

## **A City for All Londoners: Response from A New Direction**

As is acknowledged in A City for All Londoners, the breadth and quality of arts and culture in London is world-leading. As such, it has the potential to be the best place in the world to have a creative childhood, yet we know that many children and young people are not accessing the city's many diverse cultural and creative opportunities. The Mayor's dedication to policies on culture which aim to ensure that 'no Londoner is left behind by our fantastic arts and culture' is really encouraging to see and we look forward to their development.

We would emphasize that addressing the reasons why some of the city's children and young people are unable to benefit from accessing creative opportunities, ranging from play in early childhood through to employment in the ever-growing creative and cultural industries, involves action and intervention across the entire spectrum of policy areas discussed in this document. As such, we endorse the integrated approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities faced by London as put forward in this document and encourage the Mayor to continue to consider his ambitions for the capital's culture in this holistic way.

We believe that a city built around the needs of children, young people and families is a city that works for everyone and that children and young people are and should be active agents in the shaping of their city. It is to these young Londoners, that the strategic vision for the city laid out in this document will be most relevant and so we encourage the Mayor to keep considerations of children and young people at the forefront of plans and to engage directly and meaningfully with them throughout the process of turning his strategic ambitions into impactful policies.

### Accommodating Growth & Housing

Nowhere is the importance of Young Londoners more central than in the consideration of the city's rapid population growth and accompanying discussions of competing land use and infrastructural and housing investment. The Mayor's dedication to good growth informed by proper planning in the early stages of development is key and we argue that engaging children and young people in the vision of the evolving built environment is crucial. Not only because they are the future residents of the homes that are currently being planned, or the city's future workforce, but because they can offer invaluable insight and perspective on how potential opportunities may be exploited and challenges addressed.

We endorse the inclusion of culture within the Mayor's 'good-growth' agenda and see it as a crucial element of ensuring the future success of the city. The commitment to embedding cultural objectives into regeneration interventions is welcomed and we agree that this has the potential to improve community participation and bolster integration. We would encourage a holistic understanding of 'cultural objectives' which centres the experience of children and young people and offers opportunities ranging from providing space for play in early childhood through to supporting pathways to employment in the creative economy.

We know that the changing built environment faces a number of challenges in ensuring new mixed-use, mixed-income communities thrive. For example, they have to attract and retain a generation of renters rather than buyers, as well as catering to families which are increasingly choosing to stay in these urban environments to raise children. We believe that building in opportunities for children, young people and families to be creative is beneficial for developers and offers an overlooked strategy for ensuring places are successful. We have undertaken research looking at the ways that the arts and cultural sector can work collaboratively with partners in the built environment sector ranging from developers, local councils and the GLA to build places where young people and families can engage creatively

resulting in mutual benefits for all stakeholders.<sup>1</sup> The Mayor can play a key role in supporting and advocating for this collaborative endeavor through his strategic vision.

We support the Mayor's ambitions to implement a cultural infrastructure plan to ensure the city's planning framework supports culture. As we know, the creative and cultural sector is particularly dense within central London whilst the majority of children and young people live in outer London. Any future cultural plans should consider accessibility for all young people through looking to refocus London's cultural offerings so they are based where children live and by addressing barriers related to access including, for example, cost of transportation.

Our understanding is that a cultural infrastructure that supports children and young people to thrive creatively and successfully addresses issues of access and inclusion goes beyond arts and cultural venues to encompass public spaces, housing developments, and schools. We strongly advocate for a cultural infrastructure plan that considers cultural provision in terms of this broader and integrated ecosystem.

### Economy

It is encouraging to see a commitment in the document to ensuring that children and young people can recognize and access pathways to employment in the rapidly expanding creative and cultural industries sector. As the Creative Industries Federation recently explored, equipping the city's children and young people with the relevant skills to find exciting jobs in the creative economy and ensuring that these opportunities are available for all Londoners starts with education policy.<sup>2</sup>

We welcome the news that the Mayor will take a leadership role bringing together the organizations that shape our young people's education and looking to ensure that every child in the city is able to attend a good or outstanding local school. We believe that for a child's education to be considered world-class it must include a quality cultural educational offer. The Mayor has the potential to act as a strong advocate, making cultural education a key objective for London schools, and vocalizing support for the value of culture in education. Specifically, this support could include promotion of [Artsmark](#) and overseeing the expansion of [the London Curriculum](#) across all primary schools in the capital.

There is much evidence of the lack of diversity throughout the creative sector,<sup>3</sup> and addressing this relies not only on increasing access to cultural education but access to coordinated careers advice. Also key are programmes designed to support young people to navigate this complex sector which not only includes a lack of diversity, but relies on complex and inconsistent pathways to employment exacerbated by the fact that it is a sector that largely consists of SMEs. Initiatives such as our [Create Jobs](#) programme are doing great work in this area but the Mayor's economic plans could look to build on and broaden the scope of such work.

### Environment, Transport and Public Space

This response has already touched upon the importance of ensuring that the rapidly changing built environment and, specifically new developments, work for children, young people and families and the role that the integration of creative and cultural opportunities

<sup>1</sup>A New Direction, *The Cultural (Re)Generation: Building Creative Places for Young London*:

<https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/research/the-cultural-regeneration>

<sup>2</sup> The Creative Industries Federation, *Social Mobility and the Skills Gap*, Creative Education Agenda October 2016:

<http://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/assets/userfiles/files/Education%20Report%20web.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>The Creative Industries Federation, *Creative Diversity: The state of Diversity in the UK's Creative Industries and What We Can Do About It*: [http://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/assets/userfiles/files/30183-CIF%20Access%20%26%20Diversity%20Booklet\\_A4\\_Web%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/assets/userfiles/files/30183-CIF%20Access%20%26%20Diversity%20Booklet_A4_Web%20(1).pdf)

can play in this. It is perhaps most prescient then to reiterate here the importance of supporting children and young people to be active agents in the shaping of this city and to take advantage of their unique perspective and potential for creative solutions by engaging them in the master-planning process.

#### A City for All Londoners

Arts and culture can be a powerful tool for social integration and bringing communities together - not only as a site for interaction but also as a way of building empathy and shared narratives. This should start with children and families and enable life-long habits of cultural engagement as well as utilising the infrastructure of schools.

It is great to see participation in culture positioned as a core ambition for the Mayor and recognition of the importance of increasing access for those that aren't currently benefitting from the city's creative and cultural offering is welcomed. We know from existing research that it is at school that many children and young people experience their first engagement with arts and culture. We also know that schools play a crucial role in levelling access to cultural opportunities amongst peers, supporting a broader range of children and young people to develop cultural capital.<sup>4</sup> The proposed London Borough of Culture offers an exciting opportunity to strengthen the link between young people and their local cultural offer and schools could play an integral role in ensuring this opportunity reaches all children and young people.

Finally, we believe that addressing issues of access to culture for children and young must involve arts and cultural organizations, educational institutions, local authorities, and the youth sector working together to develop a joined-up art and cultural offer locally. We support seven such [Local Cultural Education Partnerships](#) across the city which are working to align cultural education with children and young people in places where this is most needed.

A New Direction is a charity that helps London think, create and learn. Through our partnerships we create positive change across schools, education and communities and invest in children and culture in the city in order to ensure that young people get the most out of London's extraordinary creative and cultural offer. We would like to work closely with the Mayor's office to achieve these ambitions: <http://www.anewdirection.org.uk/about-us>

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<sup>4</sup> A New Direction's Survey of Young Londoners: <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/cultural-engagement-by-young-londoners>