

London Borough of Newham

Newham Community Infrastructure Study

March 2010

Culture and Regeneration

TRANSPORT
TRAFFIC
DEVELOPMENT
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URBAN DESIGN
ECONOMICS
MARKET RESEARCH

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Newham Community Infrastructure Study

Culture and Regeneration

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Contents

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 1 | Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1 | Purpose of Report | 1 |
| 1.2 | Structure of Report | 1 |
| 2 | Context | 2 |
| 2.1 | Regeneration | 2 |
| 2.2 | Policy Background | 2 |
| 2.3 | Summary | 4 |
| 3 | Case Studies | 5 |
| 3.1 | Overview | 5 |
| 3.2 | Case Study 1: Peckham Library | 5 |
| 3.3 | Case Study 2: Hoxton | 7 |
| 3.4 | Case Study 3: Sparkenhoe Theatre | 8 |
| 4 | Good Practice and Opportunities | 10 |
| 4.1 | Overview | 10 |
| 4.2 | Good Practice | 10 |
| 4.3 | Opportunities | 11 |
| 4.4 | Conclusions | 12 |

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Report

1.1.1 This report has been prepared by Colin Buchanan for the London Borough of Newham (LBN). It is intended to be read in conjunction with the Newham Community Infrastructure Study (2010), prepared by Capita Symons, Colin Buchanan, Sector and Professor Janice Morphet, which sets out community infrastructure requirements to respond to population growth.

1.1.2 This Culture and Regeneration Report has been undertaken as a desk-based study. The objective was to review good practice in cultural-led regeneration, assessing where cultural infrastructure provision has stimulated economic development and community development, and draw out opportunities for Newham.

Cultural Activities in London

1.1.3 London contains a broad mix of cultural activities including four world heritage sites, over 200 galleries and museums, over 100 theatres and 12,000 film locations. These activities employ more than 500,000 people, and two-fifths of new creative industry jobs were created between 1995 and 2002. This illustrates that the sector was, and still is, experiencing a significant growth. The total revenue from the sector is estimated at £25 to £29 billion, and these activities are visited by almost 28m visitors a year. Of this total, almost 60% are from domestic visitors with the remainder from overseas.

1.1.4 These figures demonstrate that cultural activities play an important role in supporting London as a world class city by providing excellent opportunities for all people, ranging from local residents to tourists, to engage in culture.

Newham Offer

1.1.5 “Culture” can have a number of definitions, covering the arts, culture, media and sport. For the purposes of this report, it has been agreed with the Client that cultural activities in Newham include museums, galleries, heritage, theatres, cinemas and town centre festivals and markets.

1.2 Structure of Report

1.2.1 This report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2: Context
- Chapter 3: Case Studies, and
- Chapter 4: Good Practice and Opportunities.

2 Context

2.1 Regeneration

2.1.1 It is commonly acknowledged that cultural activities can help promote and achieve regeneration. This message is echoed in a range of policy, guidance and literature and is a key theme in existing documents for London. In some cases cultural activities might provide a stimulus for regeneration and whereas in other cases they might be an outcome of development and growth. In either case, cultural activities and regeneration share a close and complementary relationship.

2.1.2 In summary, common references to cultural-led regeneration are as follows:

- Cultural development can assist regeneration and economic development
- London's cultural diversity and offer should be developed and maximised wherever possible
- Access to cultural activities is important for all, including residents and visitors
- Cultural activities can have positive impacts on local communities

2.2 Policy Background

2.2.1 This review of policy and guidance covers the following documents:

- London Cultural Strategy (GLA, 2004)
- Culture at the Heart of Regeneration (DCMS, 2005)
- London Plan (GLA, 2008) and Replacement London Plan (GLA, 2009)
- Cultural Planning Toolkit (Living Spaces, 2009)
- Shaping Places in London through Culture (GLA, 2009)
- PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (DCLG, 2009)
- Total Place – A Whole Approach to Public Services (DCLG, 2010).

