

LARC

Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium

LARC

Our Vision

and Values

2011 - 2014

What is LARC?

Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium (LARC) was established in 2007 to foster a new approach to arts in the city. LARC works with the city government and agencies in new ways and to an unprecedented degree, sharing programming, resources, ambitions and staff and mobilising a wide range of other players. Its first job was to lead the programming of the European Capital of Culture 2008, ensuring world-class events in this pivotal year. LARC was awarded funding from the Arts Council England through the Thrive programme to extend its thinking and practice on how collaborative work could benefit Liverpool and serve as a national model. This led to some innovative programmes, including Creative Apprenticeships (now being rolled out nationally), a major research programme with Impacts 08, and the Find Your Talent pilot that extended our reach in the city-region.

LARC has also supported the development and delivery of joint and collaborative programming, including the Long Night, the 2010 Black Atlantic season and in 2011, the Year of Radicals; it has acted as an advocate for the arts sector and the City on the national stage and worked closely with a range of partner organisations to support the continued regeneration of North Liverpool. As LARC partners we recognise that the strength and impact of our collaborative work has to be built on the quality and reputation of the individual organisations that form part of LARC – the strength of our partnerships depends on the ability of the individual organisations to deliver an arts and cultural offer of national and international quality and reach.

The vision set out below, developed in partnership with the City Council, will inform the LARC business plan for 2011 – 2014 and will provide a rationale to support the decisions we take about future business focus and programme delivery. We know that this vision for the sector and the City is not ours alone, but is one that will be supported by a wide range of stakeholders and partners working within the arts, culture and heritage sectors and in economic development, education, tourism, inward investment and health and wellbeing.

Context

The LARC members acknowledge that the context within which we work and deliver our services will change significantly over the next five to ten years. Some of this change will be driven by policy - including a greater emphasis on the private sector involvement with arts culture and heritage - and some of it by wider factors.

Globalisation will affect us all, particularly the rise in wealth and influence of countries such as China, India and Brazil, creating a global shift of economic power away from Europe and the UK. Technology will continue to alter the way people receive information, increase their knowledge, do their jobs and network with others for business and pleasure. Inequalities are likely to persist in our society, particularly in the short term, impacting upon people's health and well-being. We will, as a society, have to develop a less consuming lifestyle, people will generally be more discriminating about the choices they make and how they spend their money and "happiness" may become increasingly important in how we choose to lead our lives.

These changes to our society will impact on individuals, communities and upon our institutions and businesses. Arts, cultural and heritage will feel the impact of these changes. They will affect artists, audiences, and participants, those who manage the arts, those who create arts policy, those who fund the arts and those businesses and individuals who benefit from arts activity

The arts provide meaningful experiences and help us to lead more fulfilling and satisfied lives. In the past during times of change or challenge, the arts have been critical in providing a means for people to express themselves, to tell stories about their lives and to engage with creative practice. Artists have frequently found their greatest inspiration when times are tough and the new opportunities provided by technology, social networking and promotion/marketing mean that for this generation of artists their inspiration could engage with many more people in new and exciting ways.

Our Vision

Liverpool is a place where great art gets made, delivered and consumed. It is a place that connects people through its astonishing history as a creative city with world class cultural assets and as a port with spectacular architecture and monuments. A place where everyone who lives or visits has the opportunity to enjoy, take part in, and create the city's culture.

Arts, culture and heritage organisations have led and shaped Liverpool's renaissance: we have built on the success of European Capital of Culture in 2008 and expanded our vision for a creative city.

Building on the success of 2008, we have:

- a strong infrastructure of internationally recognised cultural organisations
- a growing and diverse ecology of small and medium cultural organisations and individual artists who have been encouraged and nurtured, creating new work in Liverpool and around the country
- a sophisticated recognition by the City Council, the main tourism and economic development agencies, the city's health sector, universities, colleges and the business community, of the critical importance of a vibrant cultural sector to the city's economic and social prosperity
- an acknowledgement by the major arts and cultural organisations of their vital role in helping deliver the city's wider social and economic success.

LARC recognises that the arts should be a frontline service providing people with transformational experiences that will help them to see and live their lives differently. Our rich heritage and culture and our unique arts offer can lead communities from crisis to a more holistic way of being and build trust through a common creative experience.

LARC believes that arts, culture and heritage organisations have a significant role to play in tackling the economic and social challenges that exist in many of our large towns and cities – they shape the identity of cities, provide direct and indirect employment and generate income for our communities. In difficult times and in an increasingly competitive world the places that will prosper and become desired locations in which to work, live, play, study and invest are those that can demonstrate a unique combination of 'hard' and 'soft' factors: combining a robust economic argument with a sense of place, quality of life, creative and cultural opportunities. LARC appreciates this, and by working collaboratively will rise and respond to this wider, shared challenge

During this period of change LARC recognises it must concentrate its resources in those areas that engage people in and with the arts. We will work collectively to maximise the economic and social benefit of our joint public investment. This will mean a radical review of our services to find new ways that these can be delivered more efficiently through a collaborative approach. It will mean collegiate working and greater innovation in our programmes, sharing our work with the city and the city-region, deepening our relationships with other partners and intensifying our support for artists and organisations at all stages of their development. This will not mean the loss of individual identity or purpose for the arts institutions, but a more exciting, dynamic and collegiate approach to delivering our business.

