



CREATIVE
LEWISHAM

LEWISHAM CULTURE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



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CREATIVE LEWISHAM

CULTURE & URBAN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION REPORT

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BY
CHARLES
LANDRY



FOREWORD

Lewisham, like so many other towns and boroughs, is facing up to the fact that it has to move on from the days when light industry and manufacturing formed the cornerstone of local employment and prosperity. The massive shift toward Service Industries, the ubiquity of the Internet, the drift away from the 9 to 5 working day – few people seriously believe any of this is likely to be reversed. Yet some do continue to believe or, if not believe, then continue to hope, that our future might still lie in the security of our past.

Drawn from personal experience as Chancellor of The University of Sunderland, let me offer this example: I spend a good deal of my time in the North East of England, where the old manufacturing industries, shipbuilding, mining and so on have long since disappeared, to be replaced by elements of that same knowledge economy; there is no better symbol of this than the University itself, a genuinely beautiful technologically-focussed institution built on the actual site of the old shipyards, and now employing more people than the shipyards ever did.

Yet, paradoxically, I'm finding that with distance the very disappearance of the old industries has led to a growing nostalgia for them. Where once families said to their sons, 'don't go down the mine, get an education,' over time they have come to believe that the employment of the past represented real life, fostering real communities as opposed to the slightly 'artificial' or 'socially fragmented' communities of today.

Just as once Lewisham boasted biscuit manufacturing, jam, electrical engineering, lens making and the remarkable Mazawattee Tea Company, it can now boast with equal pride of Goldsmiths College, Citibank and over 500 examples of cultural industry start-ups.

This new economy needs to be embraced wholeheartedly. Ideas, creativity, the Arts and the new technologies are Lewisham's future, and its schools and colleges, in fact the whole community, need to gear up to it. If any one place has the diversity, drive and talent to make this work, Lewisham does.

For people to feel inspired, they need to have a visual environment which matches their ambitions and creative talents. The astounding number of urban developments currently underway provides the opportunity to show that Lewisham is serious about its aspirations.

The transformation has already begun. This report will help that process enormously, and although I'm not sure it needs it, I truly wish Lewisham the very best of luck.



LORD PUTTNAM OF QUEENSGATE CBE



INTRODUCTION

I invited Charles Landry to chair the Lewisham Culture and Urban Development Commission after reading his book, the Creative City. His ideas about using culture as a vehicle for transforming cities resonated with my own experience and observations. I am acutely aware of the reservoir of creative talent across Lewisham, particularly in the northern parts of the borough, and have been keen to use this talent as a dynamic force for change.

I particularly liked Charles' approach in advocating the need to go beyond traditional artistic boundaries, developing the notion that creativity and a cultural dimension need to be applied across all spheres from how we treat the built environment to how the Council takes decisions and involves the community.

I have been looking for a long time to find the key driving force that will help us take the quantum step change needed to transform the borough. Culture and Urban Design are two key areas to help cities revitalise their communities.

I would like to thank Charles for applying his enthusiasm, passion and sheer hard work to making the Commission a success.

I would also like to thank all those who worked with Charles in making the Commission a reality and the numerous members of the community who have participated in this project.

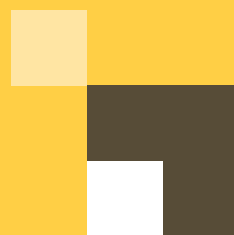
Two years ago the Council adopted the mission statement 'to make Lewisham the best place in London to live, work and learn' and I am sure the action that will flow from the Commission will go a long way to help achieve this. I am therefore looking forward with immense excitement to seeing the recommendations of the Commission come to fruition in the months and years ahead.

COUNCILLOR DAVE SULLIVAN
MAYOR FOR LEWISHAM



PREFACE

PRE FACE



PREFACE

SETTING THE SCENE

The Mayor of Lewisham felt it was time to 'seize the moment' of change and opportunity and he asked me in November 2000 to chair the Culture and Urban Development Commission. The purpose of the Commission has been to explore and recommend to the Council the step changes needed to transform Lewisham into a stimulating environment so that it becomes recognised, locally and nationally, as a more visible and notable centre for creativity, cultural development, the arts and urban design. The purpose too has been to develop a strategic synthesis between arts, culture, economy, urban vitality, landscape and urban design and to provide suggestions for strategies, programmes and projects as well as how these filter down into mechanisms for delivery.

The guiding vision has been to see how Lewisham can be enlivened by encouraging sky high ambition mixed with realism. Although it is always easier to go with the tried and tested and be satisfied with second best, that is not good enough for Lewisham. It will not tap the underlying potential.

The main focus of the Commission's enquiry has been: what needs to happen so we can

- Create a climate to enable residents of Lewisham and visitors to experience and participate in a rich cultural life.
- Equip Lewisham residents with the skills and expertise to flourish in every field of creative endeavour so supporting their economic and social well-being.
- Provide an urban design framework that results in a physical environment that engages, inspires and enthral.
- Produce an overall ambience and public realm that triggers a sense of pride in residents and admiration in visitors.

We consulted as widely as possible within time and resource constraints so establishing an overview of the Lewisham situation in terms of cultural activities and built environment projects. In Phase One we undertook:

- interviews and conversations (about 60 in all) with people who have an overview of individual sectors, e.g., urban renewal projects, multi-cultural arts, the creative industries
- visits with key officers and other stakeholders across the Borough to look at initiatives spanning all fields of relevance to the Commission's work
- desk research

The formal launch of the Commission in January 2001 was followed by a series of themed Cluster meetings with key individuals within each sector. These meetings – 14 in all – included: Citizens' Panel, arts and education, lifelong learning, multi-cultural arts, urban renewal projects, the voluntary sector, urban design, young people, the commercial creative industries, health, and geographically-based clusters such as Downham. Over 300 people contributed to this consultation phase.

On the basis of this survey and research, an interim report called 'Lewisham: A Living Work of Art' was published on 1 March 2001 and put out to wide consultation. This survey of opinions, possibilities and problems has been integrated into this final report.

In the second phase of the Commission's work two panels of Commissioners – one on the Built Environment, one on the Arts and Creative Industries – were appointed by the Chair, to raise issues of substance and 'take evidence' from 30 'expert witnesses' of whom two thirds were directly connected to Lewisham, the rest being acknowledged leaders in their field. The purpose was to bring as many perspectives as possible to bear on the issues facing Lewisham, and receive help in making recommendations on how to move forward.

TWIN TRACKS SAME DESTINATION: NAVIGATING THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE COMMISSION'S BRIEF

The Commission's brief has been difficult, because it deals with two of the most complicated words in the English language – culture and creativity. 'Creativity' is an overused concept difficult to define or grasp and often only associated with the arts. Briefly, genuine creativity involves the capacity to think problems afresh or from first principles; to discover common threads amidst the seemingly chaotic and disparate; to experiment; to dare to be original; to rewrite rules; to visualise future scenarios; and perhaps most importantly 'to work at the edge of one's competences rather than at the centre of them'. These ways of thinking encourage innovation and generate new possibilities. Differing types of creativity are needed to develop and address the complexities of a place which continuously needs to deal with conflicting interests and objectives. This might be the creativity of scientists to solve problems related to pollution or that of planners to generate new urban policy; that of engineers to solve technical problems concerned, say, with transport; that of artists to help reinforce the identity of a place or spur the imagination; that of business people to generate new products or services that enhance wealth creation possibilities; as well as those working in the social domain in order to develop social innovations that might help with issues such as social fragmentation. Creative solutions can come from any source whether from within the worlds of the public, private or voluntary sectors or from individuals operating on their own behalf. The key issue is to provide the conditions within which creativity can flourish.

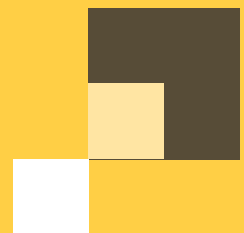
The term 'culture' is even more elusive because it has multiple meanings. On the one hand the brief discusses 'culture and development' and on the other 'cultural development'. The first is about beliefs, traditions and ways of living and how they affect behaviour and the things people do. So when we talk of 'culture and urban development in Lewisham' we are discussing the relationship between cultural factors and Lewisham's development and how these influence each other. For example, if Lewisham were to have low self-esteem and little confidence this would be a cultural factor determining how it develops. Equally if being imaginative is not legitimised or, alternatively, if a technocratic mindset is allowed to dominate, these would be cultural factors shaping Lewisham's future. All development is cultural as it reflects the way people perceive their problems and opportunities. Culture is central, because it 'is the sum total of original solutions a group of human beings invent to adapt to their.....environment and circumstances.'