2.2.2 Each is discussed below.

London Cultural Strategy (2004)

2.2.3 The Cultural Strategy aims to maintain and enhance London as a world-class city of culture. The city's strength lies in its breadth and depth of institutions, diversity, heritage, creativity and innovation, as well as the mix of old and new and the traditional and modern.

2.2.4 Culture is identified as a powerful force. It is able to promote understanding and a sense of identity, bring people with different backgrounds together, people with different backgrounds, eclipse barriers and celebrate difference. It can create a different experience for different people acting as a point of inspiration, education, wealth and/or pleasure.

2.2.5 The strategy sets four key objectives including: excellence, creativity, access and value. It is recognised that the principle of diversity underpins each of these as best performance of cultural assets will only be achieved if diverse communities are reflected and are active in cultural life.

Culture at the Heart of Regeneration (2005)

- 2.2.6 This report explains how culture can help to drive regeneration, and discusses issues such as organic development to respond to local needs to making an economic case for development.

London Plan (2008)

- 2.2.7 The London Plan provides the current planning framework for London. It emphasizes the role of the London Cultural Strategy (see below) and aims to promote and develop cultural activities (Policy 3D.4). Under Objective 2 it indicates that culture can make London a healthier and better city for people to live in. Much of this policy is also set out in the Draft Replacement London Plan (GLA, October 2009).
- 2.2.8 The Draft Plan refers to London as a Cultural Metropolis to be maintained and enhanced as one of the greatest cities in the world for culture, and creativity. Key policies include Policy 4.6 which aims to support and enhance the provision for arts, culture and entertainment, and Policy 7.9 which relates to heritage-led regeneration.
- 2.2.9 It acknowledges that culture “plays a valuable role in place shaping, especially by engaging younger people in wider community activity”. It is therefore important to expand the city’s cultural offer beyond central London and especially to town centres, including opportunities of the Olympic Park and Thames Gateway.
- 2.2.10 Boroughs are encouraged to work with partners to designate and develop ‘Cultural Quarters’ in LDFs and through development briefs. This work should draw on priorities set out in the Mayor’s Cultural Strategy (see below). These areas can provide a catalyst for local regeneration by helping to meet the need for affordable workspace for creative industries, including flexible live/work space and encouraging clusters of activity. Furthermore, the Mayor intends to work with Visit London to develop the concept of strategic clusters of visitor attractions.
- 2.2.11 The Draft Plan also identifies the potential role of heritage in regeneration. It notes that built heritage makes a significant contribution to culture by providing access to the history of the city and its places. Also, community cohesion is promoted through the recognition and enhancement of the multicultural nature of much of London’s heritage.

Shaping Places in London through Culture (2009)

- 2.2.12 In 2007, Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and CLG and five other cultural agencies formed the national “Living Places” programme. This alliance of public bodies believe everyone should benefit from the arts, sport, public space, heritage, museums, libraries and archives, the built environment and the creative industries, regardless of where they live.
- 2.2.13 This co-ordination of efforts led to the publication of “Shaping Places in London through Culture” and the “Culture and Sport Planning Toolkit” (both 2009). Shaping Places sets out a range of case studies and snapshots of good practice to help inform development of cultural activities. The document highlights key characteristics of approaches taken and explains that successful projects display the following:
- the right mix of leadership and partnership
 - effective joint policy making
 - adequate consideration of cultural provision during development, and
 - bold and imaginative thinking about the product.

- 2.2.14 The document goes on to note that “without integrated planning for cultural development, the financial and physical capacity to deliver cultural infrastructure is limited”. This highlights that a joined-up approach to planning and delivery is required for best outcomes. The Culture Toolkit supports Shaping Places by providing a practical source of information and advice to all practitioners involved in culture and planning. It focuses on helping integrate culture into existing infrastructure, developing a consistent approach and sharing best practice.

PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (2009)

- 2.2.15 PPS4 states economic development includes arts, culture and tourism uses (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities) and cinemas. Furthermore, under Policy EC4, leisure, cultural and tourism activities (such as cinemas, theatres, restaurants, public houses, bars, nightclubs and cafes) have a role in providing a diverse range of complementary evening and night-time uses.

2.3 Summary

- 2.3.1 The role of cultural industries in supporting economic development and social cohesion is accepted and strongly promoted at a national and regional level.
- 2.3.2 The next chapter of this report provides examples of how these objectives have been met through innovative projects.

3 Case Studies

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 Three different but relevant case studies are reviewed in this section. Case studies have been chosen to reflect a wide range of issues which might be encountered as part of cultural led regeneration. Two examples have been selected from London, and one from outside London. Each is briefly described below.

- Peckham Library (London Borough of Southwark) – Peckham Library is a well known community development, which forms part of the wider regeneration scheme in Peckham. The case study focuses specifically on the library development, as well as attempting to understand the design process.
- Hoxton (London Borough of Hackney) – Hoxton, in Hackney, has dramatically transformed over recent years. The case study focuses on the impact the culture has had on this regeneration and discusses a range of knock-on affects which have been identified.
- Sparkenhoe Theatre (Leicester City Council) – Sparkenhoe Theatre, in Leicester, was built as part of Sparkenhoe Primary School. It is well used and has become an important community asset particularly helping to tackle intercultural issues and strengthen local communities.

3.1.2 Each case study is set out as follows:

- Cultural Development Provision – including details of development, location, services and facilities provided, any associated development (if part of wider scheme) and development timescales
- Context – conditions of study area prior to development of cultural activity/activities
- Design Process – including project team, preparation processes, funding.
- Impact of Development – including issues, opportunities and threats.

3.2 Case Study 1: Peckham Library

Cultural Development Provision

3.2.2 Peckham Library forms the focal point of Peckham Square, a recently developed public space. It was built as a catalytic project in a wider regeneration scheme. The building has a strong presence in the town centre, especially due to its distinctive and colourful design. It was designed by architect Will Alsop.

3.2.3 The wider regeneration scheme developed 2,000 new homes, following demolition of 3,000 units in five existing estates. The new development provides a significantly enhanced environment for residents.

3.2.4 The aim of the project was to advance the traditional view of the library. The new model proposed it would be fun, interesting and attractive to everyone, of all ages, in local communities. As part of this, additional services and facilities have been provided to create a 'mediateque', including library services as well as facilities for arts groups, and studios and communal meeting spaces. The library provides:

- library offering 60,000 books and associated library services
- meeting room 'pod1 – hired to local organisations and businesses
- study area 'pod'
- children's play area 'pod'
- staff offices

- the Southwark Local History Library
- the One Stop Shop for Council information and advice.
- Other services – ‘baby and toddler’ sessions, teenage and adult reading groups, Homework Help club, and free internet and Wi-Fi access
- outdoor public space – for various activities such as festivals and markets

Context

- 3.2.5 During the early 1990s Peckham was one of the most deprived areas in the country. Previously, the area was a place where communities have moved into, but then moved on. Prior to 1990, approximately 70% of residents in the Five Estates area wanted to leave Peckham. It was clear that radical action was required to regenerate the area. The scheme aimed to counter the effects of economic and social decline experienced in Peckham.

Design Process

- 3.2.6 A large amount of public consultation was undertaken throughout the design process. A model of the proposed building sited in various local venues was used as the basis for discussion. This approach ensured, Peckham Library was the product of the public, and this has created a true community building to meet local needs.
- 3.2.7 Peckham Library took 5 years to develop and it opened in March 2000. Peckham Library cost £5million to design and build. Of this total, £1.25million came from the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). Additional funding from the SRB went onto provide the construction of new mixed-tenure, low-rise housing, Peckham Pulse healthy living centre, Peckham Square and Peckham Arch.
- 3.2.8 The project was run by the Peckham Partnership, which included a number of private, public and voluntary sector partners. The library is owned by the London Borough of Southwark Council owns this public library.

