

Member Briefing

Cultural Improvement Partnership East Midlands

The Corporate Place of Culture

Why your council needs sport and cultural services

Overview

Sport and culture are among any council's most prominent services because of their importance to people and their quality of life. As such, they make an important contribution to achieving the corporate outcomes that matter.

Why it Matters

Cultural services should be valued not just in their own right, but for their role in gearing the council up to attain other outcomes. Without this wider engagement in the corporate agenda, culture faces a number of risks:

- The council's overall effectiveness and public satisfaction ratings will be undermined.
- The council risks losing one of the most important interfaces with the public it serves.

Key Messages

- **Culture helps a council, and its Councillors, fulfil their role as community leaders.**
- **Cultural services can help your council's targets in its corporate planning process, Local Area Agreement, Sustainable Community Strategy and Improvement Plan.**
- **Culture has a strong enabling role to play in key local strategies and partnerships, such as on crime and disorder and children and young people (particularly 'Every Child Matters').**
- **The high public profile of cultural services helps your authority to strengthen its local reputation.**

- **Develop cultural assets, such as sports and community centres, as multi-purpose outlets of public services.**
- **Reach out to voluntary and community sector providers to enhance the value local people place on culture.**

Background

Unlike statutory services, the public is under no obligation to use leisure centres, libraries or the arts. As a result some authorities have been tempted at times of budget pressure to scale down their cultural offer. This is a mistake for the reasons outlined above but can happen if the council as a whole - including cabinet Members, non-executive and scrutiny Members and managers - have not understood the vital role culture plays.

Cultural services make an effective contribution to a council's strategic aims in the following ways:

- They help achieve key outcomes in physical and mental health, educational attainment, economic vitality and community cohesion and safety.
- They are among the most effective at leveraging in external funding and support. Agencies sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (including the lottery distributors) provide extensive support to local authority led projects.
- They can help the council reach out and engage communities and are particularly effective at reaching disengaged and hard-to-reach groups and promoting community cohesion.
- As visitor attractions or tourist destinations, cultural services can be important in underpinning the contribution of tourism to the local economy.
- Cultural services including libraries, museums, sports, arts and play have a particularly strong contribution to make to the Children and Young People's Plans required of County and Unitary authorities.

It is important to make sure that these and other benefits are realised, by embedding culture into the council's corporate planning process.



Case Study: Young People Get Active

Derby City Council, like all upper tier authorities, was faced with the task of developing a Children and Young People's Plan. The City Partnership recognised that physical activity was a crucial way of improving the health of this population group, so the City Council conceived the idea of a Physical Activity Entitlement.

Physical Activity Targets for Children and Young People are included within the Local Area Agreement. The recently launched Corporate Plan identifies six priorities including 'Helping us all to be healthy, active and independent'. In October 2005, Derby launched a multi agency Physical Activity Strategy.

The council brought together Health Promoting Schools, Arts within Education, School Sport Partnership, Public Health, School Travel and Sport and Leisure. In June 2006 through the School Sport Partnership the Getting Derby Active Development Service began to measure the number of young people in school years 4, 8 and 10 participating in at least 7 hours of moderate intensity sport and physical activity each week. Over the next few years, data for this indicator will be collated by Leeds Carnegie Physical Activity Research Institute.

But there is real action too. Pump prime funding will help gear the city up to improving participation, through a social marketing campaign; behaviour change programmes for professionals and partner organisations; and a pilot scheme challenging schools to embed physical activity into daily life.

The Physical Activity Entitlement provides a foothold to get everyone, in the council and among its partner agencies, getting children and young people fit for the future.

"Research has proven that increasing exercise opportunities in schools provides many health and learning benefits for children, teachers and the community as a whole. When children are happy and productive in class, teachers have fewer discipline problems and this in turn helps create a positive school environment."

Cllr Sara Bolton, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Derby City Council



Photo: Derby City Council

Your next steps

- Identify which of your authority's strategic priorities or outcomes (for instance in the Local Area Agreement) recognise culture as an important contributor.
- Identify opportunities where such a contribution is currently being missed, and address them with the Executive Members and managers concerned.
- Explore how culture can be embedded into your council's corporate planning process.



Cultural Improvement Partnership
East Midlands

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