



Commission on Culture and Local Government: Short call for submissions

Over the past three months, the Commission on Culture and Local Government has been collecting case studies and evidence to inform its findings. We have established a strong narrative on the role culture can play in our national recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and your contributions have been important in building this picture.

We are now beginning the process of writing up our findings and making recommendations and we would like to call on the combined expertise of the advisory group and local authority culture leads once again.

Specifically, we would like to ensure we are bringing in a range of voices in helping us to shape the recommendations of the Commission.

Please respond to the following questions using the template below:

1. The Commission is exploring the role of culture in supporting four themes: sustainable economic recovery, health inequalities, social mobility and place/civic pride. What will be **most important** in allowing your organisation (or the organisations you represent) to deliver against each of these four themes in the next five years?
2. What are the top recommendations you would like to see the Commission making to support this work and why? Please provide no more than three suggestions per theme.

Responses should be kept as succinct as possible within the format of the template, but if we need further details, we will follow up with you separately.

You do not need to fill out all sections of the template below. Please note the word limit. If you are a membership body we would appreciate a single response if possible, rather than separate submissions from member organisations.

Our recommendations can address all levels of government, other public authorities and cultural organisations themselves.

The deadline for submission is Friday 12 August.



1. A sustainable and inclusive economic recovery (word limit 300 words)

To stimulate a sustainable and inclusive economic recovery it is vital that music workers have places that they are able to create and perform music, both recorded and live. Small music spaces are particularly important to stimulating careers and bringing communities together. Our research shows that even a 100 person venue event can generate almost £50,000 and stimulate local retail, transport and hospitality.¹

A key cost that Local Authorities can help reduce is Business Rates to stimulate these businesses. Rising property prices have seen Business Rates spiral in recent years for music venues and studios as they are often in valuable locations with large floorspaces. In the 2017 Business Rates revaluation one music venue saw their rates rise by 800%.² Furthermore, it takes money out of music businesses and prevents it being invested in putting on more local performances, improving the venue and improving financial resilience.

We have seen some action on this point with the UK Government delivering funding for a 50% rates discount for some venues (but not studios).³ However, this is potentially temporary and eases but does not eliminate the issue.

We would welcome action to eliminate Business Rates on music spaces (both venues and studios), this could take the form of 100% rate relief for music spaces which are run on a not-for-profit basis, thereby providing a route to full relief for key community and grassroots spaces, Westminster City Council launched a similar scheme last year.⁴

It is also important that Authorities work with local music spaces to signpost support that can help make them more ecologically sustainable (e.g. Shared Prosperity Fund bids), such as energy efficiency programmes or local renewable energy generation.

¹ <https://www.ukmusic.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/This-is-Music-2021-v2.pdf> p.37

² <https://www.ukmusic.org/research-reports/securing-our-talent-pipeline/>

³ <https://www.basildon.gov.uk/article/7996/2022-23-Retail-Hospitality-and-Leisure-Relief-Scheme#:~:text=Budget%202021&text=The%202022%2F23%20Retail%2C%20Hospitality,of%20%C2%A3110%2C000%20per%20business.>

⁴ <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/news/council-acts-secure-future-iconic-soho-music>



2. Health inequalities (word limit 300 words)

Music can help reduce health inequalities in local communities by being an effective and cost-efficient treatment for a number of medical conditions, in particular dementia. Music can also bring people together through choirs or music-based local groups, which can help reduce social isolation and increase mental well-being.

