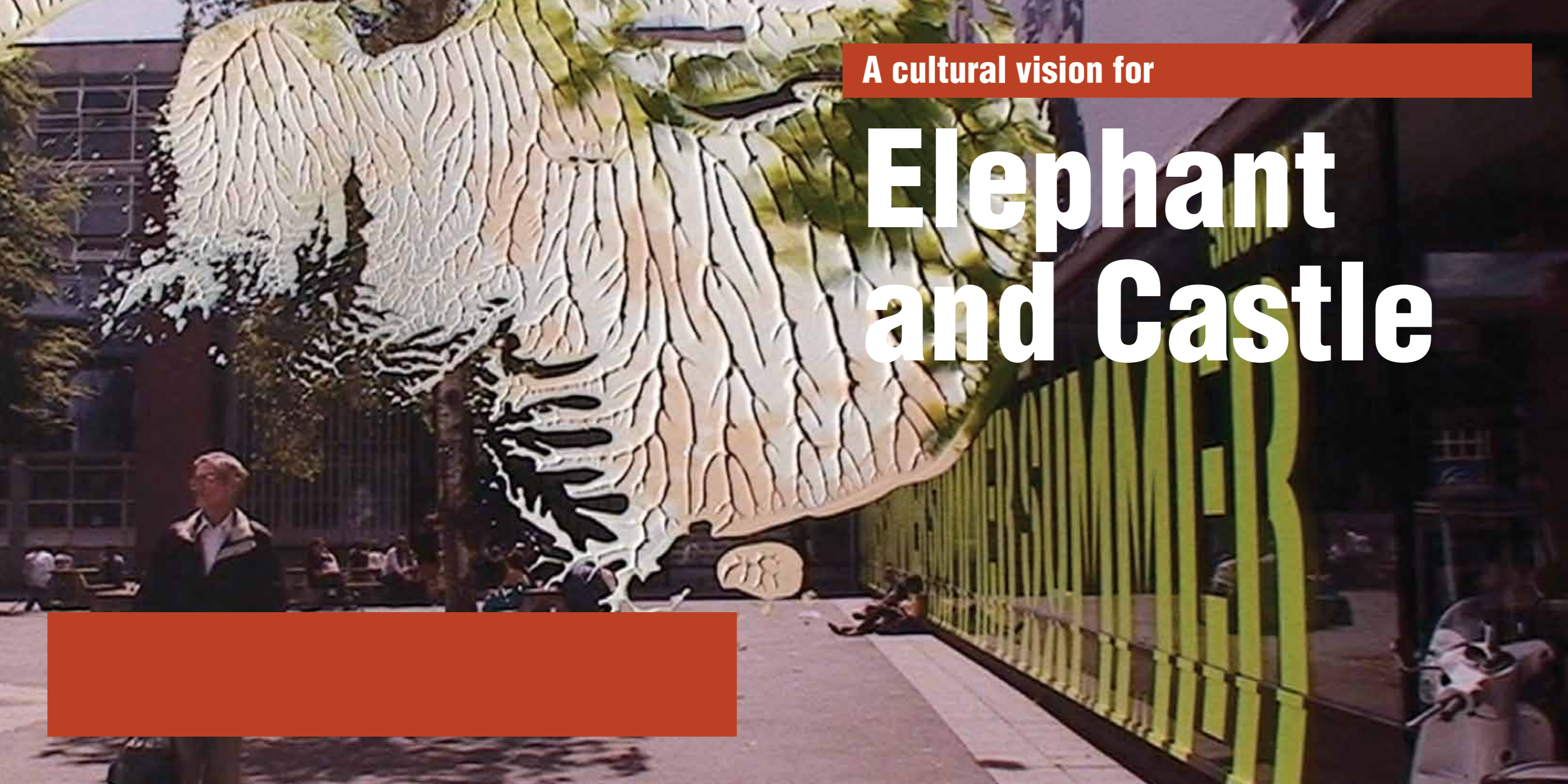


A cultural vision for

Elephant and Castle



**Building
a vibrant,
creative
future...**





This is our vision for culture in Elephant and Castle. It has been developed by creative and cultural organisations and individuals working in the area. We've worked very closely with our partners in Southwark Council, and have engaged with the Developers whose businesses are making the massive investment to improve the area.

It is a vision that paints a picture of a vibrant neighbourhood in the heart of London, full of creative activity and opportunity for young people, existing and new local people, and builds on the rich and diverse communities that make the Elephant so unique.

Elephant and Castle stands at a pivotal moment in its history. Over ten years around £1.5 billion is being spent regenerating the area, making the public spaces attractive, green and safe; renewing the housing and providing modern spaces for business, shopping and nightlife.

