



RO SD CO PEOPLE CULTURE FUTURE

A CULTURE STRATEGY FOR THE
ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

2024 to 2030



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FOREWORD



As a resident and Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture and Communities, I've seen first-hand that the diversity of our people and places gives Royal Greenwich a cultural identity like nowhere else in the capital. Our residents, community groups, arts, culture and heritage partners know that better than anyone.

To the borough, culture is one of our greatest strengths and is key to delivering the Our Greenwich missions we set out in 2023. Particularly, improving the quality of life and health of our residents.

Our first ever culture strategy is the result of conversations with local artists, creatives, museums, heritage and cultural organisations, and our diverse communities and I am hugely proud of what we have already achieved together. Thank you to everyone who took part – this culture strategy is yours.

Our culture strategy will spark transformation. It is a roadmap that will empower us to harness the power of culture and creativity, and to build flourishing communities. It outlines our aspirations and how to achieve them, by bringing together our cultural strengths - our people, our stories and our places - to shape a brighter future.

I truly believe what we will achieve with a shared vision and sense of direction knows no bounds. Working together, we will realise our creative ambitions, revitalise communities and reduce inequalities.

Our ambitious culture strategy is a commitment to our shared vision. By 2030, the Royal Borough of Greenwich will be a place where creative people, innovation, and cultural connections inspire, encourage, and flourish. Together, we'll turn this vision into a vibrant reality.

We are committed to this Culture Strategy and look forward to witnessing our shared vision in action.

Councillor Adel Khaireh
Cabinet Member for Equality,
Culture and Communities



“It’s great to see Royal Borough of Greenwich announce this exciting cultural strategy to help improve the already burgeoning cultural opportunity within the region.”

“We hope this will support the council’s work towards increasing creative and artistic activities for residents, as well as those travelling from further afield. With Greenwich having recently won a London Borough of Culture Impact Award, proudly supported by Arts Council England, I look forward

to seeing how the transformative opportunity of that programme will further embed the ambitions of this cultural strategy and to celebrating its achievements in the years ahead.”

Michelle Walker
Director, London at Arts Council England





INTRODUCTION



The Royal Borough of Greenwich has sought to consult, engage and collaborate with local residents and community and cultural organisations to co-create a Culture Strategy with a clear long-term and impactful vision for the borough.

We are an ambitious borough. This strategy builds on success and a position of strength. In recent years, we have seen significant investment in culture and heritage across our borough, such as the development of Woolwich as a centre for the creative industries, the culture led regeneration of Thamesmead, London's first permanent design district on Greenwich Peninsula and the refurbishment of

the Tramshed. We submitted a collaborative bid to the London Borough of Culture – which has resulted in a Cultural Impact Award of £200,000 for delivery in 2026.

We are confident that this position of strength and the appetite for culture from our communities, provides the momentum needed to ignite this Culture Strategy and propel us forward to achieve our vision for 2030.



WHAT WILL A CULTURE STRATEGY HELP US DO

This Culture Strategy provides a guide to help us achieve a significant step for arts and culture, and for our communities. It lays out our shared ambitions and how we can achieve great things together when we fully utilise our cultural strengths - our people, our stories and our places – to create a better future.

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It provides a framework and a set of principles to guide all organisations, individuals and communities interested in creating and developing culture and creativity in the borough. It will spark action and help us all to realise what we can achieve when working together— inclusively and in support of each other.

With a shared vision for the borough and a clear sense of direction, the impact we will achieve will be considerable – working together to realise not just our cultural aspirations, but to reinvigorate and sustain communities, reduce inequalities, and promote inclusion. Our ambition and clear purpose will enable us to secure additional resources to enhance the delivery of this vision.