The focus of the Commission's report is to argue for a culture of creativity, high ambition, entrepreneurship and opportunity, beauty and acute sensitivity to high quality urban design, all of which shape the physical and social environment in Lewisham. The report highlights too the need to devolve power and for collaboration inside and outside the borough. It is about developing citizenship. The Commission's report seeks to affect the culture of Lewisham in general and its organisational culture in particular so that the borough becomes more resourceful and confident. This cultural capital represents the raw materials and scope within which the creativity of people in Lewisham can operate.



On the other hand, this report focuses on cultural development in its humanistic and artistic dimension including the arts as an empowering, self-expressive activity; the arts as helping provide meaning, purpose and direction; the arts as fostering aesthetic appreciation and the arts as creative industries. Yet in this particular instance these elements are intimately connected to the objectives above. Firstly, because the arts encourage a particular form of critical imagination which the Commission seeks to help embed more deeply into Lewisham's culture. Secondly, the arts are concerned with quality, attractiveness, performance and beauty and the design of our environment and how it is animated – again a key feature of the Commission's overall objective with its focus on urban design and a holistic, urbanistic approach to development. Thirdly, the Commission is concerned with the economic and social well-being of the borough, where the arts and creative industries play a role both as economic engines of growth as well as in terms of their social impacts. As a consequence, the arts and culture in this narrower sense affect as well as draw on the work of other fields from economic development to health and planning.

Therefore some recommendations are concerned with organisational culture and the broader culture of developing Lewisham in a more creative, resourceful and confident way, whilst others are concerned with strengthening the arts and urban design sectors.





AND FINALLY

Although I am the author of this report it would have been impossible to write without the ideas and help of numerous individuals, in particular: the members of the Commission's Steering Group - Aileen Buckton, Emma Peters, Hilary Renwick, Fiona Nicol; the Panel Members and Witnesses; the Cluster Members; everybody interviewed individually; Ryan McDade, the Commission's Co-ordinator; and Gin Dunscombe, the Head of the Commission.



CHARLES LANDRY
JUNE 2001



SUMMARY



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SUMMARY

CREATIVE LEWISHAM

Lewisham aspires to be the best place in London to live, work and learn. In November 2000 the Council set up the Culture & Urban Development Commission to help achieve the vision of the borough as a visually exciting, creative and imaginative hub within London. The commission's report recommends the step changes needed to transform Lewisham into an inspiring physical and social environment through a more coherent synthesis between urban design, arts, culture and the economy.

The time is right for Lewisham to grasp its distinctive opportunities. To harness its potential requires a shift away from responding reactively to proactive agenda setting, to seeking opportunity and connecting with the wider pan-London agenda. It requires an entrepreneurial way of thinking and acting whereby Lewisham seeks out the partners it wishes to work with; those who can help achieve the vision.

To maximise potential means encouraging a culture of creativity and imagination and embedding it throughout Lewisham's organisational landscape. It requires an uplift in ambition and boldness, and the need to elevate urban design as well as to understand the varied impacts of involvement in the arts and creative industries.

To create a critical mass for this vision, we propose a series of catalytic projects which express and embody Lewisham's heightened ambition. We suggest making the often invisible talent and interesting projects, especially those in education, more visible, and building on Lewisham's remarkable cluster of educational institutions. This we believe will maximise the potential of the diversity of skills, knowledge and experience which already exist and can be further nurtured. This is best achieved by providing an operating environment which is more open, is willing to take accountable risks and which devolves more power. This means whenever possible thinking outside boxes, hierarchies and structures.



A MASS OF POSSIBILITIES

There are innumerable possibilities to make a more creative Lewisham. They include: Using schools, further and higher education to spread the word about creating a vibrant cultural and visual environment; seeking to work with the best of the architectural profession and when appropriate getting artists involved from the outset: this may involve creating competitions for new buildings; creating more artists' residency schemes, some in unusual settings from hospitals to social care facilities to commercial businesses; developing more niche festivals around special interests or children's projects along the lines of Greenwich & Lewisham Young People's Theatre; attracting larger creative businesses to the borough of, say, 10–50 employees so that an emerging pool of talent can readily find employment and ensuring that the newly designated Creative Enterprise Zone becomes a lived reality; encouraging more work/live spaces and providing more creative business incubator units or artists' studio premises; explaining through the careers advisory service the potential of careers in the arts and creative industries; doing more audits of potential such as of the rivers, topography and heritage; creating beacons or landmarks out of railway stations or borough entry points to enhance the sense of identity and arrival: an example would be to develop an artistic trail from the Horniman to Forest Hill station; working on a stronger design consciousness by cleaning up the street scene of unsightly advertising hoardings, traffic signs, railings and damaged paving as well as designing out crime and anti-social behaviour; this might involve taking a leaf out of Southwark's approach to involving artists in designing the public realm; enhancing the image of libraries as venues and centres for social interaction; having more information about what is going on in the borough by creating guides, maps and web-sites for Lewisham; finding ways of putting Lewisham on the music and theatre circuit by attracting a venue like Ocean to come to the borough; creating more international links with similar boroughs from places as different as New York or Mozambique and connecting these to a diaspora programme perhaps by hosting Diaspora's Music Village in Lewisham; drawing on the potential of the third sector as a gateway to excluded communities; involving young people wherever possible in decision-making and seeing the borough's rich mix as an opportunity not a threat. With projects like these and the many more that would develop naturally, Lewisham will over time generate greater vibrancy and distinctiveness making it a more self-confident London destination.

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

To create a self-sustaining momentum for change Lewisham's key stakeholders need to be engaged in an advocacy process so that the vision of a creative Lewisham becomes more deeply embedded and is expressed in the projects each party independently undertakes.

The Council as instigator of the Commission should initially lead this process, yet share decision making and responsibilities as soon as possible. We highlight over 30 catalytic projects ranging from the development of the Creative Enterprise Zone to a new Downham Library/Leisure Complex, which demonstrate the rich possibility of partnerships.

We propose a Creative Lewisham Agency as the vehicle through which that partnership is expressed. Its initial purposes are to kickstart and support the recommended strategies; to help maximise opportunities especially those in North Lewisham and audit those in the South; to communicate the Creative Lewisham agenda and to develop a fundraising strategy to help initiatives get off the ground. The agency should have an Advisory Board made up of external experts. Within Lewisham Council a steering group on Creative Lewisham should be set up with an appointed co-ordinator.

Only with a set of focused structures can the opportunities be harnessed arising from, amongst many, Goldsmiths, Lewisham College, the new Laban, the re-opened Horniman Museum, the Blackheath entertainments cluster, the Thames Gateway initiative, the plans of the Learning and Skills Council, the Art of Regeneration SRB, the Stephen Lawrence Techno Centre and Cockpit Arts' proposed move.

Any project that impacts on the physical environment should be assessed from an urban design perspective and to increase design standards the plethora of tools from design guides to competitions should be used. Lewisham Council can play an important role in this by enlarging the resources and realigning the urban design function within the Regeneration Directorate; by increasing the emphasis on visual arts, design, public art and architecture by developing an Urbanism and Urban Design strategy including a Landmarking Strategy and a Lewisham Design Guide. It can also use world-renowned architects to assess Lewisham's major built environment projects and adopt initiatives ranging from Placecheck and Architectural Foundation approaches to involvement in creating better environments as standard practice. Embedding this consciousness more widely means that organisations such as the Lewisham Strategic Partnership should include people with urban design and cultural understanding.

The Regeneration Directorate can use assets to even greater regenerative effect, such as by making sites and buildings available at reduced rates or using capital receipts creatively to support arts led regeneration projects. A primary example is to maximise the £52million schools PFI where urban design and arts objectives can combine imaginatively.

The Cultural Department equally needs an uplift in resources, personnel, skills and vision. With partners, it needs to map opportunities from arts and the curriculum to cultural animation, the evening economy, heritage and the creative industries to take the Commission's proposals further. In so doing it should connect more regionally, nationally and internationally as a means of accessing greater resources as well as raising Lewisham's profile.

