

Letters: Labour investment in cultural venues

Andy Haldane is right to argue for more investment in the social infrastructure of the arts (Labour should ‘invest big’ in arts and culture projects, says top economist, 27 October), but a new generation of flagship venues in UK cities isn’t necessarily the answer. Of the many factors surrounding this issue, three are most important.

First, community-led venues are often at the heart of local places, programming vibrant work that reflects the lives of people living outside cities and where inequalities, including rural poverty, also exist. Second, financially stretched local councils carry the responsibility of maintaining many of the UK’s existing network of cultural buildings, all of which need substantial ongoing investment and repair. Third, the evidence of agglomerated economic benefits from large urban cultural regeneration schemes isn’t conclusive.

Creating the social and physical infrastructure that can broaden access to the arts, including programmes that reflect socially and culturally diverse communities across the UK, is a systemic policy issue. When it comes to more capital investment in new buildings, 41.

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