UK Music's 2021 This is Music report found that 57% of people said music has helped them cope with lockdown and 59% said music has helped their mental health and wellbeing.⁵ Earlier this year, analysis published in the Journal of the American Medical Association Network Open, confirmed "music interventions are linked to meaningful improvements in wellbeing", as their review of 26 studies finds benefits of music on mental health are similar to those of exercise and weight loss.⁶ This includes both active participation (e.g. playing music, singing and dancing) and passive participation (e.g. listening to music). Music therapy reduces agitation and the need for medication in 67% of people with dementia, significantly reducing the spend on anti-psychotic medication.⁷

UK Music, together with Music for Dementia, are calling for the appointment of the UK's first Power of Music Commissioner to champion and coordinate all the work in this area. This includes setting up a new Government taskforce and a Life with Music Consortium to spearhead positive change. We would welcome LGA support for this work. We are also campaigning for a major public awareness campaign to show how the power of music can change lives, supported by a new online information platform, development of which is being led by Universal Music UK. In the future we want better support for frontline workers by providing training on the role of music in health and care and extra funding to help make music accessible to all.

3. Social mobility through cultural education and creative skills (word limit 300 words)

To deliver social mobility through creative skills opportunities it is key that access to music education is universal, but also that those who want to take their skills to a higher technical level have the tools to do so. In both Wales and Scotland we have seen moves from the devolved administrations to eliminate the costs for music tuition for pupils in the lowest income brackets (or universally in the case of Scotland) being provided by Local Authorities.⁸ Therefore, where Local Authorities are still providing

⁵ [This Is Music 2021 - UK Music](#)

⁶ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2790186>

⁷ Hegarty, S, (2012). Adult and Community Learning Fund Forecast of Social Return on Investment of Silver Lining at The Sage Gateshead

⁸ <https://gov.wales/national-plan-music-education>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-57834581>



music instrument tuition we would welcome steps to make tuition and access to instruments free for all those on Free School Meals.

One way access could be increased, particularly to specialist kit is by pooling “libraries” of instruments across Local Authority boundaries.

There should also be ongoing discussions with local schools, Music Hubs and music businesses on how to get access for further education students to industry level equipment to allow practical opportunities for developing skills e.g. allowing students to stage a performance in a local venue, to give experience of operating a sound board in a live setting. This is particularly important given the increasing emphasis by the UK Government on vocational qualifications, and the kind of technical skills the industry needs, particularly given changes in the job market triggered by the UK's exit from the European Union.

4. Place (word limit 300 words)

Music can help create a sense of place, our songs are our stories and live performances build connections, both between people and with spaces in their area. It also creates the kind of vibrant local life that can incentivise people to move to an area and stay. A survey by Arts Council England found that a local area's cultural offering was important to people choosing to stay on.⁹ A further survey we ran last year found that 61% of people think that music is important to their local community.¹⁰

To stimulate this sense of music place we would suggest that more Local Authorities look at creating a Music Board to help set strategies for improving not only the music scene, but also music education, local understanding of music heritage and ensuring that music is understood to be part of the brand of an area. This has worked very well in Liverpool, whose City Region has set up a Music Board.¹¹ This can also help link the local music scene with programming opportunities from Local Authorities and ensure such programming reflect local needs and influences.

To preserve a sense of place it is also important that local planning rules and guidelines protect music venues. UK Music successfully campaigned for the inclusion of the Agent of Change principle in the National Planning Framework.¹²

⁹ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Value%20of%20Arts%20and%20Culture%20in%20Place-Shaping.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.ukmusic.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/This-is-Music-2021-v2.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.lcrmusicboard.co.uk/>

<https://www.nme.com/news/music/nme-350-1203309>

¹² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf p. 54



This is the idea that new developments have a responsibility to adapt to existing users of an area. For instance, new housing developments have a responsibility to soundproof their residencies rather than relying on pre-existing music venues soundproofing themselves to prevent a nuisance to people who knew they were moving in next to the music venue.¹³ It would be welcome for Local Authorities to work the Agent of Change principle into their own local development plans and housing strategies to ensure that the needs of our music spaces and music people are considered.

5. Overarching responses, not specific to any of the four themes (word limit 300 words)

Overall, we would also welcome a shift in terms of local government valuing music as a part of our communities rather than an external force or an issue to be managed. Music workers and music spaces are part of a great British tradition but one that needs support and a sympathetic ear from local government if it is to thrive.