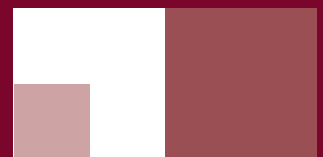
THE WAY FORWARD

Lewisham Council while key, is not the only actor. Everyone can play a part in contributing to a creative Lewisham. It requires energy, will and ambition. Success depends on the active involvement of everyone associated with Lewisham, and on those who, inspired by this vision, want to get involved. If done well, Lewisham will be positively transformed in the next decade and become a model for integrated urban development from which others can learn.



OVERVIEW

OVER VIEW



OVERVIEW

CREATIVE LEWISHAM: TOWARDS A LIVING WORK OF ART?

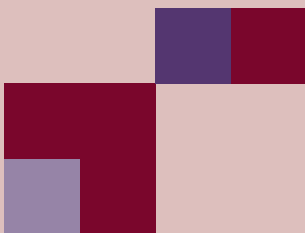


THE TIME IS RIPE

Lewisham stands at the cusp of a rare but complex opportunity that cannot be grasped by a 'business as usual' approach. The stakes are high and cannot be harnessed solely by traditional means. It requires a shift in aspiration and expectation and a desire to continuously improve on previous best. It calls for an understanding that a culture that fosters imagination, that sees the benefits of using the arts and that encourages high quality urban design can tangibly help define and implement the 'Lewisham vision'. It cannot happen overnight. It will take time to unfold in its fullness. Done well the whole can become much more than the sum of the parts.



'Creative Lewisham', the Commission's report, seeks to be the catalyst that helps spell out potential so providing a compass to help move from good ideas to practical actions on the ground. A degree of urgency is required as opportunities do not last forever and passivity is not a solution. The trick is to identify when the public sector should intervene, when it should influence and when it is right to leave things to the market. The time is ripe to catch the conjunction of special circumstances. What are these special circumstances?



The Age of Creativity

For people and places in the 21st century, it will be their creativity, in all facets, in responding to their challenges that will largely determine their success or failure. Today places like Lewisham have one crucial resource – their people: their cleverness, ingenuity, aspirations, motivations, imagination and creativity. Crucially, regeneration and renewal is a much more subtle and over-arching process than previously appreciated. It is essentially holistic and embraces economic, social, political, environmental and cultural factors. It is more than simply technological innovation. It is more than physical improvements on their own and involves innovation at every level of decision making. Organisational capacity appropriately structured has been acknowledged as a tool for urban competitive advantage which needs to be creatively developed. Physical changes assist; they can help build confidence and provide visible markers of progress. Yet, if renewal is to be self-sustaining, people need to feel involved and to have the opportunity to give of their best. And this needs to start right at the beginning by adapting the curriculum and by re-assessing the ways people are taught thereby maximising opportunities for employment. This means nurturing a place's ability to mobilize its ideas, talents and creative organisations.

Dynamics of London

More specifically in the context of Lewisham, the dynamics of London have changed dramatically over the last decade fermenting the emergence of the South East London phenomenon. Its catalyst is a combination of factors including the extension of the underground and development of the DLR; the establishment of a series of landmark projects such as Tate Modern; the relative price advantage of housing in South London and the growth of Canary Wharf, where employment is set to rise by 60,000 over the next 5 years. This overall dynamic connects Lewisham more firmly to London's destiny and to that of the wider world as part of London's role as a world city. All South East London boroughs are feeling these impacts which are generally positive but not by definition so. Lewisham needs to direct the dynamic so its own goals are met and strengthened. And importantly Lewisham cannot see itself as a self-contained island.

Home grown potential

Lewisham's opportunity is also self-generated. For example, the educational institutions and projects of national and international significance from large to small; the buoyant creative industries cluster and a motivated and experienced voluntary sector, especially in the north of the borough. These have not come out of nowhere. They have been fermenting for 15 years. They are rooted. They have done their time, so to speak. They are now coming to the boil and their networks have reached critical mass.

A spin-off is that many artists – perhaps 2000 – have stayed on after education and, as a consequence, there is a boom in creative businesses – over 550 at the last count. This is impacting well beyond Lewisham in terms of perceptions people have of Lewisham and in developing connections, synergy, networking and joint projects within and outside the borough. In sum this represents a remarkable cluster of institutions and activities which with some fine-tuning and recognition of potential can do even more. To talk of Lewisham becoming a more creative place is not simply hype but has a sound basis in reality. The discussion as to whether the arts regenerate areas is academic in Lewisham as they have already done so.

Pushing at an open door

Additional factors shaping Lewisham's increased potential and its aim of harnessing creativity and fostering good urban design include the increased recognition of creativity and the arts as drivers of the emerging economy, and, in urban regeneration, the increased understanding of the role of the creative industries. Of special note is the use of new information technology within creative industries businesses and in turn their role in education. The recognition too that the arts can have a central role in building social capital and so contribute to helping the social inclusion agenda has had an impact. Witness, therefore, the policies of the DCMS, DFEE, DTI, GLA and London Development Agency from which, if Lewisham is focused, a high level of resources could be exploited. In addition government has clearly set the agenda for urban design issues to be addressed with vigour and confidence as a number of key policies and legislative documents exist to aid the promotion of good design. The Urban White Paper agenda is one and is likely to have knock-on effects in terms of Planning Policy Guidelines. All in all the incentives and regulatory regime is shaping up in a way that feeds well into Lewisham's emerging objectives, yet Lewisham's development potential depends on its own balanced repertoire of encouragement and safeguards.

TURNING PROBLEMS INTO OPPORTUNITIES

But it is not all a blessing. Lewisham operates in a competitive environment and other places have also thought of culture and creativity to revitalize themselves so Lewisham cannot take its opportunities for granted. In addition some tangible problems exist. When the DLR opened, footfall in Lewisham Town Centre increased by 24%, only to decline rapidly when the overall experience was found wanting. Lewisham's visual environment needs a significant uplift to mark a change in attitude, ambition and offer. It is not enough to transform people's sense of themselves and their possibilities, say through the arts, if they are then dropped into a mundane and at times degrading urban setting. A litmus question to ask is simply: Does the urban environment in Lewisham uplift or deflate?

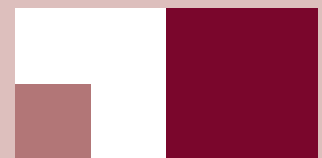
Another problem is that it is not only creatives who find parts of Lewisham attractive but property developers seeking to satisfy the demand for executive housing. The pressure to gentrify is

enormous. Starting in the North its tentacles are already spreading elsewhere in the borough. These external pressures for change are threatening to overwhelm that which has taken so long to nurture – yet at the same time within that regeneration and gentrification nexus there is also some good in terms of innovation and development.

The strategic question for Lewisham is whether it wants to be more of a dormitory or a mixed-used community. The answer is obvious – it is the latter. Can Lewisham twist the development dynamic to that goal? The Council has already taken some hard decisions. For example, to maintain diversity of interesting uses it has sold sites at below market rates to arts groups, creative businesses and community organisations arguing that the non-financial benefits will in the long run pay off in innumerable ways. This is courageous.

A complex issue is that the North Lewisham mix which is at the core of Lewisham's current opportunities is difficult to seamlessly translate into Bellingham or Downham. The North and South of the borough are different and there is a psychological distance. So the South will have its own solutions and opportunities. Yet there are lessons to take from Deptford. One focus might be to develop capacity building thereby encouraging a critical mass of new style, entrepreneurial voluntary organisations to develop, and not only in the arts. Another is to develop some inspirational landmarks that engender civic pride and motivation such as the new library/leisure complex.

In spite of everything Lewisham can regard itself as extremely fortunate. It has a diversity of assets that would be mightily expensive, if not impossible, to reinvent from scratch. To build on the potential and overcome problems, it is time to grasp possibilities with foresight and in the spirit of the Commission's perspective. In a decade Lewisham could be transformed in its sense of self and how it projects to the wider world. This in turn will generate further opportunities and funding, creating possibly a virtuous, reinforcing cycle of positive developments.



