

## 8. Arts and cultural uses



### 8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 For the purpose of this section, Arts and Cultural uses include museums, art galleries, exhibition spaces, theatres, cinemas and studios. There are uses which often, but not exclusively, lie within Classes D1 and D2 of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO)<sup>161</sup>.
- 8.1.2 The Borough contains a number of arts and cultural attractions, some local in character but some of national or even international importance. At the local level these attractions help underpin and secure the communities which are central to the residential character of the Borough, creating landmarks and reinforcing neighbourhood identity. At the national level, they greatly add to the cultural life of the capital and help put the Borough on the national stage.
- 8.1.3 The benefits are economic as well as ephemeral with over eight and a half million visits a year being made to the Natural History Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Science Museum alone. Many of those visiting our cultural attractions will stay within the Borough and spend in it.

### 8.2 Existing Local Plan policies

- 8.2.1 The existing Local Plan policies relating to shops and centres are:

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<sup>161</sup> Class D1: Non residential institutions, include art galleries and museums. Class D2 Assembly include cinemas, music and concert halls

## Policy CF7 Arts and Cultural Uses

The Council supports the Borough's role in both local and world-class arts and culture. The Council will welcome new cultural institutions and facilities across the Borough and protect, nurture and encourage those which already exist. In particular the Council will support proposals which enhance the cultural draw of South Kensington, King's Road/Sloane Square, the Notting Hill Gate and Portobello Road area and Kensington High Street.

To deliver this, the Council will:

- a. protect all land and/or buildings where the current or last use is/was an arts and cultural use unless that use is re-provided to an equivalent or better standard in the immediate vicinity of the site;
- b. permit new arts and cultural uses, or the expansion of these uses, which are likely to generate large numbers of visitors in higher order town centres and other areas of the Borough which have a PTAL score of 4 or above, or will achieve this level through improvements to public transport during the lifetime of the plan. Smaller scale arts and cultural uses which are likely to attract fewer visitors will be welcomed throughout the Borough;
- c. permit enabling development on land and/or buildings where the current or last use is/was an arts and cultural use, in order to provide alternative arts and cultural uses on site or improve arts and cultural uses elsewhere within the Borough, where it is successfully demonstrated that there is greater benefit to the Borough resulting from this proposal.

## Policy CF11 The South Kensington Strategic Cultural Area

The Council will protect and enhance arts and cultural uses in the South Kensington Strategic Cultural Area.

