Arts Strategy
2026-2029

Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

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Forward

As Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing, which includes the arts; central to Havering's identity, wellbeing and pride in place. As with our work to prevent homelessness, we know communities thrive when people feel connected, supported and able to flourish. The Arts Strategy 2026–2029 sets out how we will widen participation, strengthen partnerships and ensure creativity plays a meaningful role in improving lives across our borough.

The arts have significant social value for Havering, enriching residents' lives by supporting physical and mental health and wellbeing, building self-confidence, enabling people to develop new skills, and strengthening community cohesion. Through initiatives such as Pride in Place and the Lumière Cinema, alongside a wide range of arts groups delivered through local community centres, Havering Council is using culture and creativity to celebrate local identity, increase access to high-quality cultural experiences, animate town centres, and harness the creative industries to support inclusive economic growth across the borough.

Over recent years, Havering has experienced significant change, socially, culturally and economically bringing both challenges and opportunities. The arts sector is no different. Residents have told us they value high quality cultural opportunities, but access is not equal across all communities. Our work must therefore be targeted, inclusive, evidence led and shaped by those who use, and those who do not yet use, our arts offer.

This strategy supports our wider corporate goals for Havering: building stronger communities, improving health and wellbeing, and creating places we are proud to call home. It has been shaped through local insight, national evidence, and partnership working across the arts, health, housing, education and voluntary sectors.

Over the next three years, we will focus on increasing participation in places where engagement is lowest, developing opportunities for young people, removing barriers for disabled residents, strengthening our partnerships with local organisations, and embedding the arts into community development, wellbeing, prevention and early help work.

We remain committed to ensuring that all residents, regardless of age, background or circumstance have access to the life changing benefits of creativity. This strategy marks the next step in that journey.

Cllr Gillian Ford, Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing

About the Arts Strategy

This Strategy is to provide focus and added value to the efforts of everyone involved in the planning and provision of arts activity in Havering. Promote creativity, foster cultural awareness, and enhance community cohesion through diverse and inclusive arts programs.

Our vision for arts development in the London Borough of Havering is:

"To transform lives through participation in, and enjoyment of, the arts"

In the context of this strategy, the scope of 'the arts' is understood to encompass:

performing arts, music, dance, theatre, creative industries, visual arts, festivals, public art, literary arts, poetry, reading, writing and the spoken word, digital art, combined arts, media.

Objectives and Aims

The Objectives and Aims of the Arts Strategy are based on those of the Culture Strategy:

Objectives

1: Health and Wellbeing

Support a high standard of mental, physical and emotional health for all by increasing the number of people taking part in art.

2: Learning and Development

Support learning opportunities for all, by providing access to a broad arts offer, enabling people to take part in new activities and ensuring development pathways are in place.

3: Towns and Communities

Enriching our towns and communities, through investment and engagement in the arts, and by using art to deliver a high quality, safe, pleasant and visually interesting landscape and townscape for our residents.

Aims

1: Transforming Awareness

'Residents of Havering, and increased numbers living outside of the borough, are now more aware of Havering's existing and enhanced arts offer and the positive impact culture can play within people's lives'.

2: Creating Connectivity

'Havering is a strong networked and increasingly resilient borough of cultural players, where cultural partners work together to develop and deliver arts strategy, create projects in partnership, cross promote each other's work and fundraise for new initiatives.'

3: Engaging the Least Engaged

'That the range of people engaged in arts activity in Havering is increased and that the least engaged are actively prioritised.'

4: Rebalancing the Sector

'There is a broad range of arts activity across the borough and where there is a lack of key provision this is addressed.'

5: Placing Culture within Cohesion

The Arts is seen and being used as a way of ensuring that there is a sense of belonging for all of the communities of our borough and that there are enhanced relationships between people from different backgrounds.

Who is the Strategy for?

Everyone engages in the arts, and the arts play a role in everybody's life. Art based activities can educate us, as well as inspire. We want to challenge the idea that the arts may only be for certain people by ensuring accessibility to individuals and our community.

We aim to target key areas, working with residents who feel they are less engaged and ensure we can work towards reducing barriers communities may feel hinder their arts experience.

We learn through the arts – and develop our learning skills – as audience just as much as participant. Even as pure entertainment, the arts offer us an opportunity to locate ourselves in our social and cultural environment. Exposure to art of the highest quality as part of our educative process, be it formal or informal, has long been established as a core necessity of our learning journey.