CATALYSTS

There are many catalysts to trigger the process. They include: promoting the emergence of the new Laban; confirming the status of the Creative Enterprise Zone in Deptford; building on the potential of the creative industries through a considered business development initiative; projecting the activities of the remarkable cluster of educational institutions – Goldsmiths, Lewisham College, Laban and Trinity College; harnessing the re-opening of Horniman’s Museum in 2002 to reflect the diversity of what Lewisham offers; generating a truly ambitious development at Convoys Wharf; maximising the opportunities of the Meridian Gateway; using the borough’s schools and hospital PFIs as innovative test cases to show the scheme can generate quality and innovation especially outside the North; developing a transformatory flagship through the New Deal for Communities at New Cross Gate; using the Sundermead Estate redevelopment to set the standard for Lewisham town centre; confirming the building of a new Downham library/leisure complex; ensuring the new Goldsmiths Gateway Building reflects strong imagination; finding ways of supporting Lewisham College’s new Centre for the Performing and Creative Arts; using the Art of Regeneration SRB to measure evidence of arts impact in schools so unleashing later resourcing for arts in schools initiatives; considering whether to apply for ‘curriculum derogation’ so as to highlight creativity across all subjects thereby bending the curriculum; developing the 24-hour school concept involving creativity and community learning as well as parent involvement and cross-generational work; achieving the Artsmark gold standard for a number of schools and specialist arts status for a borough school; establishing enduring relationships and agreed longer term programmes within the Creative Partnerships initiative; ensuring that the Lewisham Arts and Education Network has greater profile; drawing in new partners to the borough such as the Architectural Foundation, Urban Space Management and Cultural Co-operation; re-using empty estate shops for creative uses; instigating some visionary design work around Catford Square, Forest Hill, Sydenham, Honor Oak and the other Lewisham neighbourhoods.

GOING WITH THE GRAIN OF TRENDS

In developing strategies and pursuing catalyst projects a number of issues need addressing. They include: understanding such trends as the inter-cultural agenda and dealing with diversity and difference – perhaps the key urban issue of the beginning of the 21st century. This can be seen as an opportunity rather than a threat. London, of course, has only become a world city over the centuries because of the influx of people, ideas and connections. Overall, Lewisham reflects London’s developing cosmopolitan mix, but its population diversity is clustered more in the North with parts of the South largely being white.

A second issue is the revolution in the economy with the creative industries playing a more central role and Lewisham does not want to miss out. The consequent need to equip the population with new skills for 21st century puts creative education, at all levels, in a completely new light. Here information technology will play a crucial role.

Thirdly, Lewisham cannot ignore the so-called ‘experience economy’, a rapprochement between everyday living, consumption and spectacle which shapes what cities look and feel like. It will affect planning, land use and use orders. This process is turning retailing into a part of the entertainment industry, often blurring the boundaries between shopping, learning and the experience of culture. Here design, multimedia applications, theatrics and soundscapes move centre stage.

Lastly, there is a recognition that the concept of development and regeneration has broadened and that physical and economic renewal cannot be detached from social renewal – and as a further twist from cultural renewal.

DEVELOPING AUDIENCES BY RETHINKING PROVISION

In order to develop audiences, Lewisham needs to assess new trends and review from scratch its current venue infrastructure. It might ask: What is a venue? What kind of buildings do we need? What is the level of quality we expect as normal? What happens in an arts centre? What is the role of a library, a theatre, a park, a museum, a play area? What is an appropriate future-oriented festival for Lewisham? A station could become an art gallery, or an arts centre a healthy living centre linking sports, arts and dance, a doctors' or physios' surgery could be incorporated into a venue, again widening potential audiences. A venue is a dedicated building, but it can also be the street. Art exhibitions could be on the streets. How we see venues has implications for what planners, licensing authorities and the police can do to create an environment within which cultural expression can flourish.

IMPLEMENTING WITH A SENSE OF BALANCE

At the heart of strategy-making certain considerations are crucial. They include: balancing large projects with small, fostering the glitzy and the less glamorous, ensuring that the wealth of ideas and talent in Lewisham becomes more visible and that this is reflected in the physical environment or activity programming. This is especially important for less high profile projects of wider significance like Second Wave, MIDI, Entelechy, Lewisham Young Peoples Theatre, IRIE dance, the Get Set for Citizenship programme. Important, too, is focusing on ladders of opportunity so linking education to business training; spreading opportunities that exist in the North of the borough into the South; ensuring that, whenever appropriate, inter-borough projects and strategy-making is fostered throughout South East London to create coherence of approach, access to resources, effectiveness and impact; encouraging development without creating too many negative side-effects of gentrification; creating a mixed-use environment which balances the local production of culture with possibilities to consume it; finding ways to use heritage assets combining innovation and tradition imaginatively; making certain there is a mix of large flagship projects whilst paying attention to smaller projects that replenish the creative base; combining, for example, incremental

improvements to the streetscape with big ideas such as re-creating Lewisham Interchange; attracting stimulators from outside whilst building on home-grown community projects; leveraging in commitment from the private sector and its desire 'to get on with it' within a more equitable public interest vision. And finally, when necessary, stretching the incentives and regulatory framework and being a pioneer in order to fulfil Lewisham's aspirations.

THE PHYSICAL FEEL

The clarion call of Creative Lewisham will increase expectations citizens have for themselves by fostering their aspirations through inspiring them – and much of that inspiration will need to come from the physical feel of Lewisham. It can develop a sense of place, identity and distinctiveness as well as engender a feeling of engagement and loyalty that gives citizens a stake by working with its culturally distinctive features. New buildings in Lewisham feel less new than they should and the architecture is less bold and innovative than it could be. For most, first impressions of Lewisham disappoint and first impressions are also our last. Lewisham's offer is both seamless and rather samey and for outsiders can feel disorienting as there are insufficient landmarks or moments of surprise to guide the visitor, to seduce and encourage them to stay on. The key issue in competitive terms is: 'Is this enough?'

In short, the urban picture has potential to improve dramatically. One route is for artists working with architects to infuse the totality of Lewisham by transforming offices, the shopping centre itself, bus shelters, buses, seating, waymarkings, lighting, entry points and portals which, if seen through the eyes of the artistic imagination, could create a sense of drama and expectation. It therefore makes sense to reconceive Lewisham as 'A Living Work of Art' and overcomes the culture of: 'Up to a standard, down to a cost!' As Lewisham operates in a competitive environment regionally and nationally it will need to lift its game.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Grasping potential will mean overcoming obstacles. Some of these are to do with awareness, others with political will or lack of resources, organisational structures and skills sets. Ideas are easy. Implementing them is quite another matter because it challenges existing ways of operating. Inevitably large organisations have aspects of institutional lethargy and the operating environment often cannot be bent to new purposes. To create the energy to make change feel worthwhile means providing and seeing the evidence of its impact, whether that be locally as with Peckham Library, or nationally with Glasgow or Huddersfield or internationally with Bilbao. The most powerful awareness-raising tool is 'seeing is believing' which will show that investing in quality and culture adds value and is not a fad, that it is to be seen as an investment and not a grant.

Implementing Creative Lewisham will require rethinking at a number of levels and developing new partnerships within the Council itself, between the Council and other actors in the borough, making links between significant players in the borough but not connected to the Council and crucially with new outsiders. By definition Creative Lewisham is a cross-departmental activity. Only when this occurs can synergies be created, new ideas, perspectives and opportunities be generated and consequently new resources drawn in. New resources will be required and not all of these are to do with money.

MAKING THE MOST OF POSSIBILITIES

To prepare the Council and other stakeholders for the Creative Lewisham agenda requires an uplift in resources, personnel and skills, for example in the Cultural Department and, similarly, for some aspects of the Regeneration Directorate's work. It requires providing the capacity to shift away from reactively responding to proactive agenda setting, to opportunity seeking and connecting. Equally the space should be created to be proactive in identifying and targeting people of talent from developers to festival organisers or anyone else they wish to attract. This will have additional spin-offs in terms of new ideas generated, profile and word-of-mouth reputation. It demands an entrepreneurial way of thinking. It means connecting the arts and urban design agenda to the objectives of other departments from Economic Development to Social Care & Health, Health, Safety and the Police. The policies of many departments therefore need to mesh and new policy handshakes initiated.

It means recognising, too, the complexity of the task and the need to work with partners, and wherever possible devolving power and trading it for creative influence. It implies recognising new skills and jobs to help bring out the most of Lewisham, both from outsiders and insiders: the cluster of skills concerned with being an amateur, an urbanist or an urban designer. It implies too that decision makers in Lewisham become a community of learners – such as recognising good ideas elsewhere or valuing what urbanism is about – essentially the dynamics of how cities work and their aesthetics. This requires awareness raising and training. Indeed the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment has begun to lobby for councillors to have some form of urban design training as a requirement.

