

Boris Johnson,
Mayor of London,
8th Floor,
City Hall

21 January 2009

Dear Mayor,

Cultural Metropolis

The Economic Development, Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee welcomes the opportunity to respond to your document *Cultural Metropolis: Priorities for Culture 2009 – 2012*. A number of issues outlined in your document reflect matters we have previously drawn attention to through our various reviews and investigations and this response highlights these matters. They are:

1. Funding for the Cultural Olympiad;
2. The work of the London Culture Strategy Group;
3. Culture in outer London;
4. The cultural workforce in London;
5. Cinema provision across London; and
6. Investment in West End theatres.

We also offer some comments on other priorities in your *Cultural Metropolis* including the 'musical amnesty' scheme. The Committee will of course formally consider your full draft Culture Strategy in more detail, following its publication in 2009.

1. Funding for the Cultural Olympiad

In our report *Impact of the 2012 Games on Lottery Funding in London (2008)*¹, we highlighted concerns about the negative impact on London's small voluntary and community arts organisations of diverting Lottery money to pay for the 2012 Games. We recommended that the Mayor work with other delivery partners to create a single London Cultural Olympiad funding pot to address concerns. The Cultural Olympiad will not be successful unless adequately funded.

The *Culture Metropolis* document mentions the £1.4 million LDA 'Cultural Skills' Fund for the Cultural Olympiad, which is welcome, although we note that approximately £200,000 of this Fund is for administration costs. We are keen that as much funding as possible is made available for the Cultural Olympiad and that administration costs are kept to a minimum. **We look forward to the draft Culture Strategy including full details of all funding available for the Cultural Olympiad and how small voluntary and community organisations will be able to access this funding.**

2. The work of the London Culture Strategy Group

In our report *The London Cultural Consortium (2006)*² we highlighted the need for the London Cultural Strategy Group (previously the London Cultural Consortium) to act as an independent voice for the cultural sector, and oversee and promote the delivery of the

¹ *Impact of the 2012 Games on Lottery Funding in London*. Economic Development, Culture, Sport & Tourism Committee, January 2008, <http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/econsd/lottery-funding.pdf>

² *The London Cultural Consortium*, Economic Development, Culture, Sport & Tourism Committee, July 2006, <http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/culture/lon-cultural-consort.pdf>

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Mayor's Culture Strategy. However, at that time, we found it had made limited progress, with a lack of clear goals and adequate support or resources to take real action.

Recently, the Assembly held a confirmations hearing with Iona Blazwick, your newly appointed Chair of the London Cultural Strategy Group, and we were impressed by her clear ambitions for excellence in the cultural sector. However, we had a number of concerns about a lack of clarity on the budget and staffing resources available to the London Cultural Strategy Group, how it will interact with the GLA's Culture Strategy Team and the mechanism, with appropriate benchmarks, by which its achievements will be evaluated. We wrote to you about these concerns after the meeting and, following your response of 11 December, we remain concerned that the arrangements for the London Cultural Strategy Group mean it cannot act as an independent voice for the cultural sector in London. **We recommend that the draft Culture Strategy includes details of how the London Cultural Strategy Group will work including how it will interact with the GLA's Culture Strategy Team and also provide an independent voice for the cultural sector in London. We would also like the draft Culture Strategy to include details of the budget and staffing resources available to the London Cultural Strategy Group and how its success will be evaluated.**

3. Culture in outer London

We welcome your support of cultural provision in outer London which corresponds with a number of points made in our report *Tourism in Outer London (2006)*³. In our report we highlighted that, as well as advocating more support for cultural provision in the outer London boroughs, the GLA can help bring visitors to less well-known venues and organisations through its own citywide marketing initiatives and partnership events. We also recommended that Visit London should allocate a greater proportion of its financial resources and promotional material to covering outer London. You have mentioned your work with Visit London to promote cultural opportunities for outer London and **we look forward to the draft Culture Strategy including further information on this promotion of culture in outer London and the proportion of Visit London's resources that will be allocated to this work.**

4. The cultural workforce in London

In previous reports we highlighted barriers that certain groups face to working in the cultural sector. For example, in our *Film Friendly London (2005)*⁴ report, we commented on the under-representation of women and people from ethnic minority backgrounds in the film industry including the under-representation of women in senior and better-paid positions. When the Assembly considered the previous Mayor's draft Culture Strategy, we suggested cultural organisations should be encouraged to undertake better monitoring of diversity in their workforce and should list biographical details of executive directors in annual reports.

