

Member Briefing

Cultural Improvement Partnership East Midlands

Cultural Regeneration Creating Sustainable Communities

Overview

Creating stronger, safer and more prosperous communities is about more than just physical infrastructure or 'bricks and mortar'; genuinely sustainable communities also need good governance, public participation, partnership working, excellent public services and a sense of civic pride.

Culture has a distinct and cross-cutting influence in shaping places that are active, inclusive, safe, strong and prosperous – essentially, culture is integral to the move toward creating sustainable communities. Culture and sport are, therefore, at the forefront of creating sustainable communities. They are "integral to the success of communities, they bring activity, creativity and character to places and are essential for living life to the full" (Culture and Sustainable Communities Joint Agreement).

Why it Matters

Culture helps us define who we are, where we're from, and the activities we engage in. From sport, leisure, theatre, the visual and performing arts, to libraries, countryside, architecture, design, heritage, play and tourism, culture plays a central role in health, learning, community engagement and cohesion, as well as contributing to wider economic and social development, through creative industries, inward investment, job creation, tourism and creating a sense of place.

Key Messages

- **The changing social and political landscape requires Members to create stronger, prosperous and more cohesive communities.**
- **Culture can effectively bond new communities with strong identities, self-confidence and ambitious life choices.**
- **Culture deserves a place in the mainstream planning of priorities for a local area – it encourages partnership working and joining-up of services, and challenges silo working.**

Background

The Local Government White Paper positions local government at the forefront of delivering better services, through a rebalancing of the relationship between central government, local government and local people. Local authorities have a duty to prepare and deliver a sustainable community strategy – the main delivery mechanism of which, the Local Area Agreement (LAA), offers a very real opportunity to both define local priorities and shape services. In this respect culture has much to offer – and a strong cultural offer often means better outcomes for local government, and local people.

- People who participate in cultural activities are more likely than the average citizen to have trust in the police, legal system, politicians and parliament (Culture, Participation and Civil Renewal, IPPR, 2006).
- 70% of young people believe that a lack of positive activities provision leads to more youth crime (MORI, 2002).
- The Home Office Citizenship Survey 2001 suggested that sport and exercise are the single greatest contributor to social participation (51%).
- Where artists have worked together with communities to create work related to migration, culture and identity, 71% of the participants felt that the project encouraged them to feel differently about other people and to have a greater awareness of other cultures and communities (Bringing communities together through culture and sport, 2004). (Joint DCMS, Home Office and NDPB delivery bodies publication).



Case Study: Fit Active Buddies (FAB)

The FAB project was set up as part of the Sports Action Zone in Leicester, initially funded by Sport England and in partnership with Braunstone Community Association, Leicester City Council and Leicester City Primary Care Trust. In four years, through groups like FitChicks, Teenage Lifestyle Club (TLC) and Calorie Killers, over 800 people of all ages have been supported to improve their health and self esteem, become more active, gain new qualifications and take up employment.

FAB was established in response to community consultation where residents said that one of the main barriers to taking part in physical activity was "I don't know how" or "I need someone to go with", as well as multiple issues such as transport, cost, poor health, lack of confidence or encouragement. Through the use of staff and accredited mentors the project supports people to set goals in health, fitness, skills and personal development. The project has now extended to three estates in the city.

Marlie has just been awarded "FAB Way of Learning" in recognition of his achievements. Marlie's learning journey began at

Calorie Killers last summer. A young man from the estate, he loves football, football and football. As he continued to attend the group, his interest in sport grew and he decided this was the career for him. He is now a qualified gym instructor, circuits instructor and community sports leader. He is a qualified first aider and has attended a Skills for Work through Sport course. Marlie is currently on a working placement at FAB and gaining more experience in the health and sport industry. So far he has helped guide a blind man to the top of the three highest peaks in the UK, coaches at Calorie Killers and supports individuals in the gym.



Photo: Fit Active Buddies (FAB)

Your next steps

- **Embrace learning opportunities – do you have the skills and knowledge to engage with the agenda?**
- **Engage with relevant local policy – identify cultural targets within your council's Local Area Agreement (LAA), Sustainable Community Strategy and Improvement Plan – they should be there.**
- **Identify the range of cultural services in your area – understand who's who, and what your cultural offer is.**



**Cultural Improvement Partnership
East Midlands**

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