The cultural and urban design agenda will move centre stage in regeneration when the planning toolkit is used imaginatively, which would also get across an understanding that the nature of planning has changed. When orchestrated effectively it can create dramatic change, especially when guidelines and incentives are rethought, when development briefs incorporate a sharp vision and when design guides leave room for innovation within a structure, so balancing looser controls and over-prescription. Such ingenuity is crucial bearing in mind that the planning of Lewisham's urban environment is dependent on regulations and powers often well beyond its control; leaving aside accountability issues which inevitably slow things down and the capacity of the private sector to operate at times more flexibly.

PROJECTING LEWISHAM

Over-riding everything should be a concern with Lewisham's projection and image, which should operate at a number of levels – internally and externally, to niche markets and broader audiences. This should not be seen as a simple PR exercise, but as a long term policy objective based on a deep sense of what Lewisham is and could be.

Done well it will increase the sense Lewisham residents have of themselves and their resulting self-esteem. If Lewisham people feel ashamed that they come from Lewisham how can they aspire? If Lewisham's image feels rich and multi-textured, outsiders will consider Lewisham as a place to be, to invest and enjoy, thereby becoming unconscious ambassadors for the borough.

Focusing on Lewisham as a collection of villages or neighbourhoods is probably the way forward. But before embarking on the major image rethink, a subtle Lewisham asset audit should be undertaken to include under-recognised assets such as history or discovering and exploiting current stars, and assets such as the dog track or Rivoli Ballroom. Only with this stock of material can an image be built that goes beyond the well-worn cliché. This image should be internationally oriented yet locally derived. Inevitably the arts and urban design will play a central part in creating images for Lewisham.

In benchmarking itself, Lewisham should not compare itself to Bromley, Southwark or Greenwich but to the best in Europe and this requires a best practice observatory function within the borough and proactive approach to culture and urban development. Through comparisons with the best, Lewisham's expectations are raised.

RECOMMENDING A WAY FORWARD

EMBEDDING THE AGENDA

We conclude that there are various ways in which the Council and other stakeholders – from education to business to community organisations – can maximise their potential by tapping into the Creative Lewisham agenda. We propose how the agenda should be championed and co-ordinated within the Council and how it should be embedded well beyond those most closely involved in the Commission process. One important recommendation we make is that a dedicated external entity, perhaps called the Creative Lewisham Agency, be set up to assist the Council and other stakeholders pursue the Creative Lewisham agenda. With a clear brief and shared vision it will, it is hoped, be a kind of inward investment agency for ideas and resources. In an ideal world it would not be necessary to set up a dedicated entity as each organisation of its own accord would identify, unleash and harness its creative resources and maximise synergies. Creative Lewisham would be the acknowledged corporate agenda and the new ethos driven from the top.

CLA is proposed as a small, flexible, helpful, supportive device to the stakeholders of Lewisham. This light-footed organisation should be reviewed after three years. Its style should not be to seek to accrue power, but rather like an impresario to generate ideas, to assess feasibility, to trigger and help launch initiatives, to seek synergies and in doing so to devolve and sub-contract whenever possible. If it works well, it will devolve itself out of existence.

A series of embedding initiatives should be put in place as soon as possible given that the Commission process, although already useful in triggering change and momentum, by its nature only worked in depth with a limited number of people. Awareness raising meetings say with tier 3 and 4 Council staff, with housing groups, with local amenity campaigns, the higher and further education sector, schools, arts organisations or employers are crucial to seedbed the ideas and perspectives more deeply. Communications tools from a Creative Lewisham information pack or newsletter and a dedicated web-site would all be part of this process.

BENDING BUDGETS AND RE-BADGING

Resources can be re-ordered to get more out of them. Lewisham Council alone has a budget of over £750million. If only a tiny percentage were bent towards Creative Lewisham objectives, the effect could be enormous. Its impact could make any investment seem cheap. The housing capital programme alone is £50million and a small percentage could be spent on better architects, urban design briefs or incentives to improve design quality.

Furthermore 15% of the housing related capital programme can be spent on non-housing issues – again an opportunity. This focus on quality can allow housing associations or registered social landlords to think of themselves as not just landlords but social investment agencies.

Re-badging existing initiatives is another effective way of generating critical mass and momentum. The catalytic projects outlined above already have the seeds of Creative Lewisham within them and if projected as part of a more seamless whole would create synergy and profile.

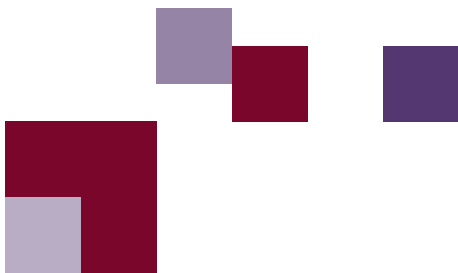


ORDERING RECOMMENDATIONS

There have been a mass of suggestions and the task ahead may seem awesome, overwhelming and complex. Yet the key point is that much can be achieved by thinking differently about opportunities and problems – a changed mindset is worth a hundred worthy reports. It was astonishing to note how many problems in Lewisham just seem to disappear when people took ‘the glass half-full’ approach and rather than stressing barriers focused on ‘what if...’ as a solution to problems.

To simplify matters we have clustered the ideas to move forward as recommendations formed into strategies. By doing so it is possible to bundle together a set of proposals making a coherent framework and highlighting where the key interventions should take place. This also makes it easier for people to connect and relate strategies to each other.

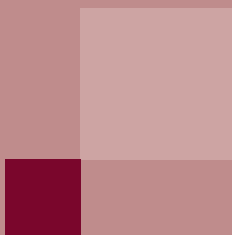
There are strategies for education and social well-being; opportunity scanning; urban design, animation and vibrancy; the creative industries; fundraising and resource procurement; communications, image and public awareness. And, finally, we outline a series of large and small catalyst projects that will provide winners and more sustained high impact projects to make Creative Lewisham feel tangible and real.



A VISION OF A CREATIVE LEWISHAM



A VISION OF A CREATIVE LEWISHAM



A VISION OF A CREATIVE LEWISHAM

AMBITION

What does a place look and feel like and what is its organisational culture so that it can call itself creative? A creative place comes across to its residents and visitors with some sense of ambition, swagger and quiet confidence. That attitude becomes visible in the quality of the urban fabric from the ordinary to the extraordinary, as well as in activities from the planned, well prepared and orchestrated to the incidental and day to day. It feels at ease with itself because it goes with the grain of its local cultures. It acknowledges the varied desires and needs of both young and old, of those who have been there for generations and those who have recently arrived. It is not made fraught by the idea that some will always want to keep things as they are whilst others are champing at the bit to change the world around them. It works openly with these differences and possible difficulties in the knowledge that in the long run better solutions emerge when conflicts are faced rather than avoided.

OPENNESS

Yet it is open to new ideas and stimulation because it recognises that change is inevitable and adaptation essential. It tries to bend these changes in such a way that the gains are greater than the losses. In trying to create such a positive balance it looks closely at each sector – the public, private, voluntary or campaigning – and asks what each is good at and what can its distinctive contribution be without overblowing the claims of any.

RECOGNITION

This place seeks to provide the conditions where public sector institutions can become more risk taking, where people dare to devolve power and to trade that power for creative influence. Its framework of accountability provides direction and seeks to uphold and support the interests of those pushed further to the margins by the dynamic of change often driven by market forces. At the same time it recognises that self-interest is one of the most potent ways of unleashing energy and ideas provided it is framed and channelled. The creative place seeks to provide the inspiration and leadership for private initiatives, whether triggered by large corporates or small entrepreneurs, so they find that social responsibility and working towards some sense of a 'common good' is also to their benefit. It acknowledges too that voluntary action is a source of potential, often providing the invisible glue that makes communities work at a fine-grained level and that they too can contribute to a broader vision.