But it is people that make places. We believe that, as the area undergoes a massive physical regeneration programme, people should be able to develop their creative talent, to be able to make their living in creative businesses, have the spaces and places to make things and perform, to be part of a new energy for the arts, and to see Elephant and Castle as somewhere people come together and where exciting and creative things happen.

The central message of this vision for developers, the council, the people who live and work in Elephant and Castle, and the cultural community here is that only by harnessing the creative

skills and talents, the capacity and potential of what is already here can Elephant and Castle create a successful future. We want to promote the Elephant and Castle as a world class example of excellence - leading the way in environmental sustainability and providing opportunity.

Cultural and creative industries can be at the heart of making this happen, creating jobs and improving the social and economic well being of the area.

This vision is a starting point. It will evolve as the regeneration changes the area. It sets out ambitions for a future where local people can enjoy arts and culture on their doorstep; increased numbers of visitors can enjoy the internationally renowned organisations already here; the artists, performers and creators can prosper and contribute; young people can build careers; and communities can share their exuberance.

We want you to share our vision, because we believe it is vital to the success of the regeneration for the local area, and we want to work with you and all of our partners to deliver it.



Our vision for Elephant and Castle



1. Cultural Community

Realising the Value of our Cultural Assets

“Regeneration is not really about buildings. It’s about people, about changing ideas of what’s possible in people’s lives.”

The development of Elephant and Castle must value its cultural assets ensuring what has developed already – a world class dance academy, internationally famous night clubs, one of London’s most visited museums, vibrant arts festivals and a thriving multi-cultural arts scene – can prosper and evolve as the area changes, and that there is space for new talent and new creative business to emerge and grow alongside existing activities.

“What is interesting about Elephant and Castle is this very rich cultural mix. There’s a buzz of energy, a quirky quality that makes it a very specific part of London. I hope the regenerated Elephant can retain something of this intangible quality.”

Our ambition for the regeneration is that it should

- 1. Protect and enhance the successful arts businesses and organisations that already exist in the area: by offering them the chance to participate in development plans around their existing premises, to work alongside developers, planners and architects to shape the new space available**
- 2. Provide infrastructure that will join up the arts and culture for local residents and visitors: from street signage and arts trails, to festivals that bring communities and organisations together, to a shared commitment to joint promotion of arts assets.**
- 3. Establish a space for film and performance, which could emerge as a specialist showcase for new London and international cinema and serving the thriving communities within the area.**



2. Creative Learning

Nuturing a Passion for Creative Learning

“Access for everyone to creative learning can bring value and opportunity to Elephant and Castle. We can draw from the local young creatives from schools and from the universities and provide learning opportunities for all ages to feed the arts community into the future”

Promoting creative learning and nurturing talent is central to this cultural vision. The excitement, wellbeing and development of the economy will depend on broadening access to learning opportunities. Elephant and Castle boasts two universities with international reputations. It has a high proportion of children and young people.

These universities and the surrounding schools are centres of learning which can develop their role as talent hubs for Elephant and Castle. And “creative learning” should be implicit in every part of the development – in the urban streetscape, through trails and interactive works, and within our organisations and facilities, through partnerships between arts organisations, schools and community groups.

“Artists can show people things they otherwise do not see. They open up a world of possibilities and change the way people think giving them an ability

to conceive of a different future. If we nurture creative talent, we make places exciting.”

Our ambition for creative learning is to

- 1. Build opportunities within the regeneration to strengthen the links between our two great learning centres - London College of Communication and South Bank University - and the local economy and wider arts scene. They provide a stream of talent – and regeneration can deliver opportunities to keep it in the area which could include affordable spaces for new creative business including workshop, galleries and retail.**
- 2. Encourage and support partnerships between our major institutions and the schools that surround the area to give all young people access to high quality, rich creative learning opportunities.**
- 3. Foster partnerships between local arts organisations and community groups to broaden access to, participation in and understanding of the arts within the wider community, as the area physically develops.**

3. Dynamic Economy

Building a Dynamic, Innovative Creative Economy

“Cultural organisations can work with each other, the developers and the council to create a vibrant arts and music scene, which brings employment, engages students, local people and visitors, and creates opportunities for training and learning.”

Elephant and Castle is already home to more than 300 creative businesses providing significant employment and showcasing the area’s talent worldwide. It also has a growing night- time economy with a small but impressive range of nightlife activity including the world famous Ministry of Sound, the independent Corsica studios and the Coronet. We want to ensure that the creative economy continues to be the engine for growth and opportunity in the future. This is why we are committed to ensuring workspaces for small creative businesses are affordable so that they can continue to contribute to the success of the area.