This is a new recipe for how arts, culture and heritage can animate a city and its communities. It is about the way we work with each other, and the city-region. It is about the scale of our ambition, influence and reach that will set us apart from other cities.

It is about creating new ways of working that bring great art to Liverpool and connect creative producers and institutions with audiences and social networks to develop and make visible the potential and talent that already exists

It's about maximising the social and economic impact of Liverpool's remarkable cultural and heritage assets, and the major organisations delivering to their individual and collective strengths, including outstanding international programmes and linking these to local communities and visitors to the city in a strong, collaborative partnership with the City Council and others.

When you go to Liverpool what do you see?

Our vision for the future is for a city in which you see:

- truly great art in a diverse range of professionally-run institutions, that manage and deliver collections and programmes that compare and compete on the national and international stage.
- the major arts organisations in the city working closely together and with other partners in a truly integrated and collegiate way – making the most of their unique individual strengths, and creating added value through this intense collaboration.
- a quality of art being created and presented which has reach and impact locally, and internationally.
- a shared vision for regeneration between the cultural organisations and the City Council that recognises the contribution an ambitious cultural infrastructure can offer the City's image and economic position. You see arts and culture embedded in every community, in every school and an arts and cultural sector that is shaped and owned by the diverse range of communities that it serves.
- a groundswell of diverse local networks of artistic endeavour in an environment where people can create new work, and in which innovative, cultural organisations can prosper.
- activity that is stimulated by the presence of the institutions, working creatively in the city with local people, schools, universities, hospitals, voluntary groups, the old and the young.

Why is it worth doing?

We have proved art can make a difference to individuals, communities and the economy. We know we can help to remove some of the inequalities in our society. Our astonishing cultural and heritage assets - both human and built - can contribute to making life better by creating enjoyment, greater self awareness, trust and dialogue between people and generating significant economic and commercial return.

Our vision is about creating good art and it is about excellence. It is about people feeling they deserve and are offered the very best; there are no half measures in our offer. That's one reason why it is so vital to have the arts institutions bringing to, and creating in, Liverpool top class work, talent and ideas and to have the very best artists working in our city.

We will be innovative about demonstrating how we make a difference and will pioneer new methods to measure our impact, marrying quantitative and qualitative data and looking at the wider social return on investment.

LARC – Our Commitment

When LARC met to create a new plan for 2011 onwards, we wanted to build on the success of the last few years with a new offer to the city, its people, its visitors, and to government. We wanted to build something that would maintain the creative momentum in the city-region during the difficult times we are facing. And we wanted to fulfil our role as leading players in the provision of UK's core cultural experiences.

We decided to make the most of our resources as organisations delivering frontline services and to extend our reach in the city-region to as many people as possible. We agreed to manage this by creating a structure to support our joint working and by building on the impact of our major artistic programmes and our significant outreach initiatives, to engage people in creative and artistic projects, working closely with both local and international artists.

As we develop our work we will identify new forms of production and delivery and ensure a high quality experience for everyone. We will continue to be internationally recognised, independent organisations, whilst planning our individual and collaborative work to ensure maximum benefit across the city-region.

We will do this with others by sharing knowledge, skills and experience. We will share delivery with the City Council supporting its ambitions for the people of Liverpool, its businesses, and its visitors and importantly, with the diverse range of smaller arts organisations that are essential to maintaining our innovative offer in this vibrant city. We will promote the Liverpool brand encouraging tourists to experience our arts programmes. It is a new way to deliver culture in cities. It will be done through great leadership, long term partnership, inspired programming and creatively shared services: it's starting in Liverpool and to achieve this we are making the following commitments:

We will accept our leadership responsibility. We will work collaboratively to enable and support the diverse range of arts and cultural organisations and activities that exist in the City-region as well as programming the very best in international culture.

We will implement new models of partnership engagement to ensure both the sustainability of the sector and to grow and develop our future practitioners and audiences.

The quality, scope and coherence of the arts, heritage and cultural offer are at the core of the LARC aspiration. We will continue to work together, and in partnership with others, to develop new ways of realising the programming, funding and delivery of an arts and cultural offer of national and international quality and reach.

We will build on our collaboration to date and develop new mechanisms for working together in order to engage even more effectively with our communities. We will ensure that all of our audiences are engaged with and benefit from our expertise and excellence by exploring a collaborative and coherent learning and participation offer.

Together, we will assess how we currently do business and explore how we can do things differently and more efficiently so that we can prioritise our investments by putting more resources into our arts and heritage programmes that are critical to the continued regeneration of the city of Liverpool and the city-region.

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