



meeting Community Services Standing Select Committee

date 27th July 2004

agenda item number

Report of the Director of Culture and Community

DCMS consultation: Culture at the Heart of Regeneration

Purpose of the Report

1. This report summarises a consultation document recently published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and invites members to comment on the issues raised.

Background

2. In June 2004 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published the consultation document *Culture at the Heart of Regeneration* as part of a process of taking stock of the lessons learned over the last ten years. It is envisaged that consideration of this, alongside wider discussions, will lead to a delivery plan outlining how the department will work with its sponsored bodies and wider stakeholders to ensure that culture is at the heart of regeneration programmes.
3. Copies of the document are provided for members. It is available on the DCMS web site www.culture.gov.uk
4. The consultation document reflects the Secretary of State's view that as well as culture being important for its own sake – in defining and preserving identity, as well as raising aspirations – culture should also be at the heart of regeneration. The document seeks to identify what works well. The closing date for responses to the questions raised and other comments on the role of culture in regeneration is 15th October 2004.
5. Culture drives regeneration in many ways including:
 - the impact of ambitious cultural centres contributing to the economic, physical, social and creative regeneration of an area;
 - the revitalisation of communities through improving the physical environment, and involving people in cultural activities;
 - increasing access to services and making opportunities available to more people.

6. The paper is based around five main themes, these are summarised below along with the 16 consultation questions.

Icons, cities and beyond

7. This section discusses the effect of landmark cultural projects as well as the “quiet revolution” taking place in our major cities. It stresses the importance of good design.
8. However, it also notes the particular pressures on rural communities and the complexity of regeneration in the countryside. There are examples of cultural and creative contributions to rural regeneration, and on a larger scale in market towns.
9. The paper identifies the challenge for cultural projects to be relevant to and rooted in local communities. It also recognises that significant cultural projects, by their nature, can divide public opinion and be viewed with scepticism.
10. The paper includes three questions for consultation:

QUESTION 1 How can we make sure that landmark cultural buildings achieve the right balance between maintaining cultural excellence and relevance to their local communities?

QUESTION 2 What role does culture have to play in tackling the complexities of rural regeneration, and what evidence is there of what works best?

QUESTION 3 We have found that strong leadership has been the key to driving through cultural innovation. But innovation can be controversial and is often opposed by local communities. How do we achieve a balance between leadership and meeting the needs and aspirations of communities?

A Sense of Place

11. The paper recognises that a sense of place is essential in creating sustainable communities. This is helped by good design of new buildings, re-use and renewal of historic features, mixed use developments, and well designed public buildings.
12. The two consultation questions in this section are:

QUESTION 4 Many claim that public art has impacts beyond its aesthetic value, but we have found little evidence of this. Are there ways of measuring its wider impact, and do you have any examples?

QUESTION 5 What more can be done to encourage developers and planners to include culture in regeneration strategies and programmes?

Delivering for communities, with communities

13. This section of the paper looks at the role of culture in regeneration at the level of the community and the individual. It focuses on using culture to:

- a. Increase social cohesion
 - b. Reduce crime and stimulate learning
 - c. Build individual capacity and community engagement.
14. Cultural activities can be highly effective in improving the skills and confidence of individuals, improving the quality of life, and enhancing the capacity of communities to solve their own problems. Physical regeneration impacts positively on the community in which it is rooted. Participation in cultural activities can deliver a sense of belonging and have far-reaching benefits, including reducing problems in health, education, crime, and anti-social behaviour.
15. The paper suggests some lessons from experience of using cultural activities as a means of achieving regeneration:
- a. One model does not fit all:
 - b. Resolving potential public/private conflicts:
 - c. Not losing sight of the cultural element:
 - d. Ensuring constant renewal:
 - e. Remembering the need for evidence:
 - f. Local consultation and participation is key:
16. The three questions from this section are:
- QUESTION 6 What role does culture have to play in strengthening communities and bringing different social groups together? Do you have any evidence-based examples?
- QUESTION 7 How can we measure the benefits, or added value that culture brings to delivering key social policy objectives?
- QUESTION 8 What incentives could be put in place to align developers' short term objectives with the longer term cultural and social aspirations of the community?

Making the Economic Case

17. The paper makes the economic case for regeneration through evidence that
- a. By adding to the reputation of an area, culture increases the “economic drawing power” and enhances inward investment
 - b. The way in which an area is perceived plays a key role in attracting and retaining skilled people;
 - c. Creative industries can have major regenerative effects.

It recognises that there is need for better, harder evidence to support this.

18. The paper raises the following questions.

QUESTION 9 How do we ensure that the gentrification of an area does not lead to displacement? Do you have any good examples?

QUESTION 10 In urban regeneration, how do we strike a balance between meeting the needs of the so-called “creative class” and the needs of the wider community, particularly those from disadvantaged groups?

QUESTION 11 How can we ensure that cultural regeneration projects offer a range of employment prospects for the local community, not just low paid service jobs? Is there an argument for training as an element of such regeneration and how might this be incorporated?

Where do we go from here?

19. The paper is based on a review of existing evidence and consultations. DCMS is proposing to take more of a lead in helping ensure that culture is firmly embedded in regeneration. It suggests that the key priorities for action are:

- building partnerships - there needs to be closer working between central government departments, regional bodies, local government and the private and voluntary sectors to better understand the processes of regeneration and the role that culture can play, and to build and promote sustainable partnerships;
- supporting delivery - those involved in delivering regeneration need to understand what works, what the success factors are and how to measure outcomes; and
- strengthening evidence - the evidence base of culture’s role in regeneration needs to be improved, particularly the evidence of long-term impact

20. This leads to the following questions:

QUESTION 12 Are these the right priorities for action?

QUESTION 13 What else could be done to strengthen partnerships?