Ensuring the success of this Culture Strategy is important to us and we must all keep the conversation going. The Council's initial role will be to

facilitate and strengthen links between communities, artists and creative practitioners, cultural organisations and institutions, and with national partners, such as Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. We commit to supporting the sector to lead this strategy for the long term. Everybody who wants to help deliver the vision will be encouraged to do so. We know that one organisation cannot do this work on their own and one of our first actions will be to bring together a Culture Board to advocate for the strategy and drive its delivery.

We uncovered so much during the consultation of this Culture Strategy. There is certainly more to discover, and the strategy will naturally evolve. We are excited to see what we can achieve together and the future we can create, guided by this Culture Strategy.



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VISION

IN 2030, ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH WILL BE A PLACE WHERE CREATIVE PEOPLE, INNOVATION AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS INSPIRE, ENCOURAGE AND FLOURISH.

Creativity and innovation are at the heart of our borough's story, our culture and our heritage. Culture is all around us in the abundance of greenspaces and riverside places, in our world heritage sites and contemporary town centres, in existing communities and new housing developments, our transport and connections, and the historic buildings that are finding new purpose and relevance.

We are a borough where our diverse communities come together to create, to tell stories, to make fantastic things happen, where young people can learn, find work, and thrive and where our centres of learning and research can nurture talent and ensure opportunities for all to flourish. Our ambitions are underpinned by the need to create a sustainable carbon neutral and inclusive future.

We will be a borough where:

- ▶ People thrive in places of creativity and heritage - by our riverfront and in our open spaces, cultural and heritage sites and world class museums and collections.
- ▶ Creativity and innovation fill our cultural and heritage places, attracting national and international visitors and inspiring local people – particularly the next generation.
- ▶ Our story constantly evolves, with new untold stories explored and shared through culture and heritage, inspired by the full diversity of our communities.
- ▶ People can be creative together and make fantastic things happen where we live. Everyone can flourish and be nurtured by taking part in culture and heritage.
- ▶ There is national recognition for the ways that our community are enabled to create, connect and flourish in achieving our shared vision.
- ▶ Our shared vision and ambition for culture will see our communities Create, Connect and Flourish.



THEMES

Our Culture Strategy is informed by three overarching themes

CREATE

We will aim to support people in creating work to make sure their creative future is bright, and our borough will be known worldwide as a great place for creativity. We will encourage more leaders from different backgrounds, so creativity and culture are more inclusive and relevant, representing the diversity of our borough today.

CONNECT

We will better connect the considerable wealth of talent, knowledge and experience in the borough to realise our full potential. We will nurture the Creative Economy, with supportive networks and spaces to work. Our communities will be better connected and tell their own heritage stories and traditions within their neighbourhoods. Local creativity will connect with our international reputation of culture.

FLOURISH

We will enable our communities and organisations to thrive because we value culture and creativity, with access to learning and participation opportunities that develop skills and lifelong learning, improve mental health and wellbeing and achieve cohesion. The local creative economy is better skilled, inclusive and attracting more visitors – locally, nationally and internationally. Cultural vibrancy will be evident across the borough.



©GDI

PRINCIPLES

Our vision will be delivered through our eight principles

PEOPLE

We will spark cultural growth and engagement that powers up our communities, supports our creative people and industries, boosts inclusivity and makes us all healthier and happier.

©Greenwich Peninsula

What we want:

- Arts organisations and creative people working with more communities in their local area.
- People creating together, because taking part in creative activities makes them feel good and creates a sense of togetherness.
- Our borough's local people to be confident and able to make their own creative ideas happen.
- Different cultures being shared and celebrated, helping us to understand each other better.
- Everyone to be enjoying culture and doing creative things, because nothing stands in their way.



©Historic England

What we will do:

- Bring creative practitioners and organisations together, to find ways that will connect them to collaborate more with their local communities.
- Continue working with the voluntary sector to make creative activity a part of their work with communities, sharing good practice and excellence and strengthening ways that creativity can support people's health and wellbeing.
- Reduce barriers to access and participation so that more people can make and create new work with and for their own communities, and more people know about opportunities to do this.
- Support the next generation to create their own pathways towards paid employment and creative careers.
- Listen to people views on what stops them joining in, and work with the sector to better meet their needs.