“Let’s aim for economic and cultural development with the participation of all stakeholders – artists, universities, the council, the entertainment and performance centres and museums, and the local community.”

Our ambition for a dynamic, creative economy would include

- 1. Identifying with developers opportunities for creative businesses to improve the evening economy by providing performance and live music space, bar and independent retail so that people working in the area will stay into the evening and those arriving later will have places to eat and enjoy the varied night culture.**
- 2. The creation of flexible units within the development, ring-fenced for local arts and creative talent, encouraging a mix of business incubation, affordable rent and opportunities for retail and professional services.**
- 3. A Creative Challenge Fund, with grants for equipment, bursaries, training, apprenticeships in the arts and culture to help local young people establish creative businesses and learn from those already established.**



4. Exciting Spaces

Creating Exciting, Quality Spaces - Inside and Outside

“The development can create public space where people can come together, share ideas, share culture and celebrate the contribution of the community and the arts.”

The changing physical spaces of Elephant and Castle are at the heart of the regeneration plans and represent a superb opportunity to make Elephant and Castle a vibrant, neighbourhood with a wide and strong cultural offer rooted in the heart of London.

This vision sees indoor and outdoor flexible public spaces where performance, festivals, sport and art can serve the needs of people; resident and visitor alike. The design of streetscapes and public realm will be central to the ‘experience’ of Elephant and Castle for residents, visitors and those who work and study here.

“When you get the design and use of space right in regeneration you have places people want to live in, work in, grow up in, want to play in and want to visit.”

Our ambition for exciting creative use of space, inside and out would see us

- 1. Ensure local people have high quality culture and entertainment on their doorstep: our priorities include new space for a gallery, a theatre, music education and film which will complement the existing provision of museums, dance, arts and nightclub spaces.**
- 2. Identify space for festivals, and for permanent and temporary public art, commissioned from local artists and students as well as national and international figures.**
- 3. To create a simple, efficient and cost effective system which ensures units which become available on a temporary basis, are made available to arts organisations to use for creative or exhibition space.**

5. Creative Connections

Connecting the Elephant to People and Opportunity

“The arts sector has everything going for it – it needs to ensure it can keep on articulating its voice through the regeneration. Let’s create a vibrant cultural hub for the benefit of all the different communities which make up the surrounding area”

We will only make this vision a reality if we continue to work together, and have an infrastructure to support our planning and delivery as we go forward. This will help us work closely with our partners, make best use of resources and develop our own networks between our diverse and varied organisations.

For the regeneration plan itself it will be important to create visible, welcoming routes around the immediate cultural quarter, and make more of the links to areas surrounding Elephant. By improving signage, making arts provision part of the green walking routes and corridors which development will bring, and providing co-ordinated information on arts and cultural events people will be able to explore everything that is on offer.

Elephant and Castle also has the chance to develop its cultural networks across London, the UK and the Diaspora of its diverse communities. We want to maintain the existing networks and build and support new ones. Attracting talent from outside to come to the Elephant will enrich those who are already here.