Impact of Development

- 3.2.9 Peckham Library is regarded as extremely successful by both the Council and local community. Usage of the building has exceeded expectations. It experiences approximately 500,000 visits per year. Most visits are from local residents, and the number of books loaned out per year is approximately 297,000. The variety of activities and spaces available ensure that it is highly used by a wide and diverse range of audiences.
- 3.2.10 Due to its success, Peckham Library has become an iconic feature of Peckham and has undoubtedly put the area "on the map". It is commonly cited as a good practice example of development in the community and has acted as a leading case study for Living Places and the DCMS.
- 3.2.11 Beyond the actual building itself, knock-on effects include reducing Peckham's high unemployment, improving opportunity, reviving an ailing town centre and making the area safer and a more attractive place where people wanted to settle and raise their families. After redevelopment, surveys showed that approximately 35% of residents in the area wanted to leave Peckham. This figure was previously 70%.
- 3.2.12 Into the future, Peckham Library contributes to and forms part of wider regeneration programme for Peckham. This scheme is on-going and has a range of future objectives to be implemented in short, medium and long term.

3.3 Case Study 2: Hoxton

Cultural Development Provision

3.3.2 The Hoxton case study relates to an area of east London, in the London Borough of Hackney, which has undergone a dramatic transformation in recent years. This review does not focus on a specific project but considers how cultural activities have impacted upon regeneration.

3.3.3 Hoxton underwent rapid development during the 1990s. The area began to initially receive attention as a popular district for artists, who began to colonise the area. Flagship projects including the Lux Cinema, Circus Space and White Cube Gallery were developed. These activities further attracted creatives and entrepreneurs to the area. The area is now one of the most sought after places in the city. It is occupied by upmarket bars, cafes, galleries, clubs, residential conversions and high profile residents. Furthermore, there have been improvements in education provision through the new Hackney Community College. This includes award-winning public art commissions.

Context

3.3.4 By the late 1980s, Hoxton was characterised by run down buildings. It was one of the most deprived and derelict areas of the country. Unemployment and crime rates were among the highest in London. It remained untouched by the property boom.

Design Process

3.3.5 The development process was initially relatively organic, however as the area became more popular it was subject to City Challenge funding and New Deal for Communities funding in Shoreditch, which helped support development projects .

Impact of Development

3.3.6 Growth has led to the creation of approximately 1,000 local jobs per year. In spite of this a number of issues have impacted upon the local population. Local unemployment levels remain and there is a tendency for locals to only find low-paid sectors such as bars and security. In addition, some local residents have been forced to move out of the area as land values have significantly increased by over 140%. As part of this it is noted that original impoverished artists who have been credited with leading the regeneration have also moved on as their squats and low-cost accommodation have been replaced by expensive loft-style living.

3.3.7 As a result of this divide between local and the new development, it has been raised as an issue that there is a lack of connection with the surrounding local community, which includes the New Deal for Communities area of Shoreditch.

3.3.8 This issue is being tackled in an innovative through the establishment of “Shoreditch Our Way”, a property corporation which is funded by the NDC. The community-run corporation buys property in the area for the benefit of the local community. So far, it has developed a property portfolio worth a approximately £5 million. This includes a cinema, community centre and housing for key workers. This has ensured that new and up-to-date community facilities are available to local residents, who have not been part of the new wave of private sector investment.

- 3.3.9 Today, Hoxton is considered to be one of the most fashionable parts of inner London. This is a significant feat as it was one of London's most notorious slum areas only several years ago.
- 3.3.10 The areas "rags to riches transformation" has also been in part come about through a fine-grained regeneration. A strategy titled "Hackney: Cultural Workshop of London" helped realize the potential of developments, such as the Lux Cinema and Circus Space, to create a distinctive offer for creative entrepreneurs.