This strategy supports the corporate objectives of Cleaner, Safer, Prouder, and Together. The four key themes of that vision are:

Communities

Helping young and old people fulfil their potential through high achieving schools and by supporting them to live safe, healthy and independent lives.

Places

Making sure that our neighbourhoods are a great place to live by investing in them and keeping them clean, green and safe with access to quality parks and leisure facilities.

Opportunities

Helping people get on in life by creating jobs and skills opportunities and building genuinely affordable homes.

Connections

Making it easier for people to get around and online by investing in road, transport links, faster internet and free Wi-Fi in town centres.

Delivering Social Value

This Arts Strategy delivers strong and measurable social value by delivering positive outcomes across health and wellbeing, equal opportunity, community cohesion and economic inclusion.

It supports **Health, Wellbeing and COVID-19 Recovery** by embedding arts activity within preventative health, social prescribing and community wellbeing programmes, reducing isolation and improving mental and emotional health, particularly for older people, disabled residents and those experiencing disadvantage.

The strategy advances **Tackling Economic Inequality** through skills development, volunteering, artist support, creative career pathways and partnerships with local employers, ensuring investment benefits local people and the creative workforce.

It promotes **Equal Opportunity** by prioritising access for underrepresented and least-engaged communities, removing physical, financial and cultural barriers, and ensuring programmes reflect the borough's diversity.

Strong **community cohesion and placemaking** outcomes are delivered through arts activity in town centres, libraries, parks and community spaces, strengthening pride in place, increasing footfall and supporting local businesses. Environmental responsibility is embedded through sustainable delivery and arts-led engagement with climate awareness.

Crucially, the strategy is co-designed and delivered through partnerships with health, education, voluntary and community sectors, ensuring local voices shape provision and that social value is retained within the borough. Collectively, these actions ensure the Arts Strategy delivers measurable, long-term social, economic and environmental value for Havering's communities.

"By 2030, we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences"

Arts Council England- Our Vision 2020-2030

Contribution of the Arts to Corporate Objectives and Initiatives

Places	The arts make our environment more appealing, and sharpen our perception and experience of it by making us more curious and allowing us to better engage with our environment. The arts also contribute to community safety, particularly through our work with young people. For example, enabling young people to work well in groups and express themselves creatively, using the arts to provide education on alcohol, using music production to allow examination of issues through lyric writing and conversation. The arts also contribute to important protective factors such as literacy and numeracy, and simple diversionary activities for people at risk of offending, or dropping out of education. School Initiative: Goal: Embed arts education within the school curriculum to inspire creativity and critical thinking. • Curriculum Integration: Include arts subjects in the core curriculum. • Extracurricular Activities: Provide after-school art clubs and programs. • Artist Residencies: Partner with local artists to provide hands-on learning experiences.
Opportunities	The arts provide opportunities for self-expression, relaxation, creativity and enjoyment, and have a powerful and positive impact on our physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. The arts provide particularly important opportunities to engage and improve the lives of more isolated, disadvantaged, disabled or hard to reach individuals, because of the diverse range, and accessible nature, of arts activities. The arts also creates a voice for these groups to connect, communicate and advocate for themselves. The arts are a rich conduit to formal and informal learning in all aspects of our lives. As well as providing opportunities to develop art-based skills, engaging in the arts also enhances our sense of imagination, enquiry and problem-solving skills, and enables us to better understand ourselves and communicate with others. The arts also provide opportunities to learn about other world cultures, is suited to all ages, interests and abilities, and can be used as a method of engaging otherwise hard to reach groups in informal learning activity. Economic Impact Initiative: Goal: Utilize the arts to stimulate economic growth and create employment opportunities. • Creative Industry Support: Invest in local artists and creative businesses to foster a thriving arts sector. • Tourism: Promote arts events and public art installations to attract tourists and boost local spending. • Job Creation: Develop arts programs that create job opportunities in various sectors, including education, event management, and healthcare. • Business Collaboration: Encourage partnerships between arts organizations and local businesses to drive economic development.

Communities	Havering's towns and communities are steeped in the arts, both in a physical sense through the design and architecture of our town centres, and through the opportunities provided to participate and engage in the arts. Art makes places more exciting, improves residents' perceptions of their local area, bind us together, and supports the development of a stronger, more cohesive society. Art resides in multiple settings throughout our towns and communities; within our libraries, parks, museums, theatres, community and church halls, our high streets and our homes. The arts attract footfall and spend within our town centres and ensure we develop an economy that makes things as well as consumes them. Project example: Community Arts Programme Goal: Create inclusive community art projects that reflect local culture and history. • Workshops: Offer regular art workshops in various disciplines (painting, sculpture, dance, music). • Events: Host annual community art festivals showcasing local talent. • Public Art: Develop public art installations and murals with community input.
Connections	To work in support of the Cultural Strategy, A Good Life. Havering is strongly networked and increasingly resilient borough of cultural players, where cultural partners work together to develop and deliver cultural strategy, create projects in partnership, cross promote each other's work and fundraise for new initiatives.

