

Appendix 2: The Role of Schools and Young People within the Culture Strategy

1. Purpose

During recent presentations of the Culture Strategy (2026–31) at CMT, stakeholders requested clearer articulation of:

- How schools are involved in delivering the strategy, and
- How opportunities for children and young people are being coordinated, particularly through the Vi-Brent Place Partnership and the Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP).

This appendix sets out the proposed governance model for meaningful, structured and long-term involvement of young people in Brent’s cultural decision-making. The model ensures young people have a formally recognised role in shaping cultural priorities, delivery, investment and evaluation in line with the Brent Culture Strategy’s commitments.

2. Our Strategic Aim for Schools and Young People

Culture is a core enabler of education, aspiration, wellbeing and skills development. Through Vi-Brent and the LCEP, the Council aims to ensure that:

2.1 Every child and young person in Brent has access to high-quality, meaningful cultural opportunities

This includes:

- Early years and primary arts engagement (e.g., the Cultural Backpack, Young People’s Festival)
- Curriculum-aligned activity and teacher CPD
- Creative pathways for 11–25-year-olds, including training, mentoring, skills bootcamps and paid work placements in the cultural and creative industries

2.2 Schools are active decision-makers, not passive recipients

Our approach ensures that cultural opportunities are co-shaped with schools, not imposed on them. Schools select the offers most relevant to their pupils, and through representation in governance structures they influence the wider design of cultural provision.

2.3 We remove long-standing structural barriers to engagement

The programmes explicitly target:

- Economically disadvantaged pupils
- Pupils with SEND and those in PRUs
- Schools currently underserved by cultural offers or with lower levels of arts engagement
- Young people needing clear routes into creative careers, paid placements and industry exposure

2.4 Cultural learning and careers guidance is embedded across the borough

By working through the LCEP, Vi-Brent directly supports Brent's Borough Plan goals relating to The Best Start in Life, raising aspirations, and widening participation in skills and employment pathways.

3. How This Work is Coordinated: The Role of the LCEP Manager

The LCEP Manager, based at Young Brent Foundation, is the central coordinating role bringing schools, cultural organisations, council departments and young people together. Analysis of the LCEP Steering Group minutes and the Vi-Brent delivery plan shows that Lashay leads or co-leads work across five domains:

3.1 School Engagement and Outreach Lead

The LCEP Manager directly:

- Introduces the LCEP to headteachers and senior leaders (e.g., through Headteachers' Meetings)
- Conducts targeted outreach to under-engaged and hard-to-reach schools
- Coordinates school representatives from primary, secondary and special schools to sit on the LCEP Steering Group
- Works with School Effectiveness teams to align messaging and ensure schools receive timely information

This ensures consistent access to schools and avoids duplication of approaches from multiple cultural partners.

3.2 Governance and Programme Oversight

The LCEP Manager:

- Chairs or co-ordinates the multi-agency LCEP Steering Group, which includes representatives from Brent Music Service, School Improvement, Education Partnerships, Brent Culture Service, and major cultural delivery partners
- Produces action logs, circulates documents, and ensures partners progress agreed tasks
- Monitors delivery of the Cultural Backpack, Young People's Festival, and school-based projects alongside Vi-Brent partners

The LCEP Manager ensures Vi-Brent's activity is aligned with:

- The new Brent Cultural Strategy 2026–31
- The Borough Plan (particularly education, inclusion, wellbeing)
- The SEND Strategy and Youth Strategy
- National frameworks for cultural education (e.g., Arts Council England's Let's Create)

Their role guarantees that school- and youth-facing cultural provision contributes directly to borough-wide objectives.

3.4 Embedding Youth Voice and Community Representation

The LCEP Manager oversees the development of meaningful youth voice structures, using:

- Brent Youth Parliament
- Faith-based CYP groups (identified as a gap through LCEP data and discussions)
- Partner organisations with existing relationships with young people in non-formal settings

Their governance approach ensures decisions are not only multi-agency but co-shaped by young people themselves.

3.5 Mapping Need and Targeting Resources

Through the LCEP, the LCEP Manager coordinates:

- Cultural mapping of schools – identifying which schools are underserved, where gaps or inequities exist, and where targeted offers are required
- Use of demographic, deprivation and participation data to prioritise resources (building on the extensive needs analysis within the Vi-Brent application)

- The creation of an “opportunity log” to link school needs with partner capacity and future funding opportunities

4. How Schools Are Involved in Vi-Brent Delivery

4.1 Cultural Backpack Programme

Schools receive free access to:

- At least one cultural visit or workshop per term
- Teacher CPD
- Bespoke programme choices determined by the school—especially for pupils less likely to engage in the arts

4.2 Young People’s Festival

Up to 4,000 primary pupils will create and present work, with a community audience of around 5,000. This is led with school arts leads and teachers in partnership with Fresh Arts and RPO.

4.3 Secondary School Strategy and Careers Pathways

Schools benefit from:

- Creative skills bootcamps
- Mentoring for 16–25 year olds
- Paid work placements
- Careers events, showcases and industry links

These respond directly to gaps identified in Brent’s evidence-base around creative careers awareness and access for young people.

4.4 Teacher Networks and CPD

A borough-wide Teacher Arts Network is being re-established, with a focus on sustainability and workforce development, prioritising arts leads in schools. This was a specific LCEP action led by the LCEP Manager and council colleagues.

5. Council Involvement and Oversight

Council officers from:

- Education Improvement Service
- Brent Music Service
- Children & Young People's Department (Employment & Skills)
- Brent Culture Service

sit on the LCEP Steering Group, ensuring decisions, resources and opportunities are joined-up and structurally embedded across Council departments.

This strengthens safeguarding, quality assurance, accountability, monitoring, and alignment with borough priorities.

6. Summary: Why the LCEP Manager is Integral

Across all evidence reviewed, the LCEP Manager is the linchpin ensuring that:

- Schools' voices shape programme development
- Cultural offers reach those children who need them most
- Delivery partners work in a coordinated, not fragmented, way
- Decision-making is inclusive of education, culture, youth and community perspectives
- Governance structures are maintained and effective
- Young people's progression pathways—from first engagement to creative careers—are coherent, equitable and strategically aligned

Without this role, the risk of duplication, inconsistency, and inequitable access across schools would be significantly higher.