ETHOS

A creative place has an ethos – an approach to how it does things – and this happens at three levels. The first is in its grand notions of transformation. Second is how this set of ideas is etched and embedded into the plans, projects and initiatives of partners and collaborators, and third, perhaps most importantly, how its structures deal with day-to-day routine. So what is the overall Lewisham ethos, not only of the local authority but other partners too? It is firm and strategic with its principles yet tactically flexible in implementation. These principles might include: to see its rich mix of history and diverse local cultures as an opportunity not a threat, and an anchor for Lewisham's distinctiveness; to work with its strategic partners on the basis of equality and respect so as to foster an inclusive approach; to develop an organisational culture where imagination and creativity are seen as assets and appropriately legitimised, to be entrepreneurial in the broader sense.

QUALITIES

That ethos in turn shapes the qualities of creative places. They include: being more inclined to have a 'yes' rather than a 'no' attitude to ideas and developments, seeking to provide solutions when an issue emerges rather than putting up obstacles which tend to stress that something cannot be done because of habits or external rules. Creative places are open-minded and develop trust. They rethink and bend the incentives and regulatory mechanisms to their broader vision, so they look at resources creatively. Such places encourage and develop widespread leadership cutting across all domains and seek to push that as far down as is possible and effective. They provide scope for bottom-up and top-down to imaginatively mesh. They have strategic focus, with a determined sense of keeping the long term vision in mind, fostering high ambition and providing inspiration so as to feed aspirations and expectations. They are determined not deterministic and bold when necessary, being prepared to take the brave decision even when it is contentious. They are aware of best practices, but go beyond merely imitating what others have done. They try to invent their own distinct best practices. They go beyond improving on their previous best, trying to enhance quality and attempting to work at the cutting edge by being aware of trends locally, nationally and internationally. They appreciate what a resource and a competitive tool is, so they look at their assets broadly, mining history, traditions, community, quirky sub-cultures, local skills and talent, the topography, and often searching out the unexpected. In this way they can turn apparent weaknesses into strengths.

ENTREPRENEURIAL

Creative places have intense networks of collaboration, for example between higher education and other actors, but at the same time they value autonomy and independent initiative, because they have generated an environment of trust. They are competitive places, valuing all kinds of entrepreneurship – the capacity to seek out opportunity whether economically or socially oriented, and they collaborate within competition. That competitiveness is geared towards enhancing quality and performance rather than putting the other party down. This is because they understand how the overall pot of possibilities is increased.

VALUING THE PUBLIC REALM

These places look at their urban environment and conceive it as a living work of art requiring attention to detail, from the appearance of a railing to the effect of a road, while still allowing the completely novel and imaginative to occur. They have the confidence and mechanisms to push up quality of design, because those they interact with over time can feel they are places to be reckoned with. They understand the importance of a complex, diverse streetlife and see the public realm as an undervalued asset. They look for opportunities in the streetscape, the neglected, the seemingly shoddy, the hidden public spaces and spaces left over after planning. They are concerned too about encouraging innovation and new approaches to any field from governance to training to putting on a festival. They recognise the importance of ritual and symbols and seek to speak to the soul of their citizens. They recognise the importance of animation and seek to make this visible in the urban landscape from festivals to other carnivalesque experiences. For these reasons they value the artistic imagination and its view of the world.

UNDERSTANDING COMPLEXITY

Creative places understand the contradictory nature of living in cities today where people often want different things at the same time. So when all the actors inter-relate well, the result in such places provides both the chance for metro buzz and village feel, spectacle and rowdiness as well as calm reflectiveness. They exude a feel of speediness and eventfulness as well as the possibility to be slow so there is time to absorb and reflect. They have places where one can be awed and inspired as well as be connected in a very local way. Of course this does not happen in one place, but overall in creative places these varied needs are met.

EMPOWERING

Creative places provide an environment where individuals can work at the edge of their competences as well as focusing on where individuals have acknowledged strengths. And because they allow for so many opportunities there will inevitably be failure. Yet the culture of creative places is not a blame culture, but a supportive one. It moves from a high blame/low risk setting to one of low blame and higher risk. Because they continually reflect and assess what is working and what is not, such places are like learning organisations reflecting honestly on what has been learnt from experience and adapting accordingly.

TENACIOUS

Their indicators for success and failure go well beyond the purely financial, although in the long run they recognise that quality of life and wellbeing is underpinned by economic vitality. They do not mind tackling entrenched interests and these interests come in many forms. For example, there are some for whom rules present the stability to guide them in an uncertain world, who will always want the certainty of the tried and tested. Innovative places finds ways of persuading the doubters that they gain too and they challenge convention when it is an obstacle. Most importantly they are tenacious and think long term, because they recognise regenerative processes take time. Equally they recognise that creative initiatives need to be visible in the shorter term and so they begin by implementing easier projects that embody their creative approach. These are then orchestrated with larger scale projects that will take time to unfold. They always do the ordinary well and the extraordinary brilliantly. Is Lewisham such a place now? Can it be like this in five years? It could.


TRAVELLING THROUGH LEWISHAM - WHAT IS IT LIKE?

The Commission hopes that Lewisham will have been transformed with each arrival point offering a sense of occasion and expectation. With difficulty Catford will have persuaded Transport for London to shift the road so making space for a Catford Piazza, where Lewisham Theatre visitors will spill out seamlessly into the civic square after an invigorating performance. The Theatre's reputation will stretch across London, its programme both familiar and challenging. The square's main café will be a central meeting point and the library will put on events, often outside, which give a sense that libraries are innovative. The Council's offices, as a consequence, will become for citizens 'our place' and the interactions between ordinary people and officials will happen often by chance encounter. St. Modwen's shopping centre will have had a dramatic overhaul having decided that, with these new developments, it can no longer hang back. The market will wend itself round into the square putting on niche markets to appeal to varied tastes. The route down from the station will feel processional and engender a sense of expectation of what is to come. The setting of the Catford stations will be vastly improved so making arrival a joyful experience and the open spaces will not feel cut off by fencing, and will at special moments become an entertainments venue relating well to what is going on in the square. At night the lighting of major civic buildings will create a feeling of drama.

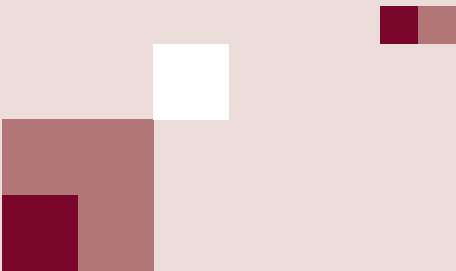
That lighting theme will be carried through Rushey Green towards Lewisham town centre and people will refer to it as 'our boulevard', especially after the carnival parade. Over time people will re-acquaint themselves with our promenading traditions and this increased footfall of people from near and far will generate streetlife and economic vitality. Many opportunities to eat at different price levels, have fun and watch the world go by will emerge. The refurbished Lewisham Hospital will not feel institutional, but remarkable and welcoming and the uninitiated passer-by will be startled to find out it is indeed a hospital. Moving through down Molesworth Street, its physical

environment will be transformed and feel less like a funnel and more like a cosseted greened enclosed space, and the back of the shopping centre will look less like a closed off backyard and engender more a feeling of permeability and activity. In the distance, Lewisham Interchange will have been made a people's place. Inventively the traffic needs will have been met whilst at the same time drawing the station network closer to the town centre. Residents and visitors will amble from one to the other without feeling they have gone through an obstacle course. They will get a sense that there are rivers in Lewisham and seeing the water will have a calming influence on the built up urban surrounds. Transport for London will, after great difficulty, have been persuaded that the Interchange should be a pilot project to show that in the modern competitive city it is people that matter, and that the beauty of engineering can be harnessed to their needs.

Moving on towards New Cross through a circuitous route there will be small moments of delight – a side street with exceptional planting, another where artists with residents have transformed a rat run and its look and feel, a housing association development with startling architecture and an open atmosphere achieving high quality at a reasonable cost, a PFI funded school which overcame that logic of 'up to a standard and down to a cost'. The kids will feel this is my place: 'I contributed to its making' in many ways – the railings, tiles and landscaping. Further along one heritage building will have been brought back to its former sense of pride sticking to its original features, but nearby another will have been transformed to new uses combining imaginatively the old and the new. But the choices made for each will feel right, because now Lewisham is good at judgement – judging when to keep things as they are and when to innovate.