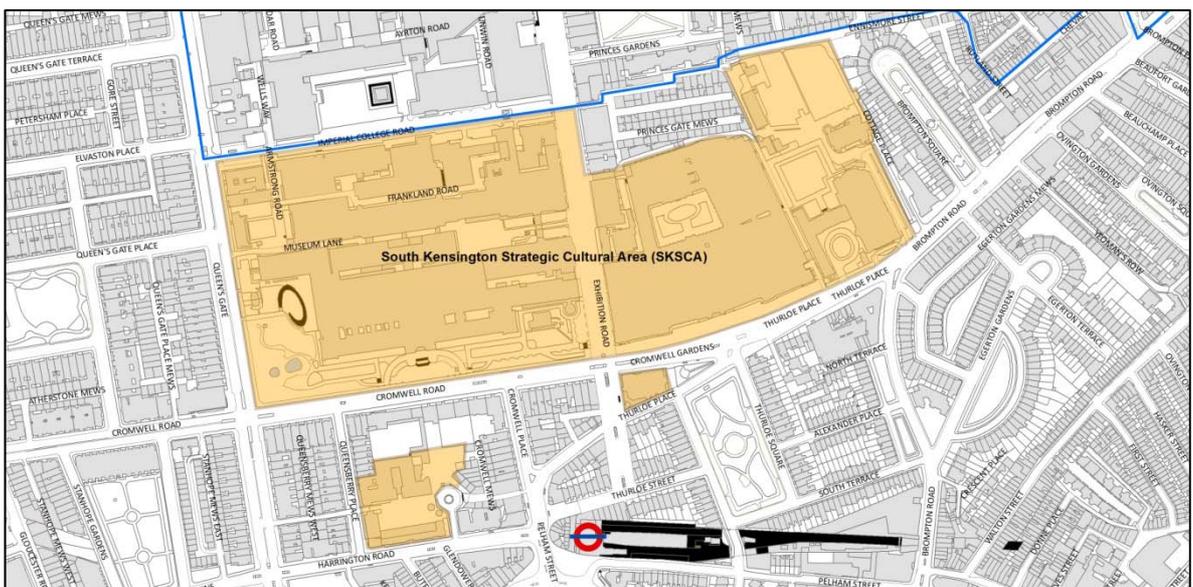


Figure 8.1: The South Kensington Strategic Cultural Area within the Borough

## 8.3 Legislation, policy and guidance context

### National

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 8.3.1 The NPPF makes a number of references to what it refers to as “cultural well-being” and the need to protect and provide for cultural facilities. Paragraph 7 notes that supporting the community’s cultural well-being is a central part of the “social role” of planning in achieving sustainable development:

A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being.

- 8.3.2 Paragraph 17 lists a number of core planning principles. One of these is to, “take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.” This is confirmed by paragraph 70 which concerns the promotion of healthy communities. If a Council is to deliver the cultural facilities which contribute to a healthy community it should, “plan positively for the provision of ... cultural buildings” and, “guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services”.
- 8.3.3 Paragraph 20 suggests Councils should “allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of... cultural... development needed in town centres” amongst other uses.
- 8.3.4 Paragraph 156 considers how Councils should set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. This includes policies to deliver, “the provision of ... cultural infrastructure”.

#### National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG): Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres

- 8.3.5 The NPPG on Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres considers tourism and the contribution that it can have to a local area. In particular paragraph 26 states that Councils should, “analyse the opportunities for tourism to support local services, vibrancy and enhance the built environment”. The Borough’s arts and cultural uses contribute to the tourist draw.

### Regional

#### The London Plan

- 8.3.6 The London Plan considers cultural uses in their own right and as an integral part of the function of the Central Activities Zone (CAZ).

8.3.7 Policy 4.6 is explicit in its “support for and enhancement of arts, cultural, sports and entertainment.” It states that:

The Mayor will and boroughs and other stakeholders should support the continued success of London’s diverse range of arts, cultural, professional sporting and entertainment enterprises and the cultural, social and economic benefits that they offer to its residents, workers and visitors.

8.3.8 Regarding planning decisions developments should:

- a) fulfil the sequential approach and where necessary, complete an impact assessment
- b) be located on sites where there is good existing or planned access by public transport
- c) be accessible to all sections of the community, including disabled and older people
- d) address deficiencies in facilities and provide a cultural focus to foster more sustainable local communities.

8.3.9 With regard the preparation of Local Plans, Boroughs should:

- a) enhance and protect creative work and performance spaces and related facilities in particular in areas of defined need
- b) support the temporary use of vacant buildings for performance and creative work
- c) designate and develop cultural quarters to accommodate new arts, cultural and leisure activities, enabling them to contribute more effectively to regeneration
- d) promote and develop existing and new cultural and visitor attractions especially in outer London and where they can contribute to regeneration and town centre renewal
- e) develop innovative approaches to managing pressures on high volume visitor areas and their environments
- f) identify, manage and co-ordinate strategic and more local clusters of evening and night time entertainment activities to
  - address need,
  - provide public transport, policing and environmental services; and
  - minimise impact on other land uses taking account of the cumulative effects of night time uses and saturation levels beyond which they have unacceptable impacts on the environmental standards befitting a world city and quality of life for local residents.

- 8.3.10 Policy 2.11 is concerned with the Central Activities Zone and the uses within it. It states that:

The Mayor will, and boroughs and other relevant agencies should:

...

f. extend the offer and enhance the environment of strategic cultural areas along the South Bank, around the Kensington Museum complex and at the Barbican.

- 8.3.11 The Mayor of London launched a cultural planning toolkit known as ‘An A-Z of Planning and Culture’ in October 2015 and this will be considered in future iterations of the Local Plan Partial Review.

