

GPS Culture Statement

GPS Culture is warmly appreciative of the seriousness with which the Select Committee has addressed the issues raised in its research reports. We attach particular importance to three of the Committee's recommendations:

1. that government has a clear responsibility to articulate its overall policy for the arts and culture. It should do so in a way that provides clear guidance on the delivery of public benefit from public funds in terms of such issues as the additionality principle to be applied to Lottery funding and the broad equity of geographic and social distribution to be achieved. These without infringing the principle of detailed artistic decisions being made at arm's length.
2. that efforts should be redoubled by Ministers and the Arts Council - at this critical time - to engage constructively and across the full range of cultural policy concerns with newly emerging combined authority and regional structures in England in terms of:
 - the economic value of the arts and culture and the case for clustered investment in cultural production to realise the national potential of the creative industries;
 - the social value of the arts and the case for widely spread investment in local facilities and programmes for practical participation in the arts, promoting the individual and community wellbeing (as per the Lottery Directions set out in 2007);
 - the maintenance of investment in the national cultural infrastructure at regional level in a consistently negotiated partnership across the country between national and more local funders.

3. that current plans for Arts Council England's investment over 2015-18, announced four months ago, fail to address the need to rebalance cultural funding between London and the other regions of England with sufficient urgency or at sufficient scale, and that a per capita limit to London's receipt of Arts Lottery funds should be introduced to facilitate address to both of these issues.

However, our study of the history of the Arts Council as an institution and our experience of interaction with it over the past twelve months, during which time it has failed to address the issues we have raised, leaves us with severe doubts as to whether it is structurally capable of addressing the recommendations for redistribution that the Select Committee has made at either the scale, or with the urgency, envisaged.

None-the-less, we will continue to be available to assist DCMS, the Arts Council, the arts and culture sector and those crafting policy in this area of interest for the next government in planning for the larger scale regional redistribution, decentralisation and devolution foreshadowed by the Select Committee's report and reflected in current debates in all political parties about future governance in England.

Parliamentary Culture Committee's Report of Inquiry into the Work of Arts Council England available here:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmcomeds/279/27902.htm>