

Draft Cultural Strategy 2018-2021



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Summary

Harrow's Draft cultural strategy outlines our vision for the borough. It details our key strategic themes, our objectives, the outputs and outcomes we aim to deliver, and the actions we will undertake to implement the strategy.

The strategic themes were developed in a series of meetings which included external stakeholders including the GLA, Harrow's Cultural Forum, Councillors, & Cross Council Departmental workshops.



Introduction

The term culture is broad and means many things to different people. Definitions include “the manifestation of human intellectual attainment”, and the “total of the shared aims and values of a group of people.”

On a more local level Harrow’s culture is influenced by social media, regional, national and international trends, the histories, faith and behaviours of our diverse communities, and our Heritage sites. Harrow like every borough, city and country comprises distinct overlapping cultures, rather than a single culture.

Our three strategic themes of Celebrate, Involve and Create were developed through workshops which included the GLA, Members and local groups. In this respect there is a focus on the creative arts, be they music, dance, drama, painting, pottery, or digital.

This strategy is ambitious in developing objectives and activities that will enable cultural and artistic activities to shape our economy, our town and district centres, address physical and mental health issues and promote social inclusion and community cohesion.



Our cultural life is shaped by our Heritage, our physical infrastructure and the daily local interactions between our residents. Those interactions may include shopping in St Ann’s Road, attending a Neighbourhood Resource Centre, relaxing on a bench in Wealdstone, visiting Canons Park, or attending a concert at Harrow Arts Centre.



As an outer London borough we have easy access to central London’s world renowned artistic and cultural provision, with the added benefit of a unique rich history, with our own distinct local artistic and cultural offer.

Harrow is unique amongst London boroughs for the global recognition associated with Harrow School. We have a strong educational culture which is reflected in high educational attainment and a successful arts provision from our schools, Further Education Colleges and the University of Westminster’s Creative, Media and Design Harrow Campus.

The creative and cultural sectors within any economy thrive on innovation and enterprise and Harrow boasts a strong entrepreneurial culture. Nearly a third of our working age residents are self employed and creative industries are a key growth sector in Harrow’s economy.

Our cultural life is shaped by our Heritage, our physical infrastructure and the daily local interactions between our residents

Harrow, however is not widely known for its arts, heritage and cultural offer. This strategy aims to raise the profile of our cultural offer, increase participation and attendance at events and support the development of the local creative and cultural economy.

The adoption and implementation of a Cultural Strategy will help promote access and involvement in cultural and artistic activities, and maximise opportunities to improve health through artistic and creative activity. The strategy will provide a mechanism to support the growth of the Creative and Cultural economic sectors in Harrow.



This strategy aims to ensure that communities have the opportunities to access and participate in cultural life and to use cultural participation as a vehicle to mitigate any adverse economic and social impacts that may arise from future automation of the economy.

At a time of continued public austerity this strategy has to be cost neutral, and ensure that planned actions are either income generating or woven into existing work streams.

The promotion and delivery of a local cultural offer will primarily reside with community and voluntary groups, individuals, businesses, faith groups and schools and colleges. Harrow

Council has an enabling role in shaping the borough's physical infrastructure, a central role in promoting participation and involvement, and a delivery role through activities at Harrow Arts Centre and Headstone Manor and Museum.

This initial draft heavily emphasises the council's role, but as the strategy evolves, its next iteration will demonstrate how as an ensemble Harrow's major stakeholders can all work together to maximise the benefit of cultural activities for our communities and businesses.

Heritage, Community, Health and Economy

Our infrastructure mirrors the heritage and modernity of London. Our key landmarks are both Norman, St Mary's Church in Harrow on the Hill and the Tower of London in Tower Hamlets.

In addition to the 11th Century St Mary's Church, Harrow boasts tourist attractions that include Bentley Priory Museum, Headquarters to Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain, Harrow-on-the-Hill, West House, and Headstone Manor and Museum celebrating 1200 years of local history and including The Great Barn once owned by Henry VIII.

Our population reflects London's diversity. We are the 2nd most diverse borough for faith and the 7th in the UK for ethnicity.

Harrow's heritage and its religious and ethnic diversity provide an opportunity to develop a strong cultural offer that appeals locally, across London and potentially to national and international visitors.