3.4 Case Study 3: Sparkenhoe Theatre

Cultural Development Provision

- 3.4.2 The Sparkenhoe Theatre, in Leicester, forms part of Sparkenhoe Community School. The school was originally built in the 1980s, with the theatre being developed in 2003-2004. The theatre was developed to provide a purpose-built performance and teaching space for the pupils of the primary school, but also to be available to the wider local community.
- 3.4.3 The site was originally a disused 1950s pre-fabricated former dole office building. It was redesigned and extended, however the original structure was retained where possible. The theatre provides flexibility in its use of space including:
- newly built theatre / performance space for dance, drama and music
 - flat timber sprung floor
 - 200 retractable seats
 - converted foyer offering additional teaching space.
 - multimedia room
 - dressing room
 - green room and office
 - outside space - including a garden and play area.

Context

- 3.4.4 It is commonly acknowledged by the school and community that the design team achieved a remarkable transformation by converting what was a derelict building into a new arts centre.

Design Process

- 3.4.5 Leicester City Council commissioned Ash Sakula Architects to design the Sparkenhoe Community Theatre. The Sparkenhoe Community Primary School is the main end user of the theatre.
- 3.4.6 Costs of the project were decreased by creatively re-using and retrofitting the existing building. This helped create a larger arts space, which could not have been achieved if a new building was developed due to budget constraints. This also ensured a more sustainable development through the re-use of existing structures, as well as use of green materials, including timber and silver thermal foil.
- 3.4.7 The project was funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) "Space for Sports and Arts" scheme (administered by Sport England). This was an initiative to provide new and refurbished facilities for primary schools in deprived areas. The Sparkenhoe Theatre cost £660,000 to develop.

Impact of Development

- 3.4.8 The creation of the Sparkenhoe Theatre transformed the a run-down and derelict plot into a vibrant and populated space for the local community.
- 3.4.9 In 2004, the theatre enjoyed one of it most celebrated achievements as it won a RIBA Award for Architecture. These awards are presented to buildings that have high architectural standards and make a substantial contribution to the local environment.
- 3.4.10 It has become a highly valued asset for children and adults in the community, and is well utilised by a range of groups from different backgrounds. An example of how the theatre has helped the community through the culture is demonstrated by the Mendhi Play.
- 3.4.11 This production was led by the local Pakistan Community and Youth Association, to help the theatre to host an intercultural event. It was very well received and attended with the audience travelling from a number of local communities in the surrounding area. Overall, it was considered a success. This demonstrated a willingness to intercultural activities at theatres, whereas previously in Leicester such events were objected to as it was claimed only English Programmes should be performed in theatres. The Society for Intercultural Understanding Leicester (SICUL) helped to organise the event and aimed to ensure the production would be accessible to all. It also encouraged involvement from people from a range of cultures to promote a truly intercultural event. This new approach to community activities helped the play become the success that it was.

4 Good Practice and Opportunities

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 This final chapter identifies lessons emerging from good practice in cultural-led regeneration and a range of opportunities for Newham in relation to developing future cultural infrastructure. Findings are based on the policy review and assessment of three case studies.
- 4.1.2 Newham is set to deliver approximately 20,000 new homes over the next 15 years. A universal challenge in relation to this type of housing delivery, and thus creating new communities is ensuring that strong and sustainable communities develop and grow. Housing cannot be developed in isolation and therefore culture can play an important role in strengthening communities. Culture is an engine for communities through a variety of activities relating to recreation, performance, celebration and participation and is therefore considered part of the social glue which can bring people together, enhance quality of life, provide education and training and bring economic benefits.

4.2 Good Practice

- 4.2.1 The following lessons of good practice in cultural-led regeneration have been identified:
- Planning – the planning and design process is vital to developing a successful project which delivers positive impacts for all. This process is ongoing from the outset of the early stages of the project and should consider a number of the best practices examples set out below such as consultation, joint-working and partnership, meeting local needs, accessibility and flexibility.
 - Consultation – defining shared and agreeing aspirations between all stakeholders including the local authority, developers, potential users and local communities is crucial to developing a project which benefits all. This approach to development can help ensure that the local community and end users have a strong feeling of ownership of the facility and/or service provided. It also ensures that the project will help meet local needs. Achieving these two objectives, of community ownership and meeting needs, will have long term benefits including increased and sustained participation in activities and events.
 - Joint working and partnership – it is important, from an early stage, to engage with, and explore potential relationships, for potential joint-working and partnership with a range of stakeholders involved in the project. This approach is encouraged by Total Place, and might reduce capital and revenue costs, which is important as budgets have become increasingly constrained overtime. It might also ensure that development fulfils a number of functions and purposes for the benefit of more users and thus add value to the final product provided.
 - Meeting local needs – new development should be planned so that it meets local needs. The whole area should be considered, as encouraged by Total Place, and any deficits in cultural provision should be identified. These areas, and those identified by local communities through consultation, should be priority areas for development.
 - Accessibility – any new development needs to be accessible to all. This form of accessibility not only relates to the location of the facility, activity or event but also

to the service provided. Firstly, buildings should be provided in accessible locations which are well connected to a range of transport modes, especially public transport, walking and cycling. Secondly, services including activities, courses and events, on offer should cater for and be available to all groups within local communities. Both these characteristics of community infrastructure will increase engagement, utilisation, interculturalism and community cohesion.

- Flexibility – new buildings should be designed to be able to accommodate a wide range of uses and cater for a diverse mix of users. Achieving this level of flexibility often relates to transforming traditional views of a single use facility into one that has a variety of roles and functions. As a result, it can add value to facilities.

Total Place – A Whole Approach to Public Services (2010)

4.2.2 The Total Place agenda represents a new approach to the provision and delivery of public services. This ambitious initiative seeks to consider how a ‘whole area’ approach can lead to improved services at a reduced cost. This requirement from increased efficiency is a result of the impact of the economic downturn.

4.3 Opportunities

4.3.1 The following opportunities to develop cultural-led regeneration in Newham are set out below:

- Total Place – a “whole area” approach is encouraged to be adopted by Newham, whereby the whole borough is considered in relation to cultural infrastructure delivery. This approach might rationalise existing stock, and involve collaboration of resources to added value and produce a more efficient network of cultural activities. This approach might also lead to cost savings, through joint-working and partnership and multi-use of facilities.
- Olympics – Newham needs to build upon future planned development and ensure that this development also delivers the right mix of supporting cultural infrastructure. This might be developed in the form of new facilities or as enhancements to existing facilities.
- Celebrating Diversity – Newham is proud of its rich mix of communities and cultures. This diversity in the local population should be celebrated and exploited where possible. It is important that both cultural facilities and services provided are accessible and available to all. The Council is recognised as a centre of excellence in the way it involves hard to reach groups in culture and sport, and this ability should continue to be promoted into the future.
- Training / skills – as part of providing flexible and multi-functional spaces, there are expected to be opportunities to develop linkages with other organisations and institutions such as schools and colleges. Where possible, such opportunities should be explored as culture can be applied as a route to learning and employment. Development of cultural activities can also lead to direct provision of new jobs.
- Tourism – any opportunities to promote cultural facilities, particularly those which might relate to cultural diversity, history or heritage, should be maximised and any potential to attract visitors be explored.

- Landmark Development – new cultural building often provide opportunities for exciting, colourful and innovative design, which mirrors and represents the diversity and mix of uses and users who visit and utilise the facility. Such buildings can provide new landmarks as part of existing communities or new schemes.

4.4 Conclusions

- 4.4.1 A common feature in all three case studies is the reliance on public funding, which is unlikely to be as forthcoming in the near future. As a result, cultural projects will need to demonstrate how they add value to public service delivery and promote operational efficiency.
- 4.4.2 It is recommended that a mapping exercise of cultural provision is undertaken to identify the range of facilities provided and services offered by them. This would be a useful input to inform any wider review of public sector assets and services to be assessed through the Total Place agenda, which aims to identify possible opportunities for rationalisation and joint-delivery of cultural and other services, as well as meeting any gaps in provision.