

Ballet in Bognor, handball in Hull? Planning for culture and sport

As the TCPA prepares to work collaboratively on cross-sector guidance on planning for culture and sport, **Michael Chang, Phil Chichester, Simon Eden, Charles Freeman, John Holden and Jane Wilson** explain why action is needed, what that means for planning, and the TCPA's role in drawing up the new guidance



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Cultural and sports provision is crucial in promoting mental and physical wellbeing (saving long-term spending on health, social care, education, and police budgets) – and in creating high-quality places crucial for the attractiveness and economic wellbeing of places

The public response to the 2012 London Olympics and to the Cultural Olympiad of activities held across the country over the last four years has been overwhelming, and legacy plans are in place to produce lasting benefits for individuals and communities. The positive vibes surrounding the success of the Olympics and complementary initiatives have resulted in more people becoming interested, engaged and involved in cultural, sporting and leisure activities.

One key lesson from London 2012 is the critical importance of planning: not just the incredible levels of detail that went into the individual venues, but the collective thought that went into the landscape in which they operated. The environment of the Olympic Park, the public transport systems, and the mix of permanent and temporary routes and structures all enabled vast crowds to come together successfully to enjoy the Games. This required significant and long-term co-operation, which is still not over, as partners continue the transformational work on the promised long-term legacy for East London.

Other events reported in the news more recently illustrate the extent to which local communities

treasure their local cultural and sporting facilities. These include opposition to the demolition of the Jubilee Sports Centre in Queens Park, West London, for new housing developments in a deprived area; criticism of the Department for Education over the sale of school playing fields and removing standards for their provision, and continuous widespread anger at the closure of public libraries.

Over the past decade, increasing attention has been paid to the role that culture plays in invigorating communities and driving regeneration. Major events or building projects have often been the bedrock for regeneration – examples include Tate Modern, the Sage Gateshead, and the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester, which kick-started the regeneration of East Manchester and in many ways provided the inspiration for the successful London 2012 Olympic bid. Similarly, the competition to become European City of Culture in 2008, eventually won by Liverpool, highlighted regeneration initiatives in Newcastle-Gateshead, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff and Oxford. In the South East, the Regional Development Agency, SEEDA, and Arts Council England made a collective

investment of over £100 million in a range of sports and culture infrastructure projects in order to enhance the economic performance of some of the region's most deprived towns.

As we move into a new policy environment, and in a time of austerity, some people are arguing that there are more important things for planning to focus on than promoting quality of life. It is often argued that the costs of good design and the burden of developer contributions act as barriers to development. In this vein, in a recent statement the Government announced its intention to extend opportunities for developers to renegotiate Section 106 agreements for affordable housing.¹ It is not clear if this renegotiation process will impact on developer contributions towards the provision of open spaces, sports facilities and cultural infrastructure.

We must remember that planning and building are about the long term, not simply quick-fix approaches. There are sound economic reasons for including culture and sport in the mix which makes up sustainable development. Not only is good planning and access to cultural and sport provision crucial in promoting mental and physical wellbeing, thus saving long-term spending on health, social care, education, and police budgets, but we must also recognise that quality of place is a key factor in attracting and retaining the talented people who will drive future economic growth. In 2009, the Government's quality of place strategy, *World Class Places*,² drew attention to the way in which the blend of homes, services (including culture and sport provision) and jobs – together with well maintained sustainable buildings and spaces, high-quality green infrastructure and sensitive treatment of the historic environment – contribute to quality of place.

Culture is thus integral to sustainable development, and there is an important and specific role for the town and country planning system to ensure that culture and sport are taken into account in the development of our villages, towns and cities. This is made clear in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). For the first time, the NPPF makes explicit the role of planning in providing culture, leisure and community facilities and services to support social and cultural wellbeing. Previous guidance, in Planning Policy Statement 1: *Delivering Sustainable Development*, made only passing reference to general wellbeing in relation to community strategies and social cohesion, but the new NPPF includes cultural wellbeing as a core aim.

In addition, the Government updated its vision of sustainable development in 2011, giving greater

emphasis to wellbeing,³ and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is currently commissioning research to gain a better understanding of the concept of wellbeing and its implications for policy.

The implementation of the NPPF⁴ raises some hard practical questions for local authorities as they consider applications and adopt local plans. The NPPF requires planning authorities to take into consideration:

- **Core Planning Principles:** Planning should take account of, and support, local strategies to improve cultural wellbeing and deliver sufficient cultural facilities and services to meet local needs (para. 17).
- **Promoting healthy communities:** Planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared space and community facilities such as cultural buildings (para. 70).
- **Plan-making:** Local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan, including the provision of community and cultural infrastructure (para. 156).