### Town Centres Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

- 8.3.12 The Town Centre Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) implementation policy 1.2 considers, “Arts, Culture, Leisure and the night time economy.” In particular it encourages Boroughs to “identify and define the special characteristics of Strategic Cultural areas and support initiatives to enhance them” (1.2(b)). Boroughs are also encouraged to, “enhance major clusters of visitor attractions and related infrastructure and develop visitor management plans to secure positive outcomes whilst addressing potential negative impacts arising from high visitor volumes (1.2(k))”.

### Summary

- 8.3.13 Figure 8.2 summarises the main legislation, policy and guidance of particular relevance to this section.

Date	Document	Organisation
Mar 2012	National Planning Policy Framework <sup>162</sup> Paragraphs 7, 17 and 156	DCLG
2014 (updated)	National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG): Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres <sup>163</sup>	DCLG
Mar 2015	The London Plan <sup>164</sup> Policy 2.10 Central Activities Zone – Strategic functions Policy 4.6 Support for and Enhancement of arts, culture, sport and entertainment	Mayor of London
Jul 2014	Town Centres Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) <sup>165</sup> SPG Implementation 1.1	Mayor of London
Oct 2015	An A-Z of Planning and Culture <sup>166</sup>	Mayor of London

Figure 8.2: Summary of legislation, policy and guidance

<sup>162</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2)

<sup>163</sup> <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/ensuring-effective-enforcement/>

<sup>164</sup> [www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan](http://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan)

<sup>165</sup> [www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/implementing-london-plan/supplementary-planning-guidance/town-centres](http://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/implementing-london-plan/supplementary-planning-guidance/town-centres)

<sup>166</sup> [www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/arts-and-culture-publications/z-planning-and-culture](http://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/arts-and-culture-publications/z-planning-and-culture)

## 8.4 Evidence base

### Cultural Placemaking

- 8.4.1 Since the Core Strategy (now the Local Plan) was adopted in 2010 the Arts and Culture Service of the Council has produced 'Cultural Placemaking in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea'<sup>167</sup> (2012) which sets out the opportunity for the Council to put cultural placemaking at the heart of the Borough's plans for regeneration. Working in partnership with developers to plan for culture from the start and throughout all the phases of development, establish a distinctive vision for new development, and provide the creative glue of people and ideas that binds successful urban places together.
- 8.4.2 The document specifically identified 'Albertopolis' as an existing cultural quarter, the relocation of the Design Museum to Kensington High Street as an opportunity to create a new cultural quarter, Portobello Road and Kensal Employment Zones and exciting creative paces and Kensal Gasworks an opportunity for cultural placemaking.