As a place, Harrow's buildings reflect both its heritage and diversity. The Norman 11th Century St Mary's Church, is now joined by temples, synagogues and mosques. Christianity is Harrow's most common religion followed by Hinduism and then Islam. Harrow has the highest Jain population, 2nd highest Zoroastrian population and 6th highest Jewish population in the UK.

This mix of faiths and places of worship is reflected in a rich religious calendar that can be celebrated in music, drama, art, poetry and prose. It provides opportunities to bring communities together through artistic activities, whether it is choirs from churches and schools singing at Christmas, Cantors from synagogues, poetry and prose readings from the Madras at the Central Mosque, dancing from Hindu temples at Holi, Sikh dancing to celebrate the birth of Guru Nanak, Bahá'í chanting, Buddhist song and Kandyan dance or Zoroastrian art.

Our communities reflect a richness of faiths and ethnicities, but the benefits of living in Harrow are not uniformly rich. The borough includes Local Super Output Areas and wards with high levels of deprivation.

Physical inactivity in Harrow has contributed to 1 in 3 adults and 21% of children over 10 years of age being obese. Harrow has one of the highest rate of Type 2 diabetes and the highest rate of pre-diabetes. Those most likely to be inactive in Harrow include women, girls, older people, black and minority ethnic groups, in work and out of work benefit claimants, carers, disabled people and people with physical and mental health issues. Physical inactivity and social isolation is also a contributory factor to dementia.

However, being active and engaged in artistic and cultural activities can improve mental and physical health and can be fun, helping address health issues, and social isolation

that affects old and young alike. Involvement in the arts can improve community cohesion (between generations, ethnicities and faiths) as we celebrate shared activities and festivals together.

There are a wealth of reports that demonstrate how the act of creating art can improve the creator's sense of worth, of how singing can aid the recovery of stroke victims and how dance can reduce the impacts of dementia.



This strategy outlines a series of objectives and actions that take on board;

- recommendations set out in The All Parliamentary Group on Art Health and Wellbeing report “Creative Health” which outlines how the arts can help people to take greater responsibility for their health,
- Harrow Council’s work with Lateral (Strategic Commissioning and Adult Social Care) to build community capacity and resilience,
- issues raised by young people on mental health, access to cultural activities and employment detailed in “This is Harrow – Understanding The Needs of Young People”.

A 2017 report commissioned by the West London Alliance outlined that 30% of jobs in west London are threatened by automation. In Harrow the figure was 28% which equates to 20,000 jobs. Parallel to this, is the ongoing threat posed by on-line shopping and e-commerce to our High Streets.

The diversity of Harrow’s economy has made it reasonably resilient to change. However, at the height of the last recession unemployment was nearly 3 times higher than present levels, rent arrears were 1.7 times higher and the number of empty shops 2.5 times higher.

As an economy, Harrow’s evolution into Metroland was built on the expansion of the underground (tube) lines, and the location of large companies employing thousands of

residents in the manufacturing sector. In many cases those businesses played a role in the provision of cultural life of their employees, running sports clubs, dances and other leisure activities.

Those major employers, Kodak, Hamilton Brushes, Winsor and Newton and Whitefriars Glass have two things in common. Firstly, they have all left Harrow. Secondly, they were all large mass manufacturing employers, that were either creative businesses or part of the creative sector's supply chain. They designed and made glassware, and manufactured photographic paper for photographers and paints and brushes for artists.

These companies may no longer operate in Harrow, their departure marked the loss of tens of thousands of jobs over a 40 year period, but they have left a legacy of industries operating in the creative sector's supply chain.

The recent growth of Harrow's digital media sector and artistic enterprises provides an opportunity to develop a Cultural Strategy to help business and social enterprises to replace redundant occupations jobs with new jobs and also to grow new jobs to replace those that are at threat from automation.

The development of our district centres records the changing nature of London, with the development of the historic areas of Harrow on the Hill and Pinner Village, to the "Metroland" suburbs of Rayners Lane and South Harrow, and to the recent housing and commercial developments in the Heart of Harrow Opportunity Area.

