

Capital City Partnership response to the Draft Culture (Scotland) Bill

28th March 2007

Introduction

Capital City Partnership's focus on Arts & Inclusion is aimed at making more of existing resources by encouraging partnerships between arts and non-arts organisations. Developments have been based on the seven of the strategic priorities set by the Edinburgh Partnership, namely:

- providing the best start for children and young people
- providing quality education and lifelong learning opportunities
- improving services and facilities for older people
- tackling disadvantage
- ensuring clean, green and safe neighbourhoods
- improving the city centre
- improving health for all.

and aim to increase funds to support arts & cultural organisations running programmes explicitly working to reduce one or more of the barriers to inclusion.

As part of this work Capital City Partnership (CCP) has been trialing a cultural planning approach in Edinburgh by developing practical projects which reflect the culture of a given area and offer creative solutions to enhance social inclusion.

Examples

For example the Park Life project (in partnership with local Arts Trust 'Out of the Blue' and the National Galleries of Scotland) engaged the local community in the creation a photographic exhibition illustrating people's aspirations for the run down park in their area. Out of the Blue then set up of the Friends of the Park group who have secured an initial £100,000 for the refurbishment of the park. CCP will be involved again working with local teenagers in understanding and 'designing-out' unsafe areas.

Another example is the partnership with five of Edinburgh's Housing Associations and Impact Arts to deliver the Fab Pad project which engages vulnerable young people entering their first tenancy. The project, funded in the main by Communities Scotland, offers participants the opportunity to work with an interior designer to turn a new flat into a home. Through giving a sense of ownership the risk of the tenancy breakdown is reduced the young person concerned can stabilise their life, and look to what they are going to do next, be it work, training, or education.

In projects such as these creative interventions have a positive impact on hard issues such as tenancy breakdown and anti-social behaviour as well as offering the soft outcomes more normally associated with cultural activities.

CCP warmly welcomes the Draft Culture (Scotland) Bill, generally, and in particular the work being carried to further the development of Local Cultural Entitlements and Cultural Planning.

Response to Section Two Consultation Questions

Do you think that developing local cultural entitlements will help to increase participation in cultural activities?

Broadly speaking yes, but to ensure these activities become 'meaningful' a framework must be established embedding cultural operators within area and city decision making and planning structures.

For example when culture responds 'positively and imaginatively to community aspirations' point 2.3, it must not happen in isolation. If it does it is likely to be viewed as an irrelevant add-on or meaningless decoration by participants and decision makers alike.

Rather than inform the strategic Community Planning process, a cultural planning approach must be taken by those already represented on these partnerships in association with cultural providers in their area.

Cultural Planning is a holistic approach to sustainable cultural and community development which embraces a broad definition of culture as a way of life, takes as its starting point the process of identifying, mapping and building on community assets, values and traditions, and develops those assets through creative activities which engage, involve and empower local people and involve artists in cross sectoral/inter-agency partnership working.

If you believe further or alternative measures are necessary, what are they?

Capital City Partnership believes three further measures should be put in place:

1. Training and support for staff from local authorities, cultural agencies and the voluntary and community sector should be included. The National Cultural Planning Steering Group is currently piloting a series of Cultural Planning masterclasses, delivered in partnership with the University of Strathclyde and these should be developed to fulfill this need.
2. A requirement and incentive for community planning partnerships to have appropriate cultural representation reflecting local authority provision and that of the wider cultural sector, to include community organisations. Undertaking a cultural planning approach is not without cost and partners should be enabled to meet these costs out of mainstream funding. The benefits of this for the community partners, and the communities they serve, will be a much greater sense of community ownership of regeneration plans and actions.

3. The opportunity to review and work on the successful aspects of the cultural pathfinder projects currently being undertaken, particularly those containing cultural planning elements.

How do you think the Scottish Executive and local authorities can best utilise the influence and impact of cultural activity?

By ensuring culture is recognised as the fourth pillar of regeneration, and as such has an equal part to play in regeneration alongside environmental, economic and social drivers. An integrated approach which is sensitive to and reflective of an area's culture, in its broadest sense, will underpin regeneration activities by making them responsive and related to the communities involved.

Cultural planning advocates this holistic approach to development, rather than starting from the identification of all the problems and issues in a community and addressing them one by one or separately, and this model puts culture and people at the core.

Cultural planning is, therefore, **not** the planning of cultural resources, it is the means of integrating cultural operators and cultural activities into broader existing community planning frameworks.

Do you think the initial guidance under this part of the Culture Bill is clear and helpful? Is there anything else it should contain?

The guidance is clear and helpful and it is encouraging to read that the Scottish Executive will be collecting information from local authorities about the ways they consider using cultural activity across their responsibilities. This information gathering should be broadened to find other examples of good practice involving a range of community planning partners and other cultural providers.

However the phrase 'planning of culture' should be removed from sections 2.9, and 2.12. Cultural planning, as noted above, is not planning for the improvement of cultural services, it is, as stated in the Bill's Guidance Document '**planning to deliver wider objectives and policies with and through cultural activity**' Annex 1, point 13, page 30.

Conclusion

Capital City Partnership applauds the Scottish Executive's interest and emphasis on cultural planning in the Draft Culture (Scotland) Bill, and looks forwards to involvement in the ongoing debate.

Kate Wimpess
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