What difference it will make:

By 2030, the people in our borough will feel stronger, happier and healthier due to cultural and creative opportunities. They will have the chance to take part in culture where they live, study and work, and to successfully pursue their own creative careers.

PLACE

We're on a mission to make our places burst with cultural excitement, where culture is better able to flourish, raising the profile across the borough, making sure everyone can enjoy parks, green spaces, great buildings, events, inspiring community art projects, and new cultural initiatives in public spaces.

What we want:

- Cultural activities, festivals in public spaces, community celebrations and art in the public realm that make our places and spaces more exciting, attractive and enjoyable to live, work and study in.
- Heritage buildings, green spaces for nature and outdoor places for the community that are accessible, cherished and looked after.
- People living in our borough with creative ideas and talent can contribute towards the vibrancy of their area and be supported to do so.
- Both existing communities and people new to the borough are welcomed and included in cultural activities and opportunities.
- Creative interventions in public places that reflect what makes the people who live there special and makes them feel proud.
- Culture and creativity that influences place-shaping in new future developments and is integral in the design of new places and town centres.



© Woolwich Works



What we will do:

- Embed culture and creativity in planning and urban strategies for the borough.
- Make sure that more creative practitioners are aware of opportunities to contribute towards making our places and spaces vibrant and inspired.
- Bring people in their neighbourhoods together to explore ways that arts and creative activity can make their places even better, with art and activities in the public realm.
- Create opportunities for creativity, culture and heritage to play a bigger role in our high streets, town centres and neighbourhoods, helping to make them even better places to be.

What difference it will make:

In 2030, spaces across our borough will be alive with creative activity, with more people able to enjoy events, high quality art projects in their community, and beautiful public places. New developments and the regeneration of our town centres and post-industrial sites will be well designed and high quality and will attract new creative organisations, individuals and businesses.

PARTICIPATION

We want to create more opportunities for participation in cultural activities and creative learning for all, offering skills development and lifelong learning, from the traditional to the cutting-edge, bringing culture and learning to life in formal and informal places.

What we want:

- ▶ People to have opportunities to learn and take part in cultural, creative and artistic activities throughout their lives, from their very early years right through to older age.
- ▶ People to have opportunities to do this for creative careers, and equally for their own enjoyment and personal fulfilment.
- ▶ Young people to have the opportunity to shape and lead their own creative projects.
- ▶ Inclusive creative engagement opportunities where people and communities are empowered to express themselves creatively.
- ▶ People with diverse experiences, skills, and knowledge come together to co-create and activate their creative potential by working together to generate innovative solutions and outcomes.



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What we will do:

- ▶ Support arts and heritage organisations, artists and creative groups to widen engagement that is radically inclusive, that nurtures and supports even more residents to get creative so that it becomes an everyday experience.
- ▶ Support arts and heritage organisations to go to where people are in their own neighbourhoods, to widen engagement and build lasting connections and sustained projects that have a deeper impact for those communities.
- ▶ Deliver our Cultural Impact Award in 2026 ensuring that learning and participation are at the centre of our programme for impact and legacy.
- ▶ Work with partners such as the voluntary and care sectors to support creativity with older people, using high quality activity and lifelong learning to tackle isolation and create opportunities for socialising.
- ▶ Support young people's programmes to develop co-creation and participation on their own terms, as well as developing their skills and knowledge.

What difference it will make:

In 2030 people in our borough will have more chances to take part in cultural activities, to learn and grow, nurturing new creative skills and being creative at any age.

LEADERSHIP

To take advantage of future opportunities, the borough will need strong entrepreneurial cultural leadership. This means building a sector that is imaginative, innovative and as diverse as our communities.

What we want:

- Our residents see themselves represented in our borough's cultural leadership, acting as role models for our young people who imagine themselves as our future leaders.
- People from different backgrounds become leaders in culture, helping to shape the future of the arts and heritage in our borough, keeping our cultural activities exciting, varied and relevant to our residents.
- People from diverse communities are fully represented in the workforce as creators, leaders, and decision-makers in our cultural organisations.



©Acosta Dance



What we will do:

- Work with cultural partners and organisations to see how they can recognise and empower new leaders, especially people from backgrounds that are underrepresented in arts and heritage at the moment.
- Create a Culture Board that includes a range of diverse voices to challenge thinking about ways of working and to lead on driving the Culture Strategy.
- Establish a creative network that brings together multidisciplinary creative practitioners and cultural organisations to generate new ideas, collaborative working and partnerships.
- Secure partnerships and investment to deliver training and development towards an entrepreneurial and resilient sector.

What difference it will make:

In 2023, our borough will have a wide range of people who are cultural leaders, and leadership will be better representative of the diversity and backgrounds of our residents. Our creative sector will be a fairer, sustainable, prosperous, and resilient.



CLIMATE

We will be supporting creative innovation to lead and take action towards a carbon-neutral future, sharing ideas, knowledge and best practice across the sector to propel us towards a brighter, greener future.

What we want:

- Our future to be sustainable, working with partners to reduce the impact of our carbon footprint and drive action and change across arts, culture and heritage.
- Creativity and innovation to help us imagine new ways of living and working so that we don't continue to harm the environment.
- To tackle the climate crisis through a collective effort, we want to encourage organisations to prioritise carbon reduction and work together as much as possible to make a difference.



What we will do:

- Find ways to share knowledge with everybody working in arts and heritage in our borough to empower them to reduce their carbon footprint socially, ethically and sustainably.
- Encourage the use of cultural activities to educate and influence our communities about climate change, the need to reduce carbon footprints and the difference they can make.
- Support and attract events that promote working towards being carbon neutral.
- Signpost training and share expertise for creative practitioners and cultural organisations to support them to reduce their carbon footprint.
- Encourage action on climate through our funding activities and programmes, encouraging partnership and collaboration to use and share resources and good practice to be part of our collective mission.

What difference it will make:

By 2030, action for a better climate is being taken across the creative and cultural sectors, their knowledge of how to work sustainably has increased, contributing towards the whole borough's efforts to reach carbon neutral.



©LucaSilvestrini's Protein

HERITAGE

We will celebrate diversity through an abundance of stories and our heritage. We will empower our communities to share their own tales, shining a spotlight on our spaces, buildings, and unique collections, showcasing the richness of our past and present for all the world to see.

What we want:

- Our borough builds on its strong heritage assets with new ways to tell the borough's story, as previously hidden stories within our diverse communities are told.
- The places, buildings and collections that we have in our borough to be protected, well maintained and flourishing; and to be accessible, ensuring that everybody is able to enjoy them.
- Everyday heritage that exists in our communities, their stories, memories, cultures and traditions to be valued and protected, and shared with future generations.

What we will do:

- We will collaborate with partners to deliver a major cultural programme in 2026 that connects young people, heritage, arts organisations and creative people to explore community stories in exciting ways.
- We will explore ways in which we can connect our communities with our heritage assets to generate new projects, ideas and ways of telling stories.
- We will increase access to our archives and collections.
- We will secure partnership investment to build capacity, leadership and engagement with our heritage.
- We will seek new, sustainable uses for underused heritage buildings and spaces.



What difference it will make:

By 2030, our borough will have strengthened its heritage story by creatively sharing compelling tales, histories and traditions. Our places, buildings, and unique collections will be accessible, looked after and well visited by our communities as well as by visitors.

CREATIVE ECONOMY

We will work in collaboration to sustain our existing spaces and make more creative workspaces available, support the energy of smaller creative organisations and up-and-coming artists, makers and designers, and generate powerful networks that turbocharge skills development and employment, and grow new audiences.

What we want:

- Our borough to benefit from both a flourishing and strong creative economy that contributes positively towards London and the UK's economic prosperity.
- Talented people to secure affordable, creative workspace in the borough for the long term and to connect with individuals and organisations with knowledge and skills to help them grow their businesses.
- Our borough to develop a stronger, supportive environment so that creative entrepreneurs and creative technology industries want to move to our borough to build their creative business.
- Powerful research and innovation taking place in our borough, with connections to our Higher Education partners, and collaborations between the public and private sectors that boost the inclusive economy.

What we will do:

- Explore funding opportunities that can support creative entrepreneurs and creative and cultural organisations to start and grow in our borough, and help them to access them.
- Bring people together in a creative network where they can share what they know, build more partnerships and new project ideas, to support creatives to develop their professional careers and find new markets for their work.
- Find ways to bring into use and make available more affordable creative space for long-term rentals and protect our workspaces by influencing planning policy decisions in an agile way to safeguard, support and respond to the needs of our emerging talent and sectors that we support.
- Bring our Higher Education institutions together and explore Cultural Education Partnerships to develop opportunities for both people in the industry and skill and talent development programmes for young people.

What difference it will make:

By 2030 the creative economy in our borough will be inclusive and thriving with various kinds of creative businesses and places for creative work; helping creative enterprises grow and new artists, makers, or designers prosper. Our borough will be seen as a good place to grow creative business and will attract new talent to make our borough their home.

DESTINATION

We will champion a global outlook and ambition for our borough's international success, support emerging talent and promote our cultural tourism and investment and development opportunities. The quality of life and excellent connectivity make the borough easily accessible and attractive to visit, invest in and locate.

What we want:

- Our heritage, cultural and creative offer to continue to attract substantial numbers of tourists to the borough, and to achieve significant impact on the local economy.
- Our borough to be well known as a place of creativity and innovation, adding to its attraction as a heritage destination.
- Local creative businesses and the talents in our borough to be celebrated and highlighted to the world.
- More creative and other sector businesses choose to locate themselves in our borough.



©National Maritime Museum



What we will do:

- Work with our partners to further enhance our reputation as a go to cultural destination by promoting and attracting international events, conferences and cultural organisations to come here.
- Work with partners to develop a stronger cultural identity for the whole borough that widens awareness of the breadth of our cultural heritage and the vibrancy of our creative communities.
- Secure new and ongoing inward investment in our cultural organisations and individual creative practitioners to make sure they have a high profile and are flourishing.
- Uncover great stories to tell about our borough and its people and work with our creative partners to find innovative ways to share them.
- Ensure that the benefits of working in our borough for creative businesses are well known, promoting our high quality workspaces, networking opportunities and available talent in an inspiring setting.

What difference it will make:

By 2030, our borough will continue to be recognised as a must-visit destination in London, not only for its exemplary heritage assets but also, for its exciting creativity and culture and as the best place for cultural experiences and sector growth.

DELIVERY

Our Culture Strategy belongs to the whole borough and was developed with a range of partners and individuals. We will only be able to deliver our ambitions by working in partnership.

We will need to work across a number of sectors to achieve the impact that we all want to see. We will set up a new Culture Board to guide the delivery of the Culture Strategy, to help us develop shared action plans that will achieve greater impact compared to working alone.

Our approach will be collaborative and evolve over time, building on our strengths and successes and adapting to opportunities and change. A strong groundwork for partnership working will enable us to test new ways of working and pilot projects that can develop into strong programmes throughout the duration of this strategy, to reach our Vision for 2030.

This Culture Strategy works alongside the individual plans and creative ambitions of people in our borough, ensuring that the Strategy remains

driven and responsive to its people and communities. The principles and vision align with and support the delivery of other strategies that the Royal Borough of Greenwich has, such as Our Greenwich, the 10 Year Regeneration Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan, Inclusive Economy Strategy and the Local Plan, ensuring that culture supports many areas of our lives.