The fabric of Harrow's district centres and Metropolitan Town Centre, with their diverse

offer of shops, restaurants, and cafes reflects our changing population. Our district centres and town centre provide places for all communities to come together to eat, drink and celebrate our cultural life. This offer to provide places to celebrate cultural life is one way of maintaining the vitality of our shopping centres as consumers move more and more to on-line shopping.

Harrow Metropolitan Town Centre provides a venue for street entertainment, dance and music, the district centres provide spaces for local community celebrations, and both the town and district centres offer venues for exhibition space.

Harrow's local business and community groups have brought our High Streets to life (with council's support), by hosting festivals, parades and entertainment in our district centres and town centre to celebrate events in the faith and secular calendar.

Harrow Council has worked with the GLA, private developers, the HA1 Business Improvement District, and the Heritage Lottery Fund to shape the borough.



We have created:

- space for drama, dance, music and markets in St Ann's Road and Lowlands Park (at Arc House) in Harrow Town Centre,
- the borough's first affordable artists studios and gallery space at Whitefriars in Wealdstone,
- space for street entertainment and events on the Station Road corridor between Harrow Town Centre and Wealdstone,
- opportunities for artists and start ups by bringing empty shop fronts back into Meanwhile use in Wealdstone
- restored Headstone Manor and Museum creating a new visitor centre and in The Great Barn a venue for commercial and community events.



In 2018/19 the Council will be implementing ambitious designs to activate Wealdstone through the creation of a new Wealdstone Square. In tandem with this will be the creation of a new Harrow Square on College Road, followed by Lyon Square abutting the residential developments on Lyon Rd, and St John's Rd in Harrow Town Centre.

All of the above provide opportunities to host drama, dance, music and street entertainment and to excite audiences and encourage their own participation in the arts. They also bring added footfall and spend to help to continuously revitalise those centres.

Vision

Harrow's vision is to build on the opportunities provided by our heritage, diversity and economy and to *Celebrate* our cultural offer, *Involve* our communities in participating in artistic and cultural activities, and to support our communities and businesses to *Create* artistic and cultural works.

CELEBRATE

Celebrating music, drama, dance, film, crafts, fine art, through live and screened productions, exhibitions, and promote Harrow's unique heritage and venues as tourist destinations.

INVOLVE

Engaging and involving our communities in cultural and artistic pursuits, through participation and learning.
Celebrating diversity, promoting inclusion, community cohesion and improving public health.

CREATE

Providing work spaces for the creative sector, from film makers, to musicians, to fine artists, and software designers, and providing spaces for creatives and artists to showcase their work.



Celebrate



Involve



Create

Celebrate

Celebrating music, drama, dance, film, crafts, fine art, through live and screened productions, exhibitions, and promote Harrow's unique heritage and venues as tourist destinations.

Strategic objectives:

- Increased attendance at cultural and artistic events
- Foster partnerships and networking between organisations to market and promote each others activities
- Celebrate Harrow's diversity of faith, ethnicity and heritage
- Improve health and well-being through attendance at cultural and artistic events (using art as a curative tool)
- Celebrate cultural and artistic work of our schools, FE Colleges, University of Westminster's Creative, Design and Media Faculty (Harrow campus) and of Harrow's dance, music and drama groups
- Celebrate Harrow's parks, town and district centres through performance and events
- Promote and celebrate work of community and voluntary sector
- Inspire participation in the arts
- Increase number of events (music, drama, dance, music, etc)
- Increase attendance at events from across the whole of Harrow
- Deliver events that respond to market demand, are commercially sustainable and require no council subsidy
- Attract visitors to Harrow's heritage sites and our venues

Outputs:

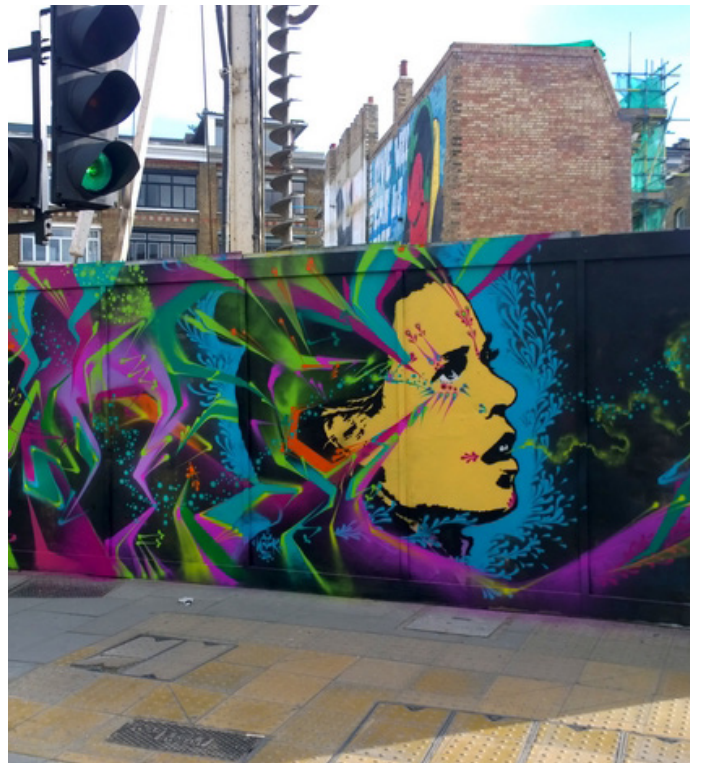
- Increased resident satisfaction levels with Harrow as a place to live (happiness and well-being generated by enjoyment of events)
- Inward investment attracting businesses and retaining businesses that wish to locate in Harrow because of its cultural offer
- Increased spend in town and district centres (holding events), and with organisations (eg HAC, Headstone Manor, West House) holding events
- Increased use of Harrow's parks and public places
- Improved sustainability of Harrow's cultural offer
- Increased attendance at Harrow Art Centre performances
- Increased library membership

Outcomes:

- Improved public health (resulting from celebration and attendance at events)
- Reduced demand on public services (resulting from improved public health)
- Improved community cohesion
- Business survival and growth, safeguarding jobs & job creation (resulting from increased spend from those attending events)

Action	Who
<p>Utilise Harrow's Homepage to build a digital platform to promote events delivered by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Faith Groups eg Christmas, Divali, Eid etc, - Private and Community & Voluntary Sector Dance, Drama and Music shows, - Harrow Arts Centre – events, dramas, shows, - Headstone Manor – events (May Day, Halloween etc), - Harrow Music Service, - Town and District Centre events (HA1 BID), Traders Groups, - Schools, FE Colleges and University. <p>Update adult social care pages to include a landing page and links to the events platform.</p>	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Recruit cultural champions to promote Harrow. Include opportunities for carers to offer respite from their caring role, to help tackle loneliness and learn new skills.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Support Cultural forum to ensure co-ordination in promotion of activities.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Promote the digital platform and provide distribution points for paper copies of advertising leaflets through libraries, Neighbourhood Resource Centres, Community Centres.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Identify how social prescribing can be used to promote attendance at music, dance, drama, art exhibitions etc to promote well-being.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.

Deliver outreach to communities to promote attendance at cultural and heritage activities through VCS, schools, faith groups.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Fast track licensing for music venues and outdoor performances.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Promote parks as venues for events and exhibitions.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Work with HA1 BID and district centre partnerships to support and promote music, dance, drama and art installations in our shopping centres.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Work with landlords to use empty shops to exhibit and celebrate art from schools and local artists.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Foster wrapping of site hoardings with art.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Work with the GLA to increase capacity of Harrow's cultural offer and the size of audience it can attract.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Work with the GLA Cultural Leadership Board to create Harrow Cultural Ambassadors.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Identify how the Individual Support Plans of adult social care clients can include a range of cultural, artistic and creative activities.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Enter into licenses with National Theatre and other well renowned theatres to bring live screened performance of nationally and globally renowned productions to Harrow Arts Centre.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Work with Visit London, London and Partners, Capital West London to promote Harrow's venues.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.



Involve

Engaging and involving our communities in cultural and artistic pursuits, through participation and learning. Celebrating diversity, promoting inclusion & community cohesion and improving public health.

