

Emerging Issues for the Sustainable Community Strategy Development, for Discussion at the Cultural Partnership 24.09.07

Theme: Culture & Physical Activity

Trends in Coventry

The Cultural Partnership is currently consulting on a draft Cultural Strategy, which sets out the story to date for the city, and excerpts are set out below.

Coventry is in the midst of an £8bn city-wide regeneration scheme and the city's cultural sector in terms of its people, facilities and activities are ready to make an essential contribution to Coventry's development and the quality of life of its citizens. Cultural provision has grown substantially in recent times and now includes the Ricoh Arena, major developments of the Belgrade Theatre and the Herbert Museum and Art Gallery and a host of festivals and events including the Godiva Festival and the Jazz Festival. CVOne plays an important role in managing / promoting the City centre.

Coventry people and visitors make over two million visits to libraries, 1.7 million visits to sports centres and golf courses and nearly 300,000 to the Transport Museum. Compared to other areas Coventry people make good use of visits to museums and libraries and a high number of school children are involved in group visits.

There are weaknesses in the facilities infrastructure, including:

- Coventry Sports Centre is in urgent need of renewal
- Voluntary sports club provision needs revitalising
- Much of the heritage of the City is playing too limited a roles for local people and visitors
- Accessibility of University and school based facilities and activities needs reviewing
- There are gaps in provision of spaces for arts and heritage activities / groups
- Some neighbourhoods have limited community and sports provsion

During consultation on the cultural strategy it has become apparent that Coventry is 'stuck with an outdated, industrial, manufacturing image, yet also viewed as a relatively harmonious place which welcomed incomers throughout history and has positive attitude towards an increasingly diverse community.

Perceived weaknesses include:

- The city centre, particularly in the evenings and its ability to attract businesses
- A need to promote city as a sub-regional centre, competing with Birmingham / NEC

- Limited understanding about the range of cultural activities and opportunities available

Key Strategies

The *Coventry Cultural Strategy (Draft) Aug 07*, is consulting on the following priorities:

- Develop the new Creative Coventry – develop creative and innovative businesses & help attract new businesses and creative people to help Coventry thrive
- Raise Coventry's profile with the community and visitors – promote the city as a place to live, work, visit or to do business
- Connect the city's culture to local neighbourhoods – increase chances for participation, volunteering and employment in and enjoyment of a wide range of cultural activities, celebration and showcasing of local and diverse cultural expression and the development of pride
- Make the city centre a vibrant centre of culture – so it becomes a more attractive place and projects a positive image of Coventry's diverse communities and innovative culture
- Contribute to social inclusion and community cohesion across the city - ensure that activities that contribute to the cultural offer also offer sustained opportunities to everyone including disabled people, children & young people, older people and those on low incomes, to ensure that the cultural sector is contributing to lower crime rates, increasing community cohesion, and a greater recognition of the different cultural backgrounds that make up the city

The *Coventry Sports and Physical Activity Facility Strategy 2006*, aims to 'promote active lifestyles and enhance the quality of life for Coventry people through the development of a sustainable network of accessible, high quality sport, recreation and fitness facilities, offering a wide range of activities with opportunities for everybody to participate and to progress to achieve their sporting potential'. Its objectives include:

- To provide facilities where people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can get started, stay and succeed in sport with access to the right facilities, equipment, coaching and encouragement
- To ensure that facilities are available to meet the particular needs of groups in the city who may experience barriers to becoming involved in sport and fitness activities

The *Coventry City Council Cabinet Member Culture, Leisure and Libraries Strategic Plan 2007/8 - 2009/10* includes the following strategic objectives:

- Support people from all communities to attain their potential through Cultural, Leisure and Library initiatives, learning for life and study support;
- Continuously improve and develop the quality and access to Cultural, Leisure and Library services and facilities internally and externally;

- Encourage the use and improve the attraction of Coventry as a venue for tourism and leisure activities

The *Coventry City Council Cabinet Member Children & Young People Strategic Plan 2007/8-2009/10* includes the strategic objective:

- Ensure that all young people have access to good youth and leisure facilities.

The *Children and Young People's Plan 2006-10* is a single strategic overarching plan for all children and young people's services across Coventry. It provides an integrated approach to meeting service needs and is structured around the five Every Child Matters outcomes, plus one local outcome:

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Having Economic Wellbeing
- Supportive Friends, Families & Communities

The Plan is relevant to all themes of the Sustainable Communities Strategy. Strategic priorities related to the theme Culture and Physical Activity includes:

- Being Healthy: The rise in obesity among children is halted
- Making a Positive Contribution:
 - More young people engage in voluntary and community activity
 - More children and young people to develop self-confidence to successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges
 - More children and young people develop enterprising behaviour

It also prioritises improving access to sporting opportunities for looked after children and children from black and minority ethnic communities.

The *Coventry City Council Cabinet Member Community Services Strategic Plan 2007/8-2009/10* includes the strategic priority 'to ensure that adults using social care services are supported to live independent lives and have access to life opportunities.

The *Coventry Older People's Strategy 2006*, gives priority to improving and integrating health and care services, and maximising the independence of older people so that they are able to have more control over their lives. Specific priorities include improving access to lifelong learning, leisure and cultural opportunities.

The *Coventry City Council Cabinet Member Neighbourhoods and Community Safety Strategic Plan 2007/8 - 2009/10* includes the following priorities:

- To create genuine neighbourhood working that enables joint service delivery at a local level, aligned with the Council's and Government's targets and objectives

Challenging and Reducing Hate Crime: A Hate Crime Reduction Strategy for Coventry 2006/8 includes the following key priority:

- To encourage, develop and support the use of sport, art and cultural activities as a tool to help address issues of discrimination, racism, homophobia and disablism and promote community cohesion;

Growth – Challenges & Opportunities:

- Development of cultural and creative enterprise to strengthen and help diversify the local economy
- Improving city centre and the cultural offer could raise the profile of the city and help with attracting and retaining business, visitors and local people.
- Building links between the two universities, schools, and colleges to develop creativity and creative business to retain graduates and strengthen the economy.
- A growing city centre programme of animation and a more co-ordinated promotion of the city's heritage would help to attract visitors and shoppers
- Culture has a large part to play in enhancing the image of the city and helping it to compete with other local economies
- Growth of the city may result in a broadened cultural base, which could further enrich the cultural offer and be harnessed to support community cohesion outcomes
- Redevelopment of the city provides opportunities to improve parks and open spaces and encourage more people to take part in activities that contribute to health and well-being

Cross-cutting Issues

Community Cohesion and Equalities

- Improved community facilities through the Building Schools for the Future Programme and through community centres would enable more people to be involved in activities to promote health and cohesion
- Need to overcome negative perceptions of the cultural industry particularly in priority neighbourhoods – we need to create opportunities for participation in events, volunteering and employment
- Good transport links are needed to enable people to access cultural opportunities
- Promotion of health and well-being

- Cultural involvement helps to develop a sense of well-being and pride in the city and in being a Coventrian.
- It should also be used to bring people from different backgrounds together
- Looked after children and children and young people from black and minority ethnic communities need to benefit from greater involvement in sports (Children's Plan)
- Increase participation of older people in cultural, leisure and sports activities would contribute towards maintaining independence

Making a Positive Environmental Contribution and Tackling Climate Change

- Arts activities could provide powerful vehicles for promoting messages and understanding about how individuals can help to address climate change
- New facilities need to be climate proofed to ensure that the carbon footprint is minimised and that buildings and landscapes are designed to mitigate the impacts of climate change

Long- term Outcomes

By 2026, Coventry will be benefiting economically from a thriving cultural industry, the profile of the city will have been raised and it will be seen as a more attractive, vibrant and creative city where people want to visit, live, work and do business

More people will be participating in cultural, leisure and sporting activities

What We Need to Tackle

- Increase the contribution of creative businesses to the local economy
- Increase participation, employment and volunteering in cultural & sports activities
- Increase the number of visitors to the city centre, particularly in the evenings

This will involve activity to:

- Support development of local creative and innovative businesses
- Improve the image of the city & the city centre
- Promote the city and raise Coventry's profile
- Improve the quality and access to sports facilities
- Connect the city's culture to local neighbourhoods
- Improve the evening culture of the city centre to enhance the quality and excitement of the built environment
- Promote social inclusion and community cohesion through Coventry's cultural offer

- Support communities to recognise and value the contribution of other local groups to improve the city's cultural offer

Cross-cutting Issues to be Addressed – Growth, Equalities and Cohesion & Climate Change

- The cultural offer is a key factor in attracting new businesses and people to the city, and hence to achieving employment-led growth
- Developing the cultural industry will contribute to a growing economy
- Cultural and sports activities can promote community cohesion, health, well-being and independence
- Good transport links are essential so everyone can access opportunities
- The level of participation in cultural activities by those living in priority neighbourhoods needs to be increased
- Improved access to sports opportunities for looked after children and children from black and minority ethnic communities is needed
- Older people could benefit from greater involvement in activities through maintaining health and independence
- Arts activities could promote awareness of and positive actions to address climate change
- New physical developments need to be climate proofed

Short-term Priorities

- Development of local creative and innovative businesses
- Increase participation, volunteering and employment in cultural activities and showcase this diverse local expression
- Improve the quality of local parks to attain 'Green Flag' status

- 1. Does the Theme Group think that the Longer Term Outcomes and issues to be tackled above are the right ones to suggest should be included in the Sustainable Communities Strategy?**
- 2. Are the Short-term Priorities appropriate for consideration as priorities for the Local Area Agreement?**