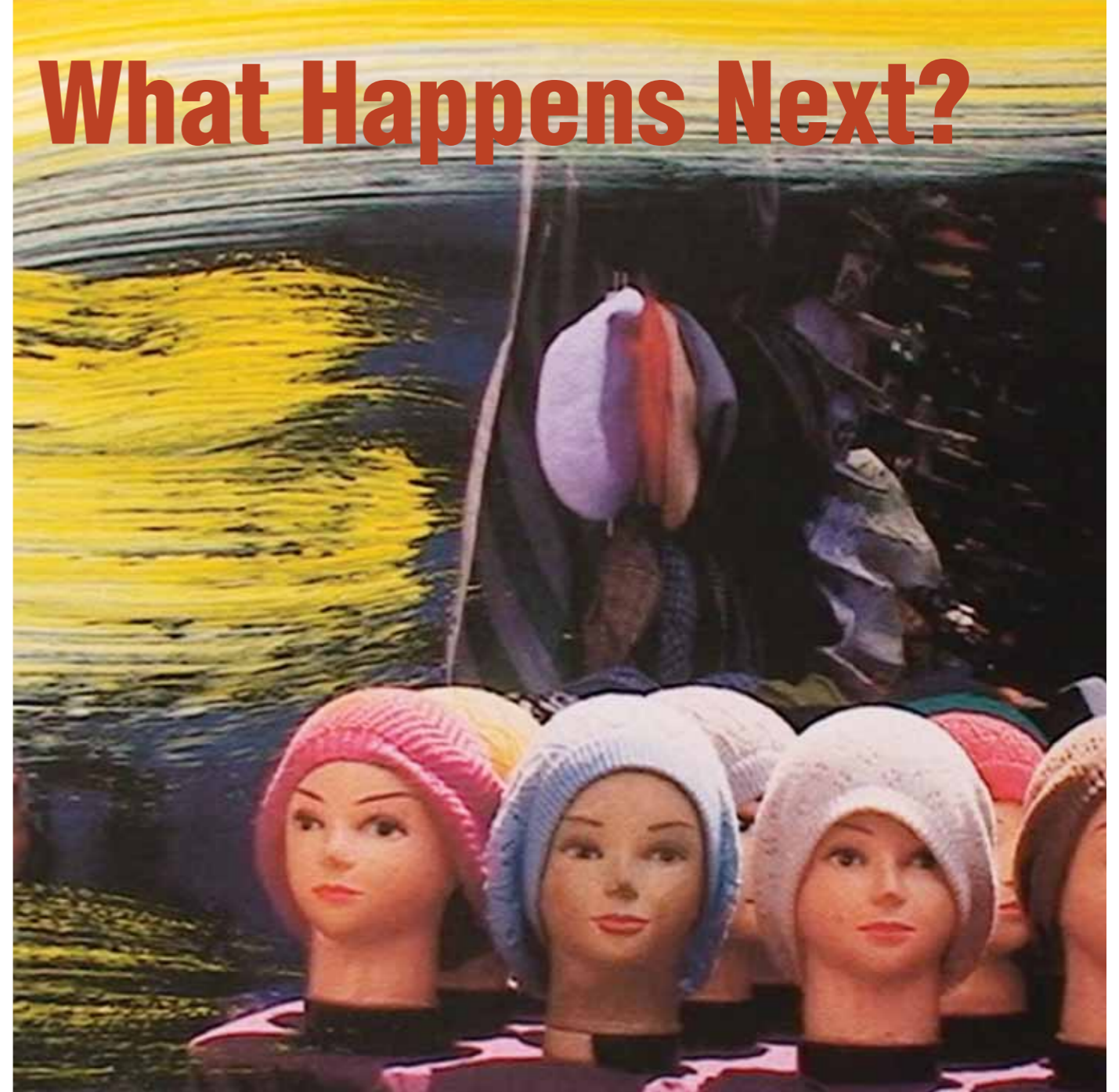
“Elephant and Castle is wonderfully located. In the heart of London, moments from centres of commerce and creativity. The regeneration of the area can make full use of these physical connections bringing people and value to and from the area.”



Our ambition for a well connected cultural community will see

1. The establishment of a strong creative and cultural forum for Elephant and Castle. Building on the success of Southwark Arts Forum, to help co-ordination and information sharing, including planning of festivals and new developments, and bring the council, developers and arts organisations together to see this vision through to reality
2. Local residents given the opportunity to enjoy all the creativity of their neighbourhood, for example by providing an Elephant Culture Card and a website with email and text alerts about everything that is happening in the area
3. A virtual network developed between our organisations and the wider cultural and creative sector, for sharing resources, good practice and ideas.

What Happens Next?





Setting out this vision and these ambitions is the start of a process...

We want to build on the energy we have created across the cultural sector, and take our vision out to developers, the Council and other partners.

Securing their support for the principles underlying the vision and ambition will be vital, as will working closely with them to turn these ambitions into firm, costed plans.

We will need to scope the ambitions and shape them into a formal cultural plan; we'll need to assess local needs, and prioritise our provision. We'll want to seek pilot projects on cultural learning, education, connections and access to space – and explore the creation of a Challenge Fund

For the cultural community to build its own strong network and be a positive proactive representative for the regeneration will be an essential first step.

As well as giving us an infrastructure and forum for dialogue with the developers, we will use this Forum to drive delivery of these ambitions, and report each year of the progress of delivering the vision within the wider regeneration.

This vision has been created with the voices of:

- Adagio Conbrio
- Carnival Schools Project
- Community Action Southwark, Sierra Leone community co-ordinator
- Community Action Southwark, Latin American community co-ordinator
- Cool Tan Arts
- Corsica Studios
- Elefest
- Imperial War Museum
- London College of Communications
- London Philharmonic Orchestra
- London South Bank University
- Ministry of Sound / Hedkandi
- Pullen's Yards - Nigel Allgood
- Reuben Powell
- Set Fashion Free
- Shortwave Cinemas
- Siobhan Davies Dance
- Southwark Arts Forum
- Southwark Black Business Initiative
- Tate Modern
- Viva Amazon

Thanks to the Culture Team and Elephant and Castle Regeneration Team of Southwark Council for their support and engagement. Also thanks to a number of elected members, and for the input of the developers who are helping deliver the broader regeneration plan.