Many of the terms used in the NPPF in relation to culture are new and have no agreed meaning, such as the concept of 'cultural wellbeing'. Furthermore, there is increasing talk of innovative new approaches to funding and delivery, including: community asset transfer, the Community Infrastructure Levy, the New Homes Bonus, Community Land Trusts, and the Community Development Finance Initiative. Planners, together with a diverse assortment of sports, culture and leisure practitioners and providers in the public private and voluntary sectors, need clarity and guidance, so that they can make the most of this new environment in planning, funding and delivering cultural and sporting infrastructure. And this is why the TCPA is working with a wide range of cultural and sports organisations to undertake a project that aims to provide practitioners with the information they require in order to develop effective local policy.

The TCPA is bringing together a cross-sector group of planning, cultural, arts and leisure organisations and individuals in a project to develop non-statutory planning guidance in support of the NPPF and a renewed approach to collaboration and partnership-working.⁵ The project will culminate in the publication of a guidance document of a form similar to recent TCPA planning guidance on *green* infrastructure and biodiversity⁶ and climate change,⁷ and which will be promoted through a regional seminar series.

Box 1 The Culture and Sport Planning Toolkit (CSPT)

The CSPT (available at www.cultureandsportplanningtoolkit.org.uk) was completed in 2009 as a collaboration between cultural and sport agencies under the Living Places initiative. It is an online resource for local authorities planning for housing growth and regeneration, designed to help them ensure that local areas benefit from improved cultural and sporting opportunities. It was produced in 2009 as a collaboration between cultural and sports agencies under the Living Places initiative. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Arts Council England, English Heritage and the National Archives in March 2012 to transfer ownership of the CSPT to the TCPA. Updating the toolkit's planning guidance will be part of the new initiative being initiated by the TCPA.

Follow updates on @CulturePlanning, or contact Michael Chang at Michael.Chang@tcpa.org.uk, or on 0207 930 8903, for details.

The TCPA is in a unique position to facilitate a longer-term commitment to the agenda, having been entrusted with the custody of the Culture and Sport Planning Toolkit, which it has taken over from the Living Places Partnership (see Box 1). For the past five years the web-based toolkit has provided a guide to help planners and professionals from the culture and sport sectors to work together, and it continues to be the only source of comprehensive information on spatial planning for culture and sport. Now, with TCPA support, the planning guidance in the toolkit will be refreshed to fill a void in the new guidance framework, and to reflect current policy and practice requirements.

In parallel with the development of the guidance, the TCPA is also continuing its work on 're-imagining' Garden Cities,⁸ whose principles include the physical and social wellbeing of the inhabitants as a key feature – the ballroom for the young women making the corsets in the Spirella factory in Letchworth being a prime example.

Pressures on staff time and public funds mean that the need for planners and culture and sports practitioners to work together has never been greater. This TCPA initiative will make an important contribution by providing timely advice, and by helping to broker new partnerships and share innovative practice between the planning, culture, arts, sport and leisure sectors. Most importantly, this will be a collaborative cross-sector initiative involving planners, arts and theatre professionals as well as a diverse range of community and minority-interest groups.

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Notes

- 1 E. Pickles: *Housing and Growth*. Written Statement by the Communities and Local Government Secretary. Department for Communities and Local Government, 6 Sept. 2012. www.communities.gov.uk/statements/newsroom/2211838
- 2 *World Class Places: The Government's Strategy for Improving Quality of Place*. Department for Communities and Local Government, and Department for Culture, Media and Sport. HM Government, 2009. www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1229344.pdf
- 3 *Mainstreaming Sustainable Development – The Government's Vision and What this Means in Practice*. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Feb. 2011. <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/documents/mainstreaming-sustainable-development.pdf>
- 4 *National Planning Policy Framework*. Department for Communities and Local Government, Mar. 2012. www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf
- 5 An initial stakeholder roundtable was held in June 2012 – further information on the roundtable event is available at <http://cultureandsportplanningtoolkit.org.uk/resources/news-and-events.html>
- 6 *Planning for a Healthy Environment – Good Practice Guidance for Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity*. TCPA and The Wildlife Trusts, Jul. 2012. www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/planning-for-a-healthy-environment-good-practice-for-green-infrastructure-and-biodiversity.html
- 7 *Planning for Climate Change – Guidance for Local Authorities*. Planning and Climate Change Coalition. TCPA, Apr. 2012. www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/PCC_Guide_April_2012.pdf
- 8 *Re-imagining Garden Cities for the 21st Century*. TCPA, Jul. 2011. www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/garden-cities.html