The strategy will also work to support some of the goals set out by key stakeholders such as Arts Council England, Historic England, Mayor of London's Culture Strategy for London, and the Thames Estuary Growth Board. We will actively seek to work in partnership with these and others.

Culture, Heritage and the Creative Economy can unlock the potential of our communities more when they work together; by uniting our efforts and working collaboratively towards shared goals, we can overcome challenges, seize opportunities and make our vision a reality.



DEFINITIONS

Some of the words we have used in this document we have defined in the following ways:

arts – when we refer to arts, we include combined arts (including festivals and carnivals), dance, literature, music, theatre and visual arts, digital arts and creative projects using new technologies. When we refer to artists, we mean anybody who practices in the arts from this list.

carbon neutral - a person, company or country is carbon neutral if they balance the carbon dioxide they release into the atmosphere through their everyday activities, with the amount they absorb or remove from the atmosphere. This is also called net zero carbon emissions or net zero carbon, because overall no carbon dioxide is added to the atmosphere. Royal Borough of Greenwich has made a commitment to reach carbon neutral by 2030, so everything that we do needs to contribute towards this goal.

creative economy - this is the sum of all the parts of the creative industries, including trade, labour and production. It is the knowledge-based economic activities upon which the 'creative industries' are based. It includes the creative things that people do as part of their business, and all the employment,

services or manufacturing that support those creative activities.

creative industries - they include advertising, architecture, arts and crafts, design, fashion, film, video, photography, music, performing arts, publishing, research and development, software, computer games, electronic publishing, and TV/radio. The UK Government Department for Culture, Media and Sport describes the creative industries as "those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property." Intellectual property refers to creations of the mind, such as inventions, literary and artistic works, designs, and symbols, names and images used in commerce.

creative network – a network is something that brings people together to benefit each other. A creative network brings together creative people. This is important for creative businesses, creative charities and voluntary groups, because networks help people meet and build lasting relationships with others who could

become their employers, commission their work, or work together with them on new ideas and projects. It is also how people stay ahead of trends, find job opportunities, and develop new ideas.

creative practitioners – this encompassing term recognises a range of roles and disciplines in the sector from artist, maker, producer, stage manager, and so on. It refers to people who are working (or aspiring to work) independently or freelance in and across a variety of artforms.

cultural assets – a cultural asset is something of value to a particular population, community, or group because of its unique contribution to the cultural, artistic, creative, economic, historic, and/or social expressions and fabric of that community. Cultural assets can be physical such as cultural or heritage sites or buildings, products, or facilities. Non-physical cultural assets could include events or festivals, activities, expertise, support networks, community and cultural knowledge, and heritage and organisations.

culture – culture as a word covers many different areas of our lives. Our definition of culture includes the arts and heritage that the Arts Council England also covers. These are: combined arts (including festivals and carnivals), dance, libraries, literature, music, museums and collections, theatre and visual arts. We also include heritage in terms of physical heritage, like

buildings and collections, but also oral histories (people's own stories that they talk about) and community heritage. We also include creative industries, and the visitor economy.

heritage - the Heritage Fund's definition says that heritage can be anything from the past that you value and want to pass on to future generations. This can include physical things like buildings, collections, monuments, museums, libraries and archives, and includes things that aren't physical, such as community heritage and pride in local places, cultural traditions, skills, knowledge and memories. It also includes spaces for nature and landscapes.

regeneration - this refers to the improvement of a place or system, especially by making it more active or successful. For instance, a council might embark on a programme of urban regeneration to revitalise a neighbourhood, town centre or industrial site, to enhance its economic prospects.

visitor economy – this includes the economic value of people who come to visit the borough, including tourists and business visitors. It also includes the businesses, services and employment that are in the borough to support these visitors, such as hotels.