Other Key Initiatives

Creative Health Initiative:

Goal: Use the arts to improve physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

• Art Therapy: Offer art therapy sessions to support mental health.

• Healthcare Partnerships: Collaborate with hospitals and healthcare providers to integrate arts programs into patient care.

• Community Wellbeing Projects: Develop projects that promote relaxation, mindfulness, and emotional expression through art.

Climate Action Initiative:

Goal: Leverage the arts to engage the community in environmental awareness and climate action.

• Eco-Art Projects: Create art installations using recycled materials to promote sustainability.

• Awareness Campaigns: Use public art to highlight the impact of climate change and encourage eco-friendly practices.

• Workshops and Talks: Host events focused on the intersection of art and environmentalism, featuring eco-conscious artists and activists.

- Green Practices: Implement eco-friendly practices in all arts programs, such as using sustainable materials and reducing waste.

Broader Initiatives:

Goal: Create an interconnected arts ecosystem that supports lifelong learning and cultural exchange.

- Partnerships: Collaborate with galleries, theatres, and other cultural institutions to offer joint programs.
- Grants and Funding: Secure funding from local government and private sponsors to support arts initiatives.
- Marketing: Use social media and local media to promote programs and events.

Innovation and Digital Arts:

Goal: Embrace technology and innovation to enhance artistic expression and engagement.

- Digital Platforms: Develop online platforms for virtual art exhibitions, workshops, and events.
- Tech Integration: Use augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) to create immersive art experiences.
- Innovation Hubs: Create spaces where artists can experiment with new technologies and collaborate with tech experts.

Cultural Diversity:

Goal: Celebrate and promote diversity through inclusive arts programs.

- Multicultural Events: Host festivals and events that showcase the artistic traditions of various cultures.
- Diverse Representation: Ensure arts programs reflect the diversity of the community.
- Cultural Exchange: Facilitate cultural exchange programs to broaden artistic perspectives.

Artist Support:

Goal: Provide support and resources for local artists to thrive.

- Grants and Scholarships: Offer financial support to emerging and established artists.
- Residencies and Studios: Provide affordable studio spaces and artist residency programs.
- Professional Development: Offer workshops and resources for artists to develop their skills and careers.

The arts make a significant contribution to our Towns and Communities, in environmental, social and economic terms.

'Analysis of the national survey reveals that people who viewed a sense of community as being important to them were most likely to agree that attending arts and culture events helped them feel part of their community. 68% per cent of those who say that a sense of community is very important to them agree that attending arts and culture events helped them feel part of their community, compared to 30% of those who see a sense of community as very unimportant' (The Value of Arts and Culture in Place-shaping, 2019, Wavehill Ltd).

The effect of the arts in educating and inspiring us, developing our emotional and intellectual literacy, keeping us active and healthy and providing cohesion for our community, all of these things translate in to our own economic activity too, extending the arts' contribution way beyond the mere purchase of tickets and refreshments.

Our borough's arts facilities, activities, events and festivals, as well as our museum, parks and libraries, are all engines for the local economy. National studies have

long shown that cultural facilities and activities are important factors in where we choose to live, educate our children, where we go shopping and where we choose to set up our businesses.

Art begins to define our townscapes not just physically, but in the way that our community functions both intellectually and emotionally. As our demography changes then so does our artistic landscape, offering us experience and insight into a huge and diverse range of new cultures which help make all members of our community understand each other better.

Building, developing, preserving and stewarding our environment is a process that greatly benefits from the guidance of artists, but in a much richer and complex way than the provision of public art or the integration of artists into urban design projects. People who make, create and perform have historically displayed an unusually vibrant relationship with their natural habitat, and their work, by relating the human experience to both the built and natural environment, and by exploring new views on relationships and situations, help the rest of us enjoy living in closer proximity to other people. Art makes the environment exciting.

How an Arts Strategy Can Enhance Havering's Heritage

An arts strategy can be a dynamic force in the delivery and expansion of heritage initiatives, breathing new life into historical narratives and making them more accessible, engaging, and relevant to contemporary audiences. By integrating creative practices into heritage work, organizations can deepen public connection to place, memory, and identity.

