

# Creative People and Places: Barking and Dagenham

## Critical friend brief

### About Barking and Dagenham Creative People and Places

Barking and Dagenham's Creative People and Places programme aims to create long term change in levels of arts participation in the borough, with a demonstrable effect on community cohesion, wellbeing and the capacity of the local arts sector, and a transformational impact on the reputation of the borough as a cultural destination.

The programme will be driven by the knowledge, skills and aspirations of the people living here. It will be rooted in a place-based approach, which builds on the areas unique geography, history and cultures to open up opportunities for everyone to access and participate in great art at places and in ways that are relevant to them.

The place-based approach is of particular importance for Barking and Dagenham as the area scores very low on the National N1 indicator of *"the percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood"*. (Local Government network Report, 2010.) In addition, in 2011 the local authority's Residents Survey found that only 52% of people believed that the borough was a place where "people from different backgrounds get on well together".

This highlights the need to find ways to connect people in and with their local environment as part of any programme to increase arts participation and engagement.

A key focus for the programme is to support and complement the borough's ambitious regeneration plans for Barking and Dagenham, through engaging local communities with the widespread and rapid changes taking place in the local landscape. The Thames Gateway, of which Barking and Dagenham forms the heart, is the largest regeneration area in Europe, and in the next 20 years, Barking and Dagenham will undergo its biggest transformation since the borough was first industrialised and urbanised

## **The purpose of the critical friend**

The 'Critical friend' will assist B&D CPP to identify how best to gather evidence and report on the work of the consortium (the context in which it was carried out and achievements) as well as help to meet the requirements of the programme evaluation. All CPP area will have a critical friend – as this is a requirement of Arts Council funded for this programme. The critical friend will be expected to build in time for networking with other critical friends from across the country (online and through occasional meetings).

## **The critical friend role**

In generic terms, a critical friend provides an independent view of an organisation, programme, project or process and prompts honest reflection and appraisal (or reappraisal) by those involved. A critical friend does this by:

- asking provocative questions;
- providing additional data, evidence or lessons from elsewhere that offer a different perspective; and
- critiquing processes and/or reports.

A critical friend in this context will:

- Provide advice and guidance on how to capture and report evidence of practice and impact;
- Act as a broker for knowledge and learning on evaluation methods and on public engagement in the arts;
- Signpost to useful tools, techniques and approaches for gathering and reporting evidence on practice and impact;
- Assist to produce accurate monitoring returns and excellent annual and final evaluation reports by providing critiques of draft monitoring returns and reports;
- Quality assure research methods and tools used as part of project evaluations; and
- Quality assure project evaluation reports.

## **What we are looking for in a critical friend**

A critical friend would be expected to:

- be open and honest;
- remain external to the project (eg a critical friend should not be part of a project's governance arrangements or be involved in delivering any aspects of the project);

- build and maintain a relationship of trust with the project (in particular the person/s responsible for producing monitoring returns and evaluation reports, which is likely to be the project manager);
- bring knowledge and understating of process and impact evaluations, partnership working and public engagement in the arts and/or decision-making processes;
- support projects to become self-sufficient with respect to evaluation needs over time, so that by the end of the third year projects should be able to carry out self-evaluations unaided;
- assist projects capture and share lessons from their work; and
- operate as part of a team at programme and project level.

### **Core requirements/deliverables**

To provide for Barking and Dagenham CPP:

- advice and guidance on how to capture and report evidence of practice and impact;
- signposting to relevant research on public engagement in the arts and research tools and methods that they can apply at the local level;
- review, critique and quality assure all monitoring returns and final drafts of annual and final evaluation reports;

### **Tasks will include**

Observation of at least one:

- partnership/board meeting,
- event to promote public influence over arts provision in the area, and
- event to engage the public in the arts organised by the project;

Production of a report reviewing the critical friend process once a year

The critical friend role is being overseen by the Arts Council nationally and it is recommended that the role of the critical friend translates to around 12 days freelance work per year. Barking and Dagenham CPP has budgeted around £10,000 for three years for this position.

### **Management and evaluation**

The Critical Friend will be managed by the Programme Director for Barking and Dagenham CPP.

B&D CPP is run by the Programme Director and the Arts and Community Engagement Director who report to a core management team made up of:

- Studio 3 Arts (named lead organisation for CPP)
- London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

- A New Direction
- Collective Voice
- Arc Theatre

Studio 3 Arts (S3A) is the lead agency for the CPP programme and is accountable to the Arts Council England for the successful delivery of the outcomes agreed in the business plan.

The role of the Management Board is to provide strategic direction, leadership and support to S3A to successfully deliver the CPP outcomes as set out in the adopted business plan. The Management Board is an unincorporated association.

The Management Board has oversight of all monitoring and evaluation for CPP at a strategic level.

In addition to the critical friend role Barking and Dagenham CPP will be appointing a consultancy or freelancer to devise an evaluation framework for the programme and assist with monitoring against the framework. The Critical friend will be expected to work alongside this activity as appropriate.

The evaluation framework is focussed on devising a clear narrative for the Programme which will inform delivery and monitoring processes. The Critical Friend is focussed on supporting B&D CPP to be able to make credible and timely returns (in respect of monitoring) both to the CPP Management Board and the Arts Council.

### **How to respond to this brief**

Please contact Holly Donagh or Miriam Nelken with any question about the brief in advance.

We will be interviewing a short list of agencies in the second week of September.

To apply for this work please send a short paper to Holly Donagh outlining:-

- Your approach to the brief
- Your experience of evaluation – evidence of past projects – and understanding of the cultural sector
- Credentials for any staff to be assigned to the project
- An outline budget
- Past clients or references you would be happy for us to contact before confirming any appointment (this would be after interview)

**Please send this paper by**

**9am September 3 2013**

**Contact details**

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