We note your intention to develop 'pathways for new talent' to encourage more people to work in the cultural sector and that research will be undertaken into the links between socio-economic disadvantage and the barriers for those entering the cultural workforce. **The draft Culture Strategy should set out how you will address barriers faced by certain groups wanting to work in the cultural sector, including more information on the 'pathways for new talent' scheme and the outcomes of your research into such barriers.**

³ *Tourism in Outer London*, Economic Development, Culture, Sport & Tourism Committee, December 2006
<http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/econsd/tourism-outer-london.pdf>

⁴ *Film Friendly London*, Economic Development, Culture, Sport & Tourism Committee, November 2006,
<http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/econsd/film-making.pdf>

5. Cinema provision across London

We welcome your focus on cinemas and film, which reflect findings in some of our previous reports, including *Picture Perfect: A London Assembly Report into Capital Cinemas* (2003)⁵ and *Film Friendly London* (2005). We note you specifically mention the need to raise the profile of the London Film Festival which we mentioned in the *Picture Perfect* (2003) report and that you are also following up our recommendation to explore ways of spreading good practice about film in London. **We recommend that you take action to ensure London Boroughs realise the importance of pinpointing gaps in cinema provision and identify possible sites for new cinemas. We hope that this will be reflected in your draft Culture Strategy.**

6. Investment in West End theatres

We welcome the discussions you have begun with key agencies about the needs of West End Theatres, particularly regarding the challenges they face in terms of modernisation. As highlighted in our report *Restoration Drama* (2008), it has been estimated that £250 million is required to ensure adequate physical improvement of the theatres. Our investigation concluded that there was no single solution to tackling long-term under-investment and identified a range of ways to secure funding including the introduction of a ticket levy, corporate sponsorship, fundraising campaigns and debentures. **We recommend that you take into account our previous suggestions for ways to raise investment for the modernisation of West End theatres in your discussions with key agencies and set out in the draft Culture Strategy the approaches you are advocating to address their modernisation needs.**

Other priorities

The *Cultural Metropolis* document mentions a number of other priorities and we are keen to see more information about these in the draft Culture Strategy. They include the 'Musical Amnesty' scheme where it would be useful to know more about how you will measure the success of the scheme and the review of musical education where it would be useful to see the results set out in the draft Culture Strategy.

In summary, we would like the draft Culture Strategy to include:

1. **Full details of all funding available for the Cultural Olympiad and how small voluntary and community organizations will be able to access this funding.**
2. **Clear details of the budget and staffing resources available to the London Cultural Strategy Group, how it will interact with the GLA's Culture Strategy Team and also provide an independent voice for the cultural sector in London, and how its success will be evaluated.**
3. **Further information on the promotion of culture in outer London and the proportion of Visit London's resources that will be allocated to this work.**
4. **More details of how you will address barriers faced by certain groups wanting to work in the cultural sector including more information on the 'pathways for new talent' scheme and the outcomes of your research into these barriers.**

⁵ *Picture Perfect: A London Assembly Report into Capital Cinemas*, Economic Development, Culture, Sport & Tourism Committee, October 2003 <http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/culture/cinemas.pdf>

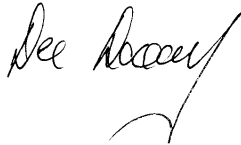
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- 5. A commitment that you will identify possible sites for new cinemas by ensuring London Boroughs realise the importance of pinpointing gaps in cinema provision.**
- 6. Further details on how you are working with key agencies to raise investment for the modernisation of West End theatres.**

I look forward to receiving your response on these matters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dee Doocey', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dee Doocey AM

Chair, Economic Development, Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee

CC: Munira Mirza, Director of Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Policy