QUESTION 14 What else could be done to support those directly involved in regeneration?

QUESTION 15 Do you have any evidence-based examples of culture’s impact on regeneration?

QUESTION 16 What else should be done to strengthen the evidence of culture’s role and impact on regeneration?

Commentary

21. Members will be familiar with the agenda represented by the consultation document as much of the council's culture and regeneration activities are along similar lines.
22. The document cites the Nottingham Lace Market as an example of regeneration being led through a creative industries strategy. It acknowledges the County Council's role in the revitalisation of the Lace Market in partnership with other private and public sector organisations, eg in supporting the development of Broadway and associated media projects, the Galleries of Justice etc.
23. Members are well aware that much of the disadvantage in Nottinghamshire is focused on the coalfield areas with the particular pressures on mining villages. This is an added dimension to the general rural aspects as for many communities the colliery was its centre – offering a social and cultural life as well as employment.
24. The council recently launched the Building Better Communities programme. Following on from previous programmes, such as the New Deal for the Coalfields, this programme will provide over £20m capital directed towards improving the quality of the physical environment. The Coalfield Community Landmarks scheme was designed to create new community resources and foster a greater spirit of pride in local areas.
25. The document cites the impact that well designed new buildings, such as libraries, can play in creating a sense of place and improving the delivery of public services. The Best Value Review of Strategic Property is currently considering a regeneration model which would place libraries at the hub of access to the county council's services including culture.
26. The paper provides some examples of how libraries can play a significant role in regeneration, by joining up with other services and widening the range of community services. The integration of Ladybrook Library in Mansfield into a neighbourhood shopping precinct improvement programme, involving a wide range of partners, shows the mutual benefits to be gained in terms of regeneration. New members and issues of library resources have increased by 50% in the first three months. In Southwell, a capital project will integrate library, youth service and registrars provision in a single high street location increasing the flow of people in the retail environment.
27. Through the community development team and the local area forums, the council has encouraged cultural activities such as local carnivals and public art.
28. The Select Committee has previously considered a report on the impact of creativity on regeneration of the former coalfield areas, following a programme funded under Objective 2.
29. Much of our cultural services activities are designed to support the council's other objectives – especially increasing social cohesion and reducing crime. For instance, there is local evidence that the rate of juvenile offending in areas where

summer activities are provided is less than in comparable areas without such activities.

30. Libraries in Nottinghamshire are demonstrating how cultural services can contribute to social regeneration through their "Libraries for All" social inclusion strategy and action plan. This is a good example of a local service delivering on the national guidance issued by DCMS on social cohesion and public libraries.
31. Cultural services make a significant contribution to learning in communities particularly through library provision and participation in the arts, sports and country parks programmes. The informal learning opportunities these services offer build capacity and confidence in communities. Opportunities range across all ages and stages of life, eg from Boots Books for Babies, through work with young people, to the Next Stage participatory arts programmes.
32. The contribution of cultural service, in the wider definition, to the economic life of the area is well established. Direct employment in sports, arts, libraries, play, etc makes an immediate contribution. EMDA estimates that tourism in the East Midlands contributes £5b to the regional economy – some 3.5% of GDP. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the cultural facilities and reputation of an area is a significant factor in inward investment decisions.
33. The consultation document teases out many of the difficult issues facing regeneration activity, notably:
 - a. The tension in balancing strong leadership and vision with community involvement
 - b. The difficulty in measuring impact of culture on social objectives
 - c. The inherently complex nature of partnership working
 - d. The importance of ensuring that jobs created are skilled and well paid not just low paid service jobs.

Recommendation

34. It is recommended that
 - I. The Select Committee considers the implications of the consultation document

Mick Burrows
Director of Culture and Community

Background papers available for inspection

Nil

Summary of Questions

Icons, cities and beyond

QUESTION 1 How can we make sure that landmark cultural buildings achieve the right balance between maintaining cultural excellence and relevance to their local communities?

QUESTION 2 What role does culture have to play in tackling the complexities of rural regeneration, and what evidence is there of what works best?

QUESTION 3 We have found that strong leadership has been the key to driving through cultural innovation. But innovation can be controversial and is often opposed by local communities. How do we achieve a balance between leadership and meeting the needs and aspirations of communities?

A sense of place

QUESTION 4 Many claim that public art has impacts beyond its aesthetic value, but we have found little evidence of this. Are there ways of measuring its wider impact, and do you have any examples?

QUESTION 5 What more can be done to encourage developers and planners to include culture in regeneration strategies and programmes?

Delivering for communities, with communities

QUESTION 6 What role does culture have to play in strengthening communities and bringing different social groups together? Do you have any evidence-based examples?

QUESTION 7 How can we measure the benefits, or added value that culture brings to delivering key social policy objectives?

QUESTION 8 What incentives could be put in place to align developers' short term objectives with the longer term cultural and social aspirations of the community?

Making the economic case

QUESTION 9 How do we ensure that the gentrification of an area does not lead to displacement? Do you have any good examples?

QUESTION 10 In urban regeneration, how do we strike a balance between meeting the needs of the so-called "creative class" and the needs of the wider community, particularly those from disadvantaged groups?

QUESTION 11 How can we ensure that cultural regeneration projects offer a range of employment prospects for the local community, not just low paid service jobs? Is there an argument for training as an element of such regeneration and how might this be incorporated?

Next steps: where do we go from here?

QUESTION 12 Are these the right priorities for action?

QUESTION 13 What else could be done to strengthen partnerships?

QUESTION 14 What else could be done to support those directly involved in regeneration?

QUESTION 15 Do you have any evidence-based examples of culture's impact on regeneration?

QUESTION 16 What else should be done to strengthen the evidence of culture's role and impact on regeneration?