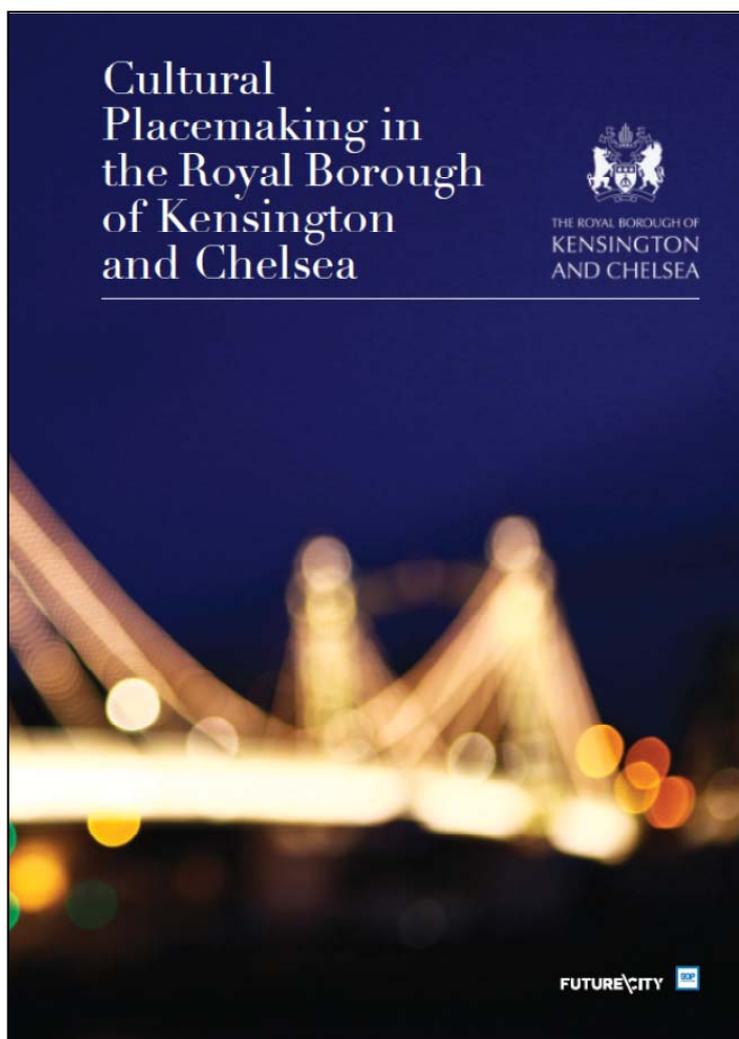


Figure 8.3: Cultural Placemaking (2012)

<sup>167</sup> [www.rbkc.gov.uk/networking-and-training-events](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/networking-and-training-events)

#### 8.4.3 The document concludes with a series of next steps:

To realise the Council's vision for cultural excellence in the Borough encouraging developers to:

- Explore the heritage and contemporary cultural context of their sites
- Brand and animate their developments via new cultural spaces, cultural partnerships and programming
- Be imaginative and bold in their proposals

The Council will support developers in the generation and realisation of cultural proposals.

It will:

- Offer advice and guidance on the cultural element of developments
- Broker relationships with the cultural organisations that provide content for how cultural spaces and festivals
- Connect new provision into the cultural life of the Borough including through marketing, signage and engagement with residents

Meanwhile cultural organisation may wish to:

- Assess their ability and readiness to work with developers
- Approach developers with the aim of forming partnerships on the new developments.

8.4.4 In July 2015 the Design Museum organised a Cultural Placemaking event. This was Chaired by the Leader of the Council and attended by representatives from cultural institutions, creative businesses, Council departments and the community. This event considered how the Council's ambitions for cultural placemaking could be delivered through encouraging the creative economy, planning policies, and links to other cultural institutions and the community. It identified a number of actions and resolved to meet again to review progress in 2016. This policy review will form one of the key mechanisms through which the Council will consider how cultural placemaking can be delivered.

#### Exhibition Road

8.4.5 The Exhibition Road public realm improvement scheme has been delivered, significantly improving the route to the museums and creating a relaxed outdoor dining area at the southern end. Further improvements to the public realm arising from development may need to be considered. Transport for London is developing proposals to increase capacity at South Kensington station, provide step free access and possibly improve the pedestrian tunnel.

8.4.6 A Neighbourhood Plan is being produced for the residential area to the east of Exhibition Road in The City of Westminster. Clearly a consistent and coherent vision needs to be expressed across the Borough boundaries.

## Notting Hill Gate

- 8.4.7 Since the Cultural Placemaking document was produced a Supplementary Planning Document for Notting Hill Gate has also been adopted. During public consultation on this document the opportunity to provide a new cultural attraction as part of development proposals was identified. This idea did not receive much public support and the Coronet Cinema has now been taken over by new owners The Print Room who are refurbishing the building and offering theatrical productions as well as showing films.