• Creative Interpretation of Historic Sites

Artists can reimagine heritage spaces through installations, performances, or digital storytelling, offering fresh perspectives that resonate with diverse audiences.

• Community Co-Creation Projects

Engaging local residents in artistic activities—such as oral history murals, participatory theatre, or craft workshops—can uncover untold stories and foster a sense of ownership.

• Heritage Festivals and Cultural Trails

Arts-led programming within heritage festivals or walking trails can animate historical narratives, blending education with entertainment to attract wider participation.

• Residencies and Artist Commissions

Hosting artists-in-residence at heritage sites encourages long-term creative engagement and can result in new works that interpret and celebrate local history.

• Digital Arts and Immersive Media

Using augmented reality, projection mapping, or interactive soundscapes can modernize heritage experiences and appeal to younger audiences.

Culture and the creative industries contribute £52bn to London's economy every year and account for one in six jobs in the capital. Culture for all Londoners details how the Mayor will keep the city at the top of its creative game and ensure there are cultural opportunities in every corner of the capital.

Culture Strategy for London

'The value of arts and culture to people and society outlines the existing evidence on the impact of arts and culture on our economy, health and wellbeing, society and education.'

As with all strategies, we can identify various challenges that may prevent its delivery. These can include:

Funding & Resources

- limited core funding: shrinking public budgets and reliance on short term grants.
- competition for investment: arts competing with statutory services like social care or housing.
- insecure funding models: difficulty planning long term programmes without stable income.

Access, Inclusion & Participation

• barriers for underrepresented groups: cost, transport, disability access, cultural exclusion.

• low engagement in certain areas: especially in neighbourhoods with fewer cultural assets.

• lack of diverse representation: both in programming and in the creative workforce.

Infrastructure & Space

• loss of affordable creative spaces: studios, rehearsal rooms, small venues under pressure from development.

• aging cultural buildings: high maintenance costs and limited accessibility.

• insufficient digital infrastructure: especially for hybrid or online arts activity.

Workforce & Skills

• precarious employment: freelancers facing unstable income and limited support.

• skills gaps: digital skills, fundraising, leadership, and business development.

• difficulty retaining talent: creatives leaving due to cost of living or lack of opportunities.

Strategic & Partnership Challenges

• fragmented collaboration: between councils, cultural organisations, education, health, and business.

• unclear governance structures: making it hard to coordinate cultural planning.

• limited data and evaluation: difficulty proving impact to funders or policymakers.

Community & Social Challenges

• inequalities across neighbourhoods: uneven distribution of cultural opportunities.

• changing demographics: requiring new types of programming and outreach.

• social isolation and wellbeing needs: rising demand for arts based health interventions.

Economic & External Pressures

• cost of living impacts: affecting audiences, artists, and venues.

• post pandemic recovery: rebuilding audiences and confidence.

• pressures from regeneration: risk of cultural displacement or gentrification.

The arts are increasingly recognised for the vital role they play in educational, social and health environments, for example the arts can:

- Encourage individuals to express themselves creatively, bringing a sense of satisfaction, improving confidence, contributing to their health and well-being and a more balanced life.

- Play a key role in knowledge and academic achievements, which can enhance individual's employment prospects.

- Create stronger, cohesive local communities by bringing people together, sharing interests, stories and experiences, and giving people a greater sense of community and place.

- Support community safety initiatives by reducing crime through encouraging delivery of purposeful activity to assist in strengthening community networks.

- Continued investment in events and arts facilities, making it a more attractive place to live and work, and attracting visitors into the area. This could also benefit cultural tourism sectors and creative industries.

- Keep local businesses at the cutting edge by encouraging creativity and developing a strong cultural and creative industry sector.

- Make our public spaces and buildings livelier and visually attractive.

'The national survey findings reveal that two-thirds of respondents agreed that arts and culture has positive benefits for their personal wellbeing and just over half (55 per cent) stated that they would like to see more opportunities in their area. A similar proportion (49 per cent) also agreed that going to arts and culture events helped them to feel part of their community.'

The value of Arts and Culture in place Shaping, 2019, Wavehill LTD.

LBH Arts Department work with local residential housing schemes, day centres, learning-disabled adults and Alzheimer sufferers demonstrates the benefits of continuing engagement in arts activities, which provide positive activities or even respite for carers and families, and even contribute to extend independent living.