Strategic objectives:

- Increase health and well-being
- Increase participation in artistic and cultural activities of all Harrow's communities, particularly from all communities not involved in activities (Local Super Output Areas and wards with the greatest level of deprivation)
- Increase participation of those with health limiting conditions and with low physical activity levels to improve health and well-being, employability, social inclusion and community cohesion
- Increase skill levels in cultural and artistic activities through learning and participation
- Engage with young people not engaged in education, employment and training and encourage pathways into Further and Higher Education
- Engage with workless residents and use cultural and artistic learning programmes to increase confidence and provide pathways to employability programmes and employment

Outputs:

- Increased participation in dance, drama, music groups, increased participation in artistic and cultural learning activities photography, pottery, painting, book groups (add to list)
- Progression (where relevant) into employment programmes

Outcomes:

- Improved health and well-being
- Reduced demand on public services (NHS, adult social care, homelessness)
- Improved community cohesion
- Reduced social isolation
- Increased skill levels
- Improving employability and reducing unemployment levels
- Improved productivity

Action	Who
Provide space for hire to support voluntary and community sector groups, and private providers to deliver learning and participation in art, dance, music, and drama. Including traditional venues but also Neighbourhood Resource Centres.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Secure additional external funding to improve & increase capacity to deliver learning and participation in arts and cultural activities.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Enhance the infrastructure in parks and public spaces to encourage the use of parks, and public spaces to inspire and empower our community to celebrate the arts and to get active and improve physical, mental health and well-being.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Develop referral routes from Adult Social Care into appropriate cultural activities. Use community hubs to complement digital information.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Work with Clinical Commissioning & Social Prescribing Network to incorporate arts into commissioning plans.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Integrate Health and Well-being and Cultural Activities into Learn Harrow commissioning.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Use social prescribing to artistic and cultural activities to address workplace stress.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Commission delivery of dance, singing, music lessons and activities in care homes.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Promote Harrow's libraries as vehicles for story telling, readings and cultural activity. Develop and promote the library service's digital offer and invest in the new Harrow Town Centre library as a key for cultural activities in the Town Centre.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Involve Residents in the commissioning, creation and selection of Public Art funded through Section 106.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.

Create

Providing work spaces for the creative sector, from film makers, to musicians, to fine artists, and software designers, and providing spaces for creatives and artists to showcase their work.

Strategic objectives:

- Secure & deliver affordable workspace
- Attract cultural, artistic and creative businesses to Harrow
- Create opportunities for creative industries sector development
- Develop career pathways into the creative industries – particularly among local marginalised communities

Outputs:

- Increased workspace
- Growth of Creative Clusters
- Increased business start up and growth,
- Increased productivity (business locating in Harrow)
- Inward investment

Outcomes:

- Business Growth and Job Creation
- Increased Business Rate Base and Opportunity for the council to invest in activities to support our residents
- Increased satisfaction with Harrow as a place to live and work



Action	Who
Develop and implement planning policies to protect existing artistic and creative workspace and develop new workspace (including incubation space).	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Work with developers to identify and develop appropriate sites for artistic and creative sector.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Bid for capital funds to provide space and capital equipment for the creative sector.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Promote Harrow as a location for creative businesses forced out of Central London.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Foster and develop networks and supply chains between businesses.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Foster and develop opportunities for knowledge transfer and business to business mentoring within the sector.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Develop and implement links between schools, careers service, Harrow's FE Colleges and University of Westminster to deliver specialist career fairs, work experience, and employment for students and young people. Link NRC's and VCS to tap into talent pools to produce content (photography, videography, printing by Wiseworks).	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Bid for external funding to deliver specialist business development support to help freelance / self employed creatives to secure contracts and micro businesses to scale up.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.
Work with the University of Westminster to find a location for their Menswear Archive and associated incubator units for creative businesses A Menswear Fashion Hub.	Council and stakeholders identified through consultation.

Conclusion

Every week there is an artistic and cultural activity being delivered somewhere in Harrow, but it can be difficult to know what is happening and that difficulty is compounded if you are vulnerable and not aware of those activities.

This strategy addresses, (amongst other things) how Harrow can reduce health inequality through participation and celebration of cultural pursuits and also improve economic inclusion by supporting the growth of the creative economy.

It is difficult to second guess the impact of automation on society. It is easier to anticipate that automation and rising unemployment or the threat of unemployment can generate adverse mental and physical health impacts on people. The provision of a strong local cultural offer can help provide meaningful activities to address the potential adverse health impacts of automation.

The Strategy sets a series of agreed actions to deliver our themes of:

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