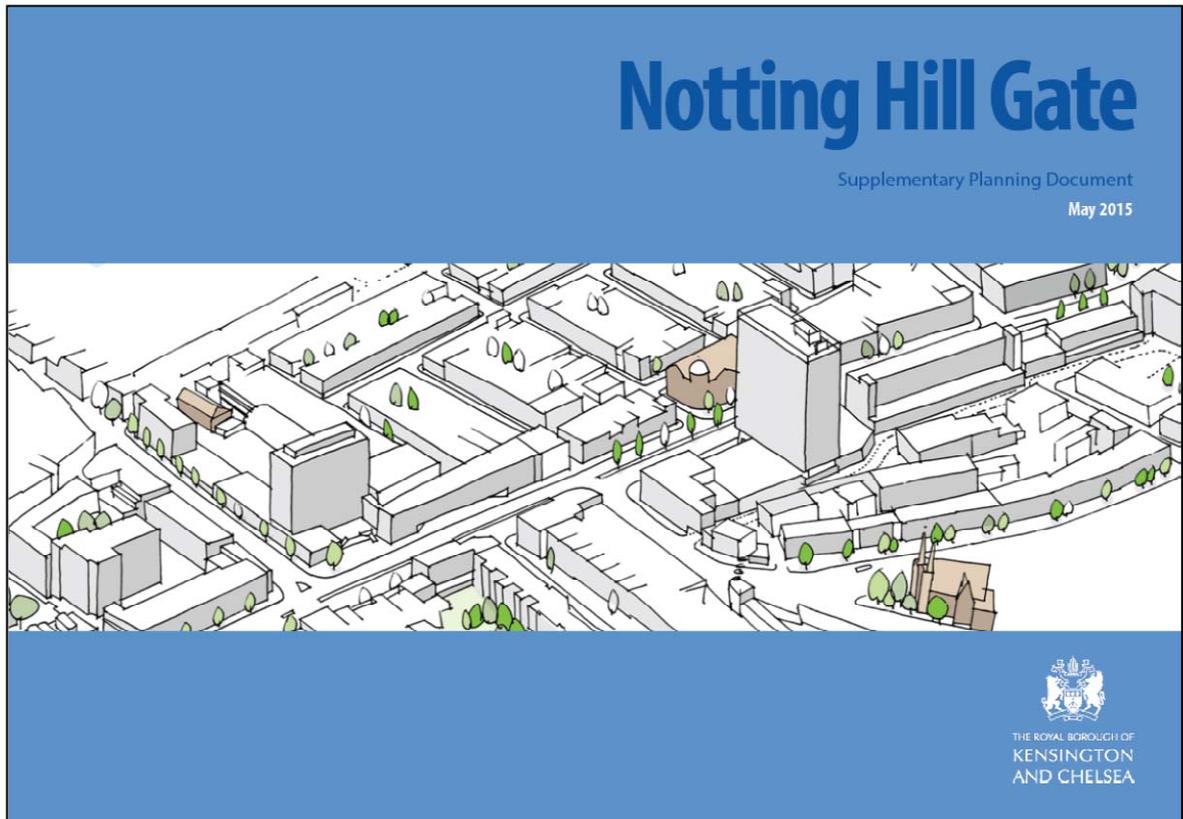


Figure 8.4 Notting Hill Gate SPD

## Imperial West

- 8.4.8 The new Imperial West College Campus at White City is now emerging just across the Borough boundary with Hammersmith and Fulham. When complete this innovation hub will have a significant impact on footfall and the nature of employment in the Borough close to the eastern section of the Westway. There will be 12,000 people on the new campus and a further 36,000 in the wider White City area. They will be able to walk or cycle to this Borough via a new subway being constructed as part of the s106 agreement for Imperial West.

## Summary

- 8.4.9 Figure 8.5 summarises the principal sources of evidence particularly relevant to this section.

Date	Document	Organisation
May 2012	Cultural Placemaking in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea <sup>168</sup>	RBKC
Jun 2015	Notting Hill Gate Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) <sup>169</sup>	RBKC

Figure 8.5: Summary of principal sources of evidence

## 8.5 Issues and options

- 8.5.1 The Council greatly values the variety of arts and cultural uses. To this end the Council has long resisted the loss of arts and cultural uses and has actively encouraged the creation of new uses.
- 8.5.2 However, within this context difficult decisions have to be made. Is any location within the Borough suitable for a new arts and cultural use or should those which attract larger numbers of visitors be directed to the most accessible areas, the Borough's larger town centres? Can a particular arts and cultural use be lost in one location as long as the overall provision of similar, across the Borough, improves? How do we support the world class facilities that we have?

**Issue 1: How should the Council ensure that arts and cultural uses continue to be protected and that new uses are supported in appropriate locations.**

### Question 1

Should the Council continue to support the Borough's role in both local and world-class arts and culture?