"There's a lot of talent around and venues like this gives people the chance to show it. Very good work. I'm proud of my Dad's work here and it's all in good company."
NHS Memory Service Exhibition Fry's Gallery, Fairkytes Arts Centre.

We learn through the arts and develop our learning skills – as audience just as much as participant. The arts offer us an opportunity to locate ourselves in our social and cultural environment. Exposure to art of the highest quality as part of our educative process, be it formal or informal, has long been established as a core necessity of our learning journey. The value of this experience to schools in both delivering and enriching the national curriculum, whether it is through visiting professional performances or hosting professional artist's in-school, is beyond doubt.

The arts assist in learning and development of important characteristics children will need as adults.

10 Reasons Why Arts in Education Is so Important for Kids, By Laura Martin

Improved Academic Performance

Creativity   Motor Skills   Confidence

Visual Learning   Decision Making

Perserverance   Focus   Collaboration

Accountability

Para Arts Exhibition response

"Inspirational work. Very thoughtful and innovative pieces. I can only imagine how motivated the artists feel when they see their work displayed. Well done to the teaching for encouraging such lovely work too."

Information sourced from **www.gov.uk** and **assets.publising.service.gov.uk**

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport: Culture is Digital 2019

The report is based on findings from a survey of how people engage with arts and culture online, and attitudes towards using online technology to engage with the arts.

The internet is a marketing and audience development tool, for example as a core platform for booking tickets, but also a medium for distributing content and delivering immersive, participative and fundamentally new arts experiences. Arts organisations that are skilled in digital marketing – and particularly in areas such as search engine optimization and the use of social media – will see more people through their doors than ones that rely on an old-school website and the odd email newsletter.

The executive summary states:

On Digital Skills and capability the report noted skills gaps in the sector, such as data analysis and intellectual property knowledge, and highlighted the benefit of increasing digital skills and maturity. Since then:

- The Arts Council have launched their new £1.1 million Digital Culture network, a 2 year initiative to increase the digital skills and capacity of arts and cultural organisations, providing practical hands-on support, developing partnerships with the technology sector and facilitating the sharing of resources and best practice.

- DCMS have provided £200,000 to support the creation of a new Digital Culture Code and a Digital Maturity Index, a tool being developed by the Arts Council and National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership for the benefit of the whole culture sector.

- The National Lottery Heritage Fund is embarking on a new £1 million campaign to build digital capability in the heritage sector. Over the next 2 years they will invest in new projects and learning opportunities that target heritage organisations that lack digital skills and confidence.

- The Intellectual Property Office have delivered 6 free training seminars on intellectual property attracting over 100 organisations from across the culture sector.

- The Space have worked with the sector to develop and agree a new IP rights terminology to make the contracting of contributors, creators and existing rights-holders easier and more standardised.

Culture is Digital: June 2019 progress report

Year 1 Action Plan

Strategic Priority	Key Actions	Outputs	Success Measures
1. Strengthen Havering's Arts Ecology	Deliver a diverse, high-quality arts programme supporting wellbeing, placemaking and economic impact across Havering.	• 12+ arts events/exhibitions • Activity in 3+ town centres/community settings	• 10% increase in attendance • 85% positive audience feedback • Clear evidence of social and economic impact
2. Visual Arts & Craft Programme	Curate professional and community exhibitions, talks and workshops; grow craft shop offer for local makers.	• 6 professional exhibitions • 6 community/emerging artist exhibitions • 24 talks/workshops • 30+ local artists in craft shop	• 15% increase in retail income • 70% Havering-based artists • Positive artist development outcomes
3. Artist Development & Collaboration	Create platforms for collaboration, networking and innovation; build national and international links.	• 2 new artist-led initiatives • 4 networking/development events • 3 external partnerships	• 50+ artists engaged • New commissions or collaborations formed • Increased external profile
4. Participation & Learning	Expand inclusive learning and engagement programmes for all ages and abilities.	• 1,000+ participants • Targeted programmes for children, older people, disabled and diverse communities	• Record participation levels • Increased first-time and underrepresented audiences • Strong qualitative feedback
5. Music Hub Partnership	Strengthen partnership to ensure inclusive, high-quality music education for all children and young people.	• Engagement with all Hub schools • Targeted SEND and disadvantaged provision • Regular performance opportunities	• Increased participation and retention • Positive school and parent feedback • Clear progression routes

