your application then you should make that very clear and you'd certainly be entitled to seek an uplift to be able to explain why your particular organisation would be able to make the portfolio more representative.

Michelle Dickson: There is a question about will the activity plans be updated to include the new places?

Yes, we'll reissue those and show all 109 Levelling Up Culture places. If you've already started working on one of the ones we've published and you'd like to carry on using that, that's fine. They'll both work and we'll take both of them.

Another question for Simon. Does this mean NPOs who are not in a priority place will not be prioritised if asking for an uplift in their NPO bid? Similar to the previous question.

Simon Mellor: From the get go we have been saying that we will be using additional funding for both uplifts and new NPOs to make the portfolio more representative. And representative through the two lenses that I've just talked about. That's where we'll want to be focusing on and prioritising that additional investment which includes the money that's coming out of London.

So, that's what we will be focusing on as we go through the decision-making process. It doesn't rule out an uplift for an organisation that isn't able to demonstrate that, but clearly, it's going to be less likely.

Michelle Dickson: Thanks. And Simon, it has been said that organisations receiving over £2 million will be required to increase activity in Levelling Up places by the end of the final year of the funding period. Does that mean that any applications for £2 million plus will not successful until they're going to be delivering activity in Levelling Up places?

Simon Mellor: You will need to commit to doing more activity in those places by the end of the investment period. That's non-negotiable.

Michelle Dickson: Thanks. And then there is a question about what happens if activity planned in places doesn't go ahead for one reason or another?

Simon Mellor: Well, we recognise always that all applicants and all organisations need to change their plans as the situation changes for them. That's why through this application process we're only asking for details on the first year of activity for 23/24 and if you're in the portfolio, we will be asking you to update that your activity plan on a regular annual cycle.

So, you know, that will be an opportunity then to make changes and amend to that. Those will have to be negotiated and agreed with us, but we do understand and accept that there may need to be changes as you go along, but if they're substantial changes those would need to be agreed with us.

Michelle Dickson: And coming back to relocation, Simon. How will the Arts Council consider proposals from London NPOs applying to relocate to non-NPOs? Will existing and new applicants to NPOs be consulted or what other measures are about for ACE to go about balance?

Simon Mellor: Just to be clear, when we talk about this relocation programme, this will be open to London-based applicants whether they are a current NPO or not. The second thing to say is that we haven't yet designed the programme. I

can't go into the detail, but at this stage, all you're being asked to do is indicate through the application form whether you are prepared to consider relocating and then we will follow up before the summer with more information and at that point, we'll ask for a commitment and some clarity and that will include information about where you might be considering relocating to.

We are certainly not going to be in the business of telling organisations where they should move to. That's not our job, but clearly, we will be providing advice and support as I said through the possibility of feasibility studies, but also we hope to, lots of organisations, lots of businesses move all the time and that's true of the culture sector as well.

Michelle Dickson: There are a few questions exploring more activity of satellite offices. Can you talk a bit about what's relocation?

Simon Mellor: What we mean by relocation is the move of your registered office and your head office to a new location from which you would apply for future funding. That's different from organisations that might be wanting to establish satellite or second offices and certainly, we will be very interested for those organisations that are getting more than £2 million a year, that if one of the things they want to explore is setting up a satellite operation. We would be interested this having conversations with those organisations during the funding negotiation period.

Michelle Dickson: Great. Thanks, Simon. A couple of quick clarifications for people. Levelling Up for Culture places are based on local authorities. So they are local authority places and they're shown as a list. I know I said we'd focus on the addendum, but there are quite a few people asking if they can make a National Lottery project grant application at the same time as an NPO application and you can. I think there is an FAQ that covers that in a bit more detail. One last one for Laura.

The answer might be that it is set out in the web link that you can get through the addendum. Do the Levelling Up for Culture places replace the priority places? How do these two lists interact?

Laura Dyer: No, they don't. The 109 includes all of the priority places outside of London. Just to add complication to them. That's slightly larger in number than the priority places because in one area it includes a priority authority. The difference is our 54 priority places are the ones which we will prioritise not just for development, but staff commitment time. We have made a commitment to do detail development work to work with them, to develop and plan around how we can really shift the

dial in those places. The wider list, we don't have the staff resource to do that kind of intensive staff development work. So, in that wider list, what we will be doing is responding to strong applications and as we articulated, that will be in the balancing criteria so that's where they come in as a priority.

Michelle Dickson: Great. Thank you, Laura. Just to reiterate, we haven't managed to get through everything, but hopefully we've answered some of the most frequently asked questions today.

But we will take all of these unanswered questions away and feed them in to FAQs which we will publish next week. I will hand back to Darren.

Darren Henley: Thank you, Michelle and Lauren. Thank you to our BSL interpreters as well. I want to summarize the next steps and the support that we have available to you over the coming weeks and months. You can visit our website where you can access the information and guidance that you need to make your application.

We do know that there is a lot of information online, but it is all there to support you. We purposefully have been publishing information over a longer period of time to give you as much time to prepare as possible.

You will see if you go to our website today that we have made clear which of that information is essential to read in order to make your application and which is more intended as helpful background. All new applicants to the Investment Programme are required to have an introductory conversation with us before submitting your application.

We're having these conversations now and you can find out more about them and how to book them online. Current NPOs, you can have one too and you can book that via your Relationship Manager. We're having briefing sessions from 7th to 17th March. Please do come and join us for those if you can. If you can't, don't worry, they will be recorded and shared online afterwards. We are here for you.

Making an application to this programme is not something that any organisation will take lightly and we do understand how pivotal a moment the outcome of this process maybe for organisations. So, if you do need any further support, you can contact us. Our customer service team is available to you right now. They would love to hear from you. You can speak to them on the phone and you can also speak to them online.



Thank you for your time and thank you for your questions and thank you for listening to us. Please take good care of yourself and we will see you soon.