- 8.5.3 Existing Local Plan Policy CF7 seeks to protect all existing arts and cultural uses and supports the creation of new such uses in suitable areas. A particular use can only be lost where the use is provided elsewhere in the Borough and where there is a greater benefit to the Borough resulting from the proposal.
- 8.5.4 This approach has proved successful, with the Borough strengthening its role as a vibrant part of a world city. As such the Council does not intend to amend the approach that it takes in Local Plan CF7 (Arts and Cultural Uses). Do you agree?

<sup>168</sup> [www.rbkc.gov.uk/networking-and-training-events](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/networking-and-training-events)

<sup>169</sup> [www.rbkc.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/emerging-site-specific/notting-hill-gate](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/emerging-site-specific/notting-hill-gate)

**Question 2**

Should the Council continue its existing approach in protecting existing arts and cultural uses and permitting enabling development where the overall provision is maintained?

- 8.5.5 Local Plan Policy CF7 seeks to protect arts and cultural uses across the Borough. The policy also recognises that, within this context, arts and cultural uses may have to evolve if they are to remain relevant. Sometimes the new requirements can be met in the existing buildings on the existing site. Sometimes they cannot. As such the Council currently allows “enabling development” (often the introduction of higher value residential uses) where “it is successfully demonstrated that there is a greater benefit to the Borough resulting from the proposal.” The Council does recognise that change to a well loved use can cause controversy. The Council must, however, be able to take a long term view.
- 8.5.6 In the absence of any compelling evidence to the contrary the Council does not intend to alter this position and allow enabling development where the overall provision is maintained.

**Question 3**

Should the Council continue to take a “town centre first” approach to the location of new arts and cultural uses and direct uses which are likely to generate large numbers of visitors to the larger centres.

- 8.5.7 A large arts and cultural use has the potential to generate significant numbers of visitors. Perhaps unsurprisingly there can be a conflict with the needs of visitors and the desires of local residents. This conflict can be minimised if larger operations are directed to the larger town centres. Here they can make the best use of available transport links and help sustain the vitality, the viability and the diversity of these centres.
- 8.5.8 Smaller scale facilities which are likely to attract fewer visitors will be welcomed throughout the Borough.
- 8.5.9 In the absence of any compelling evidence to the contrary the Council does not intend to alter this position.

**Do you have any other comments, issues or options (reasonable alternatives) you would like to raise regarding this section?**

**Issue 2: What spatial approach should the Council adopt to support enhancing the cultural draw and promoting the arts and cultural uses across the Borough?**

**Question 1**

Should the Council continue its existing approach in protecting and enhancing cultural uses in the South Kensington Strategic Cultural Area?

- 8.5.10 In recognition of its outstanding universal value as a visitor destination, the Council designated the South Kensington Museums complex as a Strategic Cultural Area. This designation reflects what the London Plan sees as the function of the CAZ, as an, “area home to many of the capital’s (and the country’s) leading cultural facilities.” The museum quarter, “should be protected and [where] opportunities to enhance or extend [it], to improve the quality of their environments or to develop new quarters in appropriate locations will be considered sympathetically.”<sup>170</sup>
- 8.5.11 In this area the Local Plan notes that, “any development within the Strategic Cultural Area must be of the highest quality and reflect the historic and architectural interest of the area.”
- 8.5.12 In the absence of any compelling evidence to the contrary the continued designation of the museums complex as a strategic Cultural Area is considered to remain appropriate.

**Question 2**

Should the Council specifically support enhancing the cultural draw of the following places?

Those within the existing policy:

- South Kensington Strategic Cultural Area
- King’s Road / Sloane Square
- The Notting Hill Gate and Portobello Road area
- Kensington High Street

Possible new creative industries clusters at:

- Kensal Employment Zone and Kensal Gasworks
- Freston / Latimer Road Employment Zone (linking to Imperial West Innovation Hub)
- Lots Road Employment Zone
- Somewhere else

**Do you have any other comments, issues or options (reasonable alternatives) you would like to raise regarding this section?**

<sup>170</sup> Para 2.51 of the London Plan, Mayor of London, 2015