Arriving soon at the education cluster in New Cross there is a growing perception of movement and activity – young people everywhere, some thoughtful and locked in contemplation, others more lively and excitable. Yet the feeling for older people will be ‘I can be part of that too’, it is not another world. How will this be achieved? By involving us all as learners, the programmes of Lewisham College and Goldsmiths will have focused more than they already do on the lifelong learning agenda providing opportunities to participate at different stages of life whatever communities we come from. They will have rethought the atmosphere of their estates and will have created reasons for all to walk through their campuses with a purpose. This will have unexpected spin-offs such as links across generations and experiences. The new Goldsmiths Arts Building in particular will be a landmark mirroring the creative agenda of the institution, but simultaneously being accessible, because it will offer facilities like a cinema and shops open to all. The shops on New Cross Road will be a combination of the ordinary and useful and the unusual reflecting the talents and products of students from all the colleges who have decided to make Lewisham their long-term base. The reason they can stay is that the rent regime has been tailored to their needs. Some will call this ‘our learning quarter’ and over time the connections and synergies between students and new home-grown businesses will develop a critical mass so that the area will be a place for living, learning, producing and consuming.



The A2 axis from Lewisham College to Goldsmiths will become a cause célèbre. Lewisham stakeholders have asked: ‘Why do government agencies treat Lewisham like a backwater? If the road were in Kensington something would have been done’. Now they will enjoy the road which will be calmed and beautified, and students from Goldsmiths and Lewisham College will play their part in collaboration with internationally acclaimed designers and engineers in creating a number of innovative solutions.

Lewisham College itself and its surrounds will reflect far more sharply the creative dynamo that it is. This will have required some fancy footwork and openness in putting together the partnership to fund the changes. The Seager Distillery building will have emerged; it will remain contentious for some who will say it is out of place and scale, but in its own terms it will be a structure of quality and sensitivity, many of the reconfigurations having been achieved after arduous negotiations. So whilst its presence will seem large its streetlife will feel personal.

The Lewisham College/Seager bowl along the A2 nexus will feel like a remarkable entry point and arrival station. Artists and multimedia designers will have come up with a solution that makes it feel like a place not a thoroughfare.

Moving towards Deptford High Street its quality will be familiar and the changes subtle. There will be more activity especially in the evening, there will be more arts businesses and galleries and on balance the surrounding community will approve. In part this will be because for them opportunities to be involved will have been created. Unavoidably there will be gentrification and this will create an element of tension, but as developments proceed there will be greater awareness and appropriate consideration of the fact that existing communities made Deptford what it is.

After complex negotiations the Convoys Wharf site will be in development and be seen as a vista from Deptford High Street. It will be a dense mixed use site, its water frontage a people place and the Olympia Warehouse a new venue for the borough. It will exude a sense of openness yet with opportunities for lower cost uses from the artistic to business start-ups achieved through planning gain negotiations.

The Creek will be a hub of productivity and the planning regime will have been able to inventively balance the pressure for housing whilst creating sufficient work units to allow for a thriving cultural industries zone. This and the completed Laban Centre London will make the Creek a destination. Laban Centre London will be a landmark yet feel open and welcoming to outsiders, but still be able to pursue its core teaching tasks with integrity.

In Forest Hill the new station will give the neighbourhood a revitalised heart and micro galleries will display changing aspects of the Horniman's collection and the route leading up to the museum will feel processional and inviting rather like an extended artistic creation. The Havelock Walk effect will have spilled out into other streets.

Downham's centre will feel special to its residents and outsiders with the new library/leisure complex interestingly connected to the shopping centre through clever urban design. Its panorama over London will be a feature as well as an evening destination as residents relax looking over the shimmering night light show.

These are just some of the changes we hope we can expect and the audit of possibilities will bring up equivalent projects – some landmarkish and others on a smaller scale for Honor Oak, Crofton Park, Brockley, Bellingham, Lee Green, Blackheath, Sydenham, Hither Green.

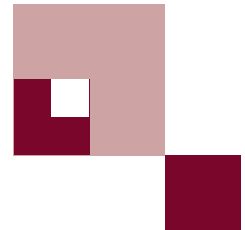
At the same time the level and quality of activities will have increased along with the range of venues from Lewisham Theatre to libraries and museums plus newly discovered venues in the parks and streets and a new raft of commercial spaces. They will have worked up new niches and found ways to help mirror the North London cultural circuit in the South. Lewisham will feel connected to the network of impresarios. The borough's festivals skilfully mixing local with outsider talent will have a strong regional identity and over time the idea that Lewisham has a streetlife will not seem strange anymore as the diversity of spaces become regularly animated whether through markets, the arts or civic activities.

Much of this will be possible through the tenacious work of unseen helpers at every level and the arduous work of a variety of formal and informal organisations in education, private commercial initiatives, cultural and other interest groups. From the top, local politicians will send messages that make people think being innovative is possible, officials will reflect this openness allowing opportunities to cascade as resources become available and, at the same time, there will be a reverse move from the bottom up. The strategic vision will provide a framework for action.

Drawing this picture down to Lewisham, what needs to happen?

- To infuse, embed and legitimise within the organisational cultures of key Lewisham stakeholders the idea that imagination and lateral thinking adds value across Council and other programmes, and to provide a context and the pre-conditions whereby this capacity, potentially present in everyone, can be unleashed and harnessed to the long-term benefit of the borough.
- To encourage a commitment to a cultural approach to development in Lewisham, which means asking at every stage ‘what is the distinctively Lewisham answer to this opportunity?’ and how can we maximise its possibilities?

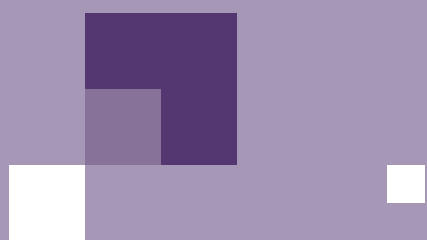
- To become dedicated to quality, strong ambition and the confidence to raise expectations and aspirations of residents, and to ensure that outsiders and partners increase their respect for Lewisham’s goals along with promoting the idea that Lewisham is an ordinary, yet distinctive place, which makes the extra-ordinary happen.
- To create a series of mixed-use neighbourhoods or villages by spreading development opportunities across the breadth of the borough, each with their distinct identity and local landmarks, where residential and light industrial uses creatively combine, so making it possible for them to develop as productive and living hubs.
- To develop a physical environment that aspires to be high quality, combining both an appreciation of the old with a delight for the new, and to recognise that the quality of the built environment from the grand gestures to the fine detail and hidden jewels is a key to enhancing Lewisham’s quality of life, civic pride and profile.



- To become a leader in implementing the philosophy and practice of the Urban White Paper and its implementation plan and to ensure that catalytic opportunities such as the Lewisham Interchange, the Seager Building and Convoys Wharf reflect that vision.
- To equally become a leader in implementing the DCMS' 'Culture and Creativity – The Next Ten Years' document by recognising that the arts and creative industries are powerful in multiple ways. In their own right, they are an asset, but beyond that, they create transformation, confidence, empowerment and skills enhancement, and are instrumental in helping to achieve objectives in other spheres such as within urban developments, economic development, health and social services and in animating Lewisham as a whole. As a consequence, they provide a context within which the formal and informal educational structures can operate and so enhance their reputations well beyond the borough.
- To feed off the slipstream of London-wide, national and even international initiatives in terms of both the arts and built environment and to see Lewisham as a player in a larger orbit.
- To ensure there is a balanced arts and cultural infrastructure from learning to production to consumption, and to celebrate its public, private and voluntary sector beacons from the large to the small.
- To continuously develop and adapt the incentives and regulatory structure and resource allocation to meet emerging needs and opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOM MEN DATIONS



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RECOMMENDATIONS: TOWARDS A LIVING WORK OF ART

INTRODUCTION

1 KEEPING STRATEGIC CLARITY

Creative Lewisham's overall objective is to change or shift mindsets and in so doing affect how opportunities are assessed and decisions are made. The outlined vision and proposed re-focus of internal culture set a framework for changed thinking and priorities. If this occurs, appropriate actions in line with the Creative Lewisham perspective are likely to follow quite naturally without people being told in detail what to do. What people require is a determined direction or compass rather than a deterministic micro-plan. It should then be possible for decision makers at different levels to be strategically opportunistic and entrepreneurial within an accountable framework rather than opportunistically strategic. What the precise projects or programmes should be in detail is often difficult to predict as they depend on context, resources being available at the right time, the ambition and will of individuals, the capacity for institutions to move with flexibility and the judgement on alternative ways forward. We outline however at the end of these recommendations a wide range of catalytic projects that should be pursued with vigour in order to give shape and momentum to the Creative Lewisham initiative in its first phases and as a means of allowing decision makers to rethink priorities and budgets.

