

# WESTERN WEDGE FRAMEWORK

Eight boroughs on the west and central/west side of London and Arts Council England, London and the West London Alliance

Partnership development for Arts and Culture

**Brent**  
**Ealing**  
**Harrow**  
**Hounslow**  
**Hammersmith & Fulham**  
**Kensington & Chelsea**  
**Hillingdon**



## **West London Alliance** **Arts Council England, London**

The developing partnership has been formed in response to the needs for a more regional approach to arts and cultural key issues, the ongoing approach to regional re organisation proposed in 2003 by The Mayor of London (GLA) and the need for refined communication systems supported by other key agencies, including Arts Council England.

Arts and Cultural officers of some London Councils are aware that present arrangements often result in an insular single borough approach rather than London wide regional or sub regional view. In the past this has led to radically different approaches and policies within a relatively small geographic area of London. Planning and development of services takes place without other neighbouring boroughs developments being taken into consideration, and ongoing inefficiencies as each borough attempts to 'reinvent wheels' and solve problems that are outside of one boroughs scope.

Although the autonomy of each Council needs to be considered and supported, the partnership aims to provide a regional strategic approach to key cultural issues that are shared across the region, providing an opportunity to tackle priority issues via joined up approaches, and importantly to maximise resources.

The mix of the eight boroughs from the west and central west of London were brought together under the following principles:

## Transport

Each borough shares common transport systems generally working out of central London in a series of 'spokes' this enables members of the public to visit centres of activity and artists to work in locations within reasonable travelling distance from each borough. The boroughs also 'share' residents, local people living in one borough but working or attending school in the neighbouring borough.

Throughout the region the road network joins and divides communities, with road transport generally effecting most daily issues for local people in some manner.

## Demographics

The boroughs share similarities in their populations. Across the region there is a wide diversity of individuals and communities, many active economically and socially. Each of the boroughs has pockets of deprivation, although these vary in scale. In west London these 'pockets' are usually relatively small, and often fail to gain significant funds to tackle the issues effectively, however across the region these individuals are significant in numbers. Opportunities to deliver some cultural services to targeted individuals within the region through the partnership offer a more efficient option, rather than through small local programmes.

## Partnerships

The region also covers significant partnerships and regional development areas. The North West Learning Skills Council for example crosses some but not all of the boroughs, whilst the Pathfinders social cohesion group the Western Alliance covers six of the eight Western Wedge partners. The partnership could provide access to larger scale regional developments, allowing the region to take a more strategic approach, spreading and sharing the benefits. Potential future projects include the Heathrow extension and the offer of a regional response to the potential focus on the eastern Thames Gateway and the Olympic bid area.

Each of the units in the boroughs is under ongoing pressure to supply arts and cultural services beyond each unit's means. A regional approach could present the opportunity for each borough to specialise on key issues, and distribute regional opportunities to a wider range of beneficiaries. A number of these successful partnerships already exist including the literature project West Words.

The partnership is flexible, and in no way aims to inhibit the partners from membership of other groups or strategic groupings.

## Inner and Outer London

In including inner and outer London Boroughs the partnership aims to find the means to address the ongoing issue of density of cultural provision in inner London versus sparse provision in outer London. In attempting to share and distribute the artistic and human resources across a wider area and number of people, we aim to remove expectancy on inner London based officers, and provide a wider variety of provision to outer London areas. However the partnership is aware that the nature of London and the influence of its central commercial and tourism core should be maximized, and only relevant and realistic opportunities pursued.

## Communications

Opportunities within the region can be communicated to a wider range of people, and local knowledge shared and maximized across the partnership boroughs. Allowing for increasingly effective targeting of provision to the right people.

The pilot web based information system the Seer developed by LBB and RBKC with funding from ACE is designed to be expanded to other areas, allowing for improved access to information and networks within the cultural sector.

## **Terms of Reference for the Western Wedge:**

- Membership of the Western Wedge to include representatives from the Arts and Cultural Services of:
  - Brent
  - Ealing
  - Harrow
  - Hounslow
  - Hammersmith & Fulham
  - Kensington & Chelsea
  - Hillingdon
  - Westminster

Membership to also include representatives from:

- Arts Council England, London
  - West London Alliance
- Meetings of the full group will be held at least 4 times per year, with additional sub groups meeting as necessary
  - Representation from 4 boroughs is required to form a quorate at each meeting
  - A chair will be appointed on an annual basis from the member boroughs
  - A note taker and co-ordinator for the following meeting will be agreed at each meeting, ensuring a rotation of duty across the partnership.

## **Remit of the Western Wedge Partnership**

*The partnership has agreed the following to be the primary roles of the group:*

- Identify information collection across the region that will lead to better data for longer term cultural planning.
- Identify key priorities and develop work plans where a partnership approach will provide greater efficiencies and effectiveness both regionally and locally.
- Clarify and communicate regional arts and cultural priorities
- Identify and pursue opportunities to secure resources and develop new partnerships for the region

- Identify specific areas of spend where a regional approach will bring efficiencies, for instance in the area of communications.
- Develop projects across the sub-region based on the agreed priority areas.
- Share information and best practice, leading to higher quality services and provision.
- Refer and relate cultural resources and users in a more effective way across the region.
- Liaise with other agencies, such as ACE, in a more effective and coherent manner therefore developing better regional opportunities.
- Work together where relevant to add weight to advocacy arguments on behalf of the region and individual boroughs.
- Review progress, membership and remit, where necessary taking action to adapt according to the changing nature of the region and partnership members.

## **Priorities:**

**Following initial meetings and consideration over the development needs for each borough, the following priorities were identified as key strategic themes for the Western Wedge to focus on:**

- **Capacity building and diversity**
- **Communication and information systems**
- **S106 and Planning (Public art)**
- **Workspaces and venues**

A mapping exercise which aims to gather data and identify each boroughs position regarding the four priorities is now required to enable the development of a three-year business plan for the partnership, identifying key areas for development and an associated action plan.