Year 2 Action Plan

Strategic Priority	Key Actions	Outputs	Success Measures
1. Diverse Programme Development	Co-design and deliver a more diverse arts programme with cultural, community and education partners reflecting Havering's changing communities.	• 10+ delivery partners • 20+ new activities/ events • Wider range of cultures and artforms represented	• 20% increase in participation from underrepresented communities • Programme demographics align more closely with borough data • Positive partner feedback
2. Arts in Hard-to-Reach Areas	Establish sustained arts activity in priority wards and deliver high-quality lifelong learning opportunities in partnership with arts education providers..	• Programmes in 5 priority areas • 40+ participatory sessions • 6+ education providers collaborating	• 1,500+ participants • 60% new to arts engagement • Improved repeat attendance and progression
3. Major Events & Festivals	Expand the scale, quality and profile of events, concerts and festivals in Havering's major centres.	• Major event/festival in each principal centre • Enhanced production and programming	• 25% increase in attendance • Increased dwell time and economic impact • Strong audience and stakeholder feedback
4. Access to Information & Opportunity	Improve access to arts opportunities through digital platforms, consultation, partnerships and targeted marketing.	• Centralised digital listings platform • Quarterly community consultations • Targeted digital campaigns	• 30% increase in online engagement • Improved public awareness • Increased attendance linked to promotion
5. Voluntary Arts Sector Development	Strengthen the voluntary arts sector with training, support and opportunities, particularly for young people.	• Support for 20+ voluntary groups • 10 capacity-building sessions • New youth volunteering/ leadership roles	• 30% increase in youth engagement (16–25) • Improved sustainability of groups • Increased collaboration across sectors

Year 3 Action Plan

Strategic Priority	Key Actions	Outputs	Success Measures
1. Outreach & Cross-Sector Partnerships	Sustain and deepen partnerships with community, health and care sectors to deliver targeted, measurable outreach for hard-to-reach and at-risk groups.	• 10+ active partners • 50+ outreach arts sessions • Formal referral pathways	• 2,000+ participants • 70% from priority groups • Evidenced wellbeing and social outcomes
2. Equitable Access & Inclusive Programming	Ensure equitable access for disabled people, older people and economically disadvantaged residents, with programming reflecting Havering's diversity.	• 100% programmes meet access standards • Targeted provision for priority groups • Culturally diverse programme offer	• Participation reflects borough demographics • Improved access indicators • Strong inclusion feedback
3. Evaluation & Gap-Filling	Evaluate borough-wide arts provision and pilot activity to address identified gaps by artform, place and audience.	• Evaluation report completed • Key gaps identified • 3–5 pilot projects delivered	• Evidence-led programming decisions • Successful pilots with demand • More balanced arts offer
4. Grassroots Music Development	Support grassroots music projects to deliver an accessible, inclusive and diverse music programme.	• 15+ grassroots projects supported • 20+ music events/workshops • Mentoring for emerging leaders	• Increased participation from underrepresented groups • Improved project sustainability • Clear progression routes

Strategic national, regional and local documents relevant to the delivery of the arts in Havering

There are a large number of policies, strategies and priorities which are relevant to the Arts sector and the development of this strategy. The most significant influencers are listed below.

National Context

Arts Council England 2020 Strategy- Let's Create

Arts Council England's Strategy for 2020-30 is built around three Outcomes and four Investment Principles. They are designed to work together to achieve our vision of a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences.

The outcomes
- Creative people
- Cultural Communities
- A Creative & Cultural Country

Investment principles
- Ambition & Quality
- Dynamism
- Inclusivity & relevance
- Environmental Responsibility

The Outcomes and Investment Principles are fundamentally linked.

We believe people are better able to develop their creative potential if they have easy access – off and online – to outstanding libraries, museums and arts organisations.

Such provision must be locally accessible but part of a national cultural ecology: one that is ambitious, inclusive and relevant, dynamic and environmentally responsible.

And that national ecology must in turn be strengthened by talented artists from all communities, who have been given equal opportunities to develop their individual creative potential.

Taken together, the Outcomes and Investment Principles will guide us towards the creative and cultural nation we want England to become by 2030.

New National Plan for Music Education 2024-The Power of Music Lives

The National Plan for Music Education 2024, titled "The Power of Music to Change Lives," outlines the government's vision for music education in England. Here are some key points:

Vision and Goals

- Inclusivity: Ensure that all children and young people have access to music education, regardless of their background or location.

- Opportunities: Provide opportunities for children to learn to sing, play instruments, and create music together.

- Progression: Enable students to progress their musical interests and talents, including the possibility of pursuing music professionally.

- Brain Development: Highlight the role of music in brain development, aiding in language, motor skills, and emotional intelligence.

Funding and Investment

- Investment: The plan includes a £75 million investment to boost culture and creativity outside London between 2022 and 2025.

- Partnerships: Emphasizes partnerships with schools, music hubs, the music and creative sector, and other stakeholders to achieve its goals.

Implementation

- Music Hubs: Strengthen and expand the network of music hubs to provide high-quality music education in schools and communities.

- Teacher Training: Enhance training and support for music teachers to ensure they are well-equipped to deliver effective music education.

- Community Engagement: Encourage community involvement in music education through local events, workshops, and performances.

Impact

- Cultural Enrichment: Promote cultural enrichment and appreciation through diverse musical experiences.

- Economic Growth: Support the creative industries and contribute to the local economy by nurturing musical talent.

Health and Wellbeing:

Use music education to improve mental health and wellbeing among children and young people.

Successes of the Previous Arts Strategy (2020–2025)

1. Strengthening Havering's Cultural Infrastructure

1.1 Fairkytes Arts Centre

- Expanded its year round participatory arts programme, increasing reach to children, adults, older residents, and SEND communities.

- Grew its offer of vocational and professional classes supported by long term tutors and resident artists.

- Established Fairkytes as a key cultural industry hub with nine permanent studio artists and an expanded retail craft shop supporting local makers.

1.2 Fry's Gallery

- Successfully transformed the former Citizens Advice Bureau into a dedicated gallery and workshop space.

- Hosted a significant number of local and national exhibitions, providing emerging and established artists with high quality public exposure.

- Embedded itself as a community venue for voluntary groups, schools, charities and local organisations.

1.3 Havering Library Services

- Libraries grew into cultural hubs offering exhibitions, digital arts, storytelling, performance, creative workshops and community displays.

- Increased footfall and usage, positioning libraries as inclusive cultural spaces central to local engagement.

- Introduced arts in health and wellbeing sessions, supporting isolated, older and vulnerable residents.

1.4 Queen's Theatre Hornchurch

- Delivered award winning regional theatre programming, attracting over 200,000 annual attendances before and after the pandemic.

- Strengthened its Learning & Participation programme, including youth theatre, schools tours, backstage training, and foyer based community events.

- Achieved Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status, securing sustained investment for the borough.

- Developed major partnerships with the Royal Opera House, London Symphony Orchestra and other national bodies.

1.5 Brookside Theatre

- Continued to operate as Havering's first and only professional arts venue in Romford, providing musicals, plays, comedy, and educational opportunities.
- Maintained a self funded, volunteer led model while increasing training and performance pathways for local people.
- Strengthened heritage work around the Romford War Memorial Buildings.

1.6 Appleby Gallery (Former Brentwood Road Gallery)

- Delivered national touring exhibitions and high quality visual arts programming.
- Expanded outreach to schools and community groups to develop inclusive access to contemporary arts.
- Supported local artists through shows, skills development and professional practice events.

1.7 MyPlace Youth & Community Centre

- Embedded arts, music, digital recording and creative participation within its youth programme.
- Hosted multi agency community events, arts festivals, wellbeing sessions and youth led cultural activity.

2. Expanding Access & Participation

2.1 Broader, more inclusive programme offer

- Significant growth in arts activities across age groups, including children, families, adults, and older residents.
- Enhanced provision for SEND children, young people and adults, including quiet sessions, sensory workshops, accessible performances and targeted holiday schemes.

2.2 Delivery across communities

- Arts programming expanded beyond core venues into community halls, parks, libraries, schools and town centres—broadening reach to under represented communities.
- Arts activity embedded into borough wide festivals, public events, and markets, bringing creative culture into public life.

2.3 Increased cultural engagement

- Participation Survey 2023–24 showed increases in physical attendance across museums, galleries and arts venues post pandemic.

- Arts remained the highest-engaged cultural sector among Havering residents, demonstrating strong demand and relevance.

3. Community-Led Culture & Partnership Working

3.1 Havering Changing (Creative People & Places)

- Secured over £1 million of Arts Council England funding (across the programme period) to support community led arts and culture.

- Empowered residents in Harold Hill, Orchard Village, Rainham and Romford to design, commission and deliver their own cultural programmes.

- Built a multi organisation consortium including Queen's Theatre, Clarion Futures, Havering Colleges, Interfaith Forum, Volunteer Centre and MyPlace.

- Delivered festivals, co produced performances, public art and creative health projects shaped directly by local communities.

3.2 Collaborative delivery across sectors

- Stronger partnership work with:
  - Schools and academies
  - Health providers (NELFT, NHS, creative health partners)
  - Community groups and charities
  - Youth and family services
  - Libraries and adult education
  - Improved relationships between cultural organisations, enabling resource sharing, audience development and joint funding applications.

4. Children, Young People & Learning

4.1 Artsmark Growth

- Havering significantly increased the number of Artsmark accredited schools, including multiple at Silver and Gold levels.

- Supported teachers with CPD, resources and cultural education planning.

4.2 FUSE (Local Cultural Education Partnership)

- Expanded cross-school cultural programming—visits, workshops, consultation panels, student-led activities.
- Delivered borough-wide youth consultation "The Children Have Spoken", generating insight that shaped new creative pathways for young people.
- Developed a commissioning scheme enabling young people to design their own creative events.

4.3 Youth opportunity pathways

- Queen's Theatre and Havering Music School provided intensive training opportunities in drama, dance, orchestral performance and technical skills.
- Thousands of young people engaged annually in:
  - Ensembles
  - Youth theatre
  - Dance companies
  - Backstage technical workshops
  - School-based cultural residencies

5. Creative Health & Wellbeing

5.1 Health partnerships and innovation

- Creative arts programmes delivered in partnership with NHS, NELFT, GP practices, St George's Health & Wellbeing Hub, dementia services and social care.
- Clear evidence of improved wellbeing: reduced stress, improved mood, enhanced confidence, reduced isolation.

5.2 Dementia-friendly arts

- Memory cafés, singing programmes, arts therapy and visual arts sessions for Alzheimer's and dementia patients.
- Positive feedback from families and NHS partners regarding improved communication and quality of life.

5.3 Social prescribing developments

- Increased links between arts providers and early help services.
- Use of arts in supporting residents experiencing bereavement, trauma, long term health conditions or social isolation.

6. Inclusion, Diversity & Representation

6.1 Cultural inclusion

• Programmes increasingly reflected Havering's diversifying population—strengthening multicultural programming, festivals and representation across events.

• Strengthened links with ethnically diverse communities and faith groups.

6.2 Accessibility improvements

• More BSL interpreted events, sensory-friendly performances, accessible communications and dementia-friendly programming.

• Venue audits and infrastructure improvements to increase access for disabled residents.

6.3 Targeting least engaged residents

• Outreach delivered in areas with historically low cultural participation to widen access and remove barriers (financial, geographic, cultural or awareness-based).

7. Talent Development & Creative Workforce

7.1 Supporting local artists

• Growth in residencies, studio spaces, micro-grants and exhibition opportunities (Fairkytes, Appleby, Fry's Gallery).

• Selling platforms for artists through Fairkytes retail space, library displays and festival stalls.

7.2 Skills & career pathways

• Partnerships with national institutions through Havering Music School and Queen's Theatre enabled students to:

  • Perform in major London venues

  • Access professional coaching

  • Work with leading orchestras and ensembles

• Training for adults and young people in creative industries including design, digital production, filmmaking, costume and set production.

7.3 Volunteering & community development

• Increased opportunities through libraries, Brookside Theatre, festivals, and community arts programmes, strengthening community ownership and civic pride.

8. Town Centres, Heritage & Placemaking

8.1 Public art & heritage initiatives

• Arts integrated into town centres, parks, heritage spaces, festivals and markets.

• New public art installations shaped community identity and supported regeneration schemes.

8.2 Cultural trails and events

• Expanded heritage and cultural activity programmes supporting local tourism and pride in borough identity.

9. Resilience, Innovation & Post Pandemic Recovery

9.1 Digital transformation

• Organisations adopted digital delivery—virtual exhibitions, online classes, streaming, and digital arts workshops.

• Supported residents with limited mobility or ongoing health concerns to continue engaging.

9.2 Rebuilding audience confidence

• Post pandemic recovery efforts successfully restored cultural participation and revitalised local arts organisations.

10. Summary of Impact

The previous Arts Strategy significantly strengthened Havering's cultural sector through:

• Increased participation and reach

• Stronger community voice and local networks

• Improved inclusion and accessibility

• Broader cultural education for children and young people

• Creative health integration with NHS/social care

• Enhanced economic, cultural and social value for local communities

These achievements form a strong foundation for the Arts Strategy 2026–2029 and demonstrate the borough's capacity for creativity-led community transformation.