There are literally thousands of initiatives large and small that could happen in Lewisham. In the consultations and individual discussions hundreds of ideas came up from the extremely general - 'you should involve artists more' to the incredibly focused 'we need more toilets'. We have therefore outlined the recommendations as a series of strategies within which fall a number of related proposals. These strategies indicate the broad areas for intervention and focus, with examples given for illustration. They include strategies for communications and public awareness, fundraising, urban design, animation and creating vibrancy, the involvement of the education sector, and the creative industries. In addition, proposals are made about how the agenda can be implemented more broadly through a Creative Lewisham Agency and internally within the Council.

To give a flavour of some of the ideas that emerged and the complexity of satisfying different interests here is a partial list: actively contribute to the Thames Gateway 2008 City of Culture nomination as a means of focusing a cultural strategy and getting a higher profile; create competitions for new buildings with artists involved; have more artists' residency schemes, some in unusual settings from hospitals to social care facilities to commercial businesses; develop more niche festivals around special interests; develop more children's projects along the lines of Greenwich & Lewisham Young People's Theatre; set up an organisation like the Sheffield Cultural Industries Quarter Agency to foster the creative industries, and link it to infrastructure support for the creative sector in terms of business, legal and financial support; attract larger creative businesses to the borough of, say, 10 - 50 employees; set up a business angels network; develop more work/live spaces and provide more artists' studio premises; do more audits of potential such as of the rivers, topography and heritage; create beacons or landmarks out of railway stations to enhance the sense of identity and arrival; create a café/bar buzz so Lewisham feels more like Stoke Newington by stopping 'horrible chain pubs'.

The list goes on as when people say: use schools to spread the word about creating a vibrant cultural and visual environment; support ethnic minority arts and cultural groups and institutions to be part of the mainstream; enhance the image of libraries as venues and centres for social interaction; clean up the street scene of unsightly advertising hoardings, traffic signs, railings and very poor damaged paving; design out crime and anti-social behaviour; take a leaf out of Southwark's approach to involve artists in designing the public



realm; create international links with similar boroughs in New York like Brooklyn, and with places in Mozambique or South Africa and connect these to a diaspora programme perhaps by hosting Diaspora's Music Village in Lewisham; hold one of the World Tea Parties in collaboration with the Horniman, an unusual yet increasingly well-known international intercultural event; through the careers advisory service promote and understanding of the potential of arts careers; improve public transport links throughout the borough especially from the north east to south west; develop an artistic trail such as from the Horniman to Forest Hill station; have more information about what is going on and create guides, maps and web-sites for Lewisham; attract a venue like Ocean to come to Lewisham; put Lewisham on the music and theatre circuit; develop an art market in Deptford on Sunday morning or an organic food market in Lewisham Town Centre that is bigger than Peckham's farmers' market; be conscious that the third sector is the gateway to excluded communities and active in multiple and varied cultural activities; set up Community Chests; involve more young people; look at the assets of the elderly or disabled people, and so on.

As can be seen these suggestions cover a multitude of areas targeted at a diversity of possible agencies, yet implicitly it was often the Council who it was assumed would take responsibility – an impossible goal and not appropriate.

2 TRADING POWER FOR CREATIVE INFLUENCE

In thinking through these recommendations, it is important for readers to understand the roles of and expectations for key actors. No one organisation has the power, authority and capacity to drive and implement the implications of this report on its own, although some organisations will play more significant roles than others. The Council inevitably has a strategic function. For a start by commissioning the report it has signalled a measure of its own intent whose message can cascade into the crevices of its own organisation, the partners it connects to and those whom it chooses to fund. Yet although it can and will put more resources into both changing the culture of how Lewisham develops and into the cultural sector itself it can only go so far. Primarily it sets some of the main initial pre-conditions within which others can feel confident to expect and operate.

Yet the Council is still often in a no-win situation. It is an easy target to criticise; it is visible, whereas other sectors are more dispersed. Some assume it should initiate, control and fully resource, whilst others suggest precisely the opposite. Its best and most effective role is initially to trigger and lead the Creative Lewisham debate and so legitimise a new set of expectations and possibilities; then by setting up a more independent mechanism it can over a short time share that leadership widely within a set of relationships of equality and mutual respect. The leadership grouping should be broad, but who takes part will depend on will, interest and contribution.

The Council is then an enabler, which through its powers and resources, although limited, can shape the direction of change. It can lead by example and encourage best practice and support the best practices instigated by others. Yet its style should be to devolve whenever possible, trust others and trade power for creative influence. At the same time it should let itself be influenced by others as good ideas will come from multiple sources. In the end who does what should be decided honestly based on capacity, appropriateness and effectiveness. In one instance it may be the Council, in another an educational set-up, in another a commercial company or a voluntary grouping or a combination. With the right degree of open-mindedness and sharing of power there are roles for most in implementing a Creative Lewisham agenda.

3 CREATING A DYNAMIC MOMENTUM

The recommendations for Creative Lewisham are multi-layered. They focus on a series of key themes concerned with: enabling creativity and inventiveness, increasing standards and enhancing thresholds of quality, identifying assets innovatively and with subtlety, generating and using resources imaginatively and fostering communication. A variety of actors need to be involved and many will rightly pursue their personal desires independently, but their actions should be shaped by an overall framework – the vision – so its tenets are embedded into Lewisham's day to day workings.

A set of principles frame these recommendations. They include: daring to devolve power to enable, harness and motivate action, so actors trade their power for creative influence and are open to opportunity rather than constraining it.

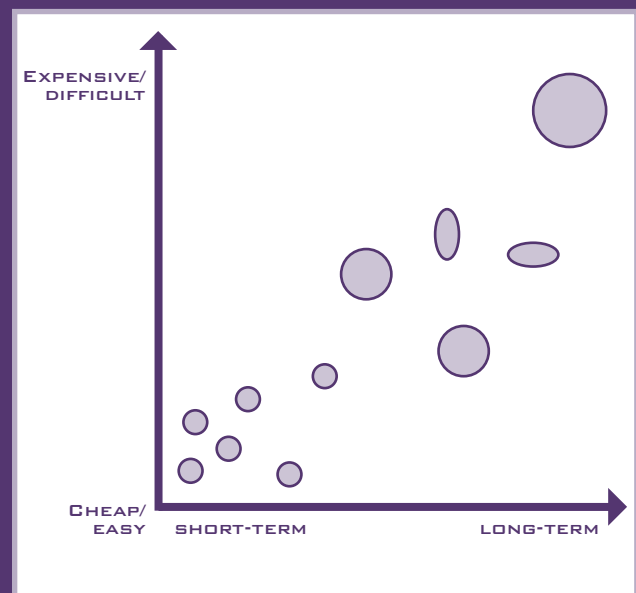
In order to orchestrate the potential a useful conceptual device is to think of recommendations as falling into the categories of easy, cheap and short-term and expensive, difficult and longer-term. In terms of a strategic action plan it is important to co-ordinate these possibilities in a way which develops momentum and critical mass. Once this has been achieved synergies will occur, of themselves generating their own self-reinforcing momentum. These development processes in turn need shaping by the overall vision and the Lewisham ethos.

There is a need to make achievements visible to residents and outsiders as this generates motivation and confidence. Communication is key, especially when many initiatives, such as an educational programme or safeguarding a community asset, by their very nature have no immediately obvious visible outcome. For this reason attention to display, exhibition and performance is important as a means of celebrating accomplishments.

Many significant activities are already happening that fit into the idea of a Creative Lewisham and often the task is merely to recognise these and re-brand or re-badge them as part of the Creative Lewisham process. This is important because of the time lag problem between announcing the programme and implementing it. If the proposed agency is set up it will spend some initial time advocating and scanning opportunities and developing strategies so that when it does act it can act coherently. The task here may be to communicate or to go with the flow of an existing initiative yet to bend it slightly to new

purposes. A pre-existing library exhibition project might be at the easy, short-term end of the scale, whereas a complicated urban design project might fall onto the difficult, expensive scale. Whilst the easier projects can be started quickly the objective is not simply to stick with these but to use them to kick-start the process. The crucial point is orchestration, