People, Places and Spaces: a regional cultural infrastructure development strategy for the South West of England

Planning Areas for Culture: Bristol, Bath and Weston super Mare

Update from Mary Schwarz, Consultant to Culture South West
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1 Since May 2008, I have been talking with key contacts in each of the People, Places and Spaces (PPS) Planning Areas for Culture (PACs) about the most appropriate body or group to take forward sub-regional PPS implementation as the PAC Partnership Group (PG), in anticipation of the formal launch of PPS on 19 September 2008.

2 These discussions have also informed the development of the PAC Protocols, which provide a common purpose and working practice for each PPS PG, whilst being flexible to meet differing circumstances in each PAC. The PAC Protocols also include a description of the role of the PPS Joint Implementation Group (JIG) designated contact agency. These Protocols, which have been agreed by the PPS JIG at their July 2008 meeting, can be found at the end of this report.

3 As regards the Bristol, Bath and Weston super Mare PAC, following initial discussion about PPS at the West of England Partnership Culture, Leisure and Tourism Group on 6 June 2008, Libby Grundy (Joint Executive Director of Culture South West) and I met with Chris Humphrey (now Acting Regional Director, Arts Council England South West and this PAC’s designated contact agency representative) and Andrew Kelly (Bristol Cultural Development Partnership) on 2 July 2008. I subsequently attended a West of England Partnership Culture, Leisure and Tourism Officers’ Group meeting on 14 August 2008.

4 Participants in these meetings have taken account of previous discussions and proposals about the way forward for this PAC, and have now, at the formal start of the PPS implementation phase, identified the West of England Culture, Leisure and Tourism Group as the appropriate basis of the PAC PG.

5 Next steps to prepare the way forward to develop the sub-regional PPS implementation plan - a joint strategic document describing cultural infrastructure aspirations; prioritised areas for investment; joint approach to events development, working with 106/Community Infrastructure Levy etc. - will include:

- a sharing of current cultural infrastructure plans and strategies across the four local authorities
- the identification of additional key people to become involved in sub-regional cultural infrastructure planning (see PAC Protocols)
- developing communications with wider networks/fora.

6 The West of England Culture, Leisure and Tourism Group is invited to discuss and agree this proposed way forward, the detail of which the Officers’ Group will work on for presentation at the next meeting.
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Planning Areas for Culture protocols

1 Context

A Planning Area for Culture (PAC) is an identified urban and geographic area of high growth and its surrounding hinterlands. A PAC may cover one or more local authority areas. PACs are one of the two strands of People, Places and Spaces, the regional cultural infrastructure strategy, the other being Regional Priority Projects. Each PAC will have an identified body (e.g. Cultural Partnership, Cultural Forum Board, Culture Theme Group etc.) that acts as the PAC Partnership Group (PAC PG). The aim of this group is to undertake sub-regional cultural infrastructure planning, within the context of wider sub-regional cultural planning, working effectively with the regional and sector specific perspectives and objectives of the regional agencies represented on the PPS Joint Implementation Group (JIG). The following terms of reference are offered as generic guidelines to inform the work of the PAC PG.

2 Generic guidelines re Terms of Reference for PAC work

- To identify and develop sub-regional cultural infrastructure priorities, an implementation plan and timetable within the framework of PPS, with measurable outcomes and outputs
- To commission, or support the commissioning of, research into the current cultural infrastructure and needs
- To commission, or support the commissioning of, feasibility studies that evidence whether there is a sustainable business model for identified cultural infrastructure priorities
- To provide a framework in which constituent organisations can provide joint advocacy for identified projects, joint investment of direct and in kind resources and joint leverage for investment, within an integrated plan
- To work within the context of national, regional and local policies and strategies e.g. Living Places, Regional Economic Strategy, Regional Spatial Strategy, Regional Cultural Strategy, sustainable community strategies, cultural strategies, local area agreements, multi area agreements etc. and support the objectives of these
- To liaise with other key agencies and structures e.g. SWRDA Area Teams, GOSW Locality Teams, Local Strategic Partnerships, Economic and Planning Departments in local authorities, where not represented on the PAC PG
- To liaise with other relevant organisations, agencies and areas in relation to the potential impact of sub-regional cultural infrastructure priorities
- To liaise with the PPS JIG through the designated contact
- To contribute to, and benefit from, sharing of practice with other PACs
- To identify a meeting schedule; determine servicing arrangements; decide on a quorum (if appropriate); and agree protocols for the setting up of any sub- or working groups and inviting non-members to attend meetings
- To ensure all communications are clear and open, with due regard to issues of commercial confidentiality
- To review its role and achievements on annual basis.
3 Composition and Membership

The group will very likely be an existing body concerned with the wider context of sub-regional cultural planning, but may be especially established to undertake the implementation of PPS. Whilst the composition of each PAC PG should take into account sub-regional circumstances, and is a matter for sub-regional decision, consideration should be given to including representation from the following, ensuring all cultural sector domains are covered, and also environment and planning interests, where appropriate:

- Local authorities (senior officers/members as appropriate)
- Local Strategic Partnerships
- SWRDA area team
- Private sector (including major cultural institutions)
- Voluntary/third sector (including major cultural institutions)

Each PAC PG will also include the relevant JIG designated contact agency (bearing in mind that this role - see below - supports the engagement of all relevant regional agencies in PAC PPS implementation)

Composition and membership will be formally notified to the JIG to enable a regional overview.

4 PAC JIG designated contact role

- To work with the PPS central resource as needed to identify the PAC Partnership Group (PG)
- To promote the implementation of PPS within the PAC
- To attend PG meetings
- To represent and/or provide an active communication link with other JIG member agencies
- To provide a link between the PAC PG, PPS central resource and JIG
- To advocate the work of the PAC PG
- To liaise with any PAC based regional priority project JIG designated contact
- To support sub-regional cultural infrastructure planning with reference to regional and sector perspectives, viability and sustainability
- To make regular reports to JIG and contribute to annual review.

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