Part of this should be accepting that in the words of the Welsh Government: “A *healthy acoustic environment is more than simply the absence of unwanted sound*” and that the need for quiet must be balanced by the need for expression and while avoiding nuisance sounds, we should accept and expect that a certain level of noise is healthy in a town or urban setting.¹⁴

Another part is reaching out to local music spaces and working with owners to open them up to the community where possible. For example, in July 2022 the Independent Venue Community worked with venues to put on a range of community programming in small venues during the day with a specific aim to reach out to “early years; young people; the deaf, disabled and neurodivergent; mental health and wellbeing; LGBTQIA+, and older years”.¹⁵ We would therefore welcome any work the LGA can do in encouraging Local Authorities to reach out to these kind of schemes.

Partnerships between music and Local Authorities can reap great dividends for both sides, for example a series of Ed Sheeran concerts in Ipswich were put on with support from the Local Authority and this provided not only incredible experiences for local people, it also was worth £9 million to the local economy or £58.44 per head.¹⁶

¹³ <https://www.nme.com/news/music/various-artists-4327-1303870#:~:text=Cardiff%20music%20venue%20The%20Point,Danger%20Mouse%20and%20The%20Bluetones.>

¹⁴ <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/noise-and-soundscape-action-plan.pdf> p. 1

¹⁵ <https://www.rollingstone.co.uk/music/news/initiative-launched-to-encourage-new-audiences-to-visit-grassroots-venues-20464/>

¹⁶ <https://www.ipswichstar.co.uk/news/ed-sheeran-ipswich-concerts-economic-impact-2883010>



Working together we can achieve so much more than we do alone.

Your details

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Would you be happy for your comments to be attributed to you in the final report of the Commission? We will seek approval for any attributed quotes with you before publication. Y

For more information about the Commission on Culture and Local Government, please [visit our website](#) or contact lauren.lucas@local.gov.uk



Annex

UK Music's membership comprises: -

- AIM – The Association of Independent Music– the trade body for the independent music community, representing 1000+ independent record labels and associated businesses, from globally recognised brands to the next generation of British music entrepreneurs.
- BPI - The British Phonographic Industry - The representative voice of the UK's recorded music sector. Their membership consists of approximately 500 music companies, ranging from hundreds of SME independent labels to the major global record companies Universal, Sony and Warner. They also organise the BRIT Awards, the Mercury Prize and administer the Music Exports Growth Scheme (MEGS).
- FAC – The Featured Artists Coalition - UK trade body representing the specific rights and interests of music artists. A not-for-profit organisation, they represent a diverse, global membership of creators at all stages of their careers and provide a strong, collective voice for artists.
- The Ivors Academy - An independent association representing professional songwriters and composers. As champions of music creators for over 70 years, the organisation works to support, protect and celebrate music creators including its internationally respected Ivors Awards.
- MMF – Music Managers Forum - representing over 1000 UK managers of artists, songwriters and producers across the music industry with global businesses.
- MPG - Music Producers Guild - representing and promoting the interests of all those involved in the production of recorded music – including music studios, producers, engineers, mixers, remixers, programmers and mastering engineers.
- MPA - Music Publishers Association - with 260 major and independent music publishers in membership, representing close to 4,000 catalogues across all genres of music.
- Musicians' Union - Representing over 32,000 musicians from all genres, both featured and non-featured.
- PPL licenses recorded music in the UK when it is played in public or broadcast and ensures that revenue flows back to our members. These include independent and major record companies, together with performers ranging from emerging musicians to globally renowned artists. In 2021 we collected £252.8 million while also distributing money to 147,000 performers and recording rightsholders.
- PRS for Music is responsible for the collective licensing of rights in the musical works of 150,000 composers, songwriters and publishers and an international repertoire of 28 million songs.
- UK Music also has an informal association with LIVE (Live music Industry Venues & Entertainment), the voice of the UK's live music and entertainment business. LIVE members are a federation of 13 live music industry associations representing 3,150 businesses, over 4,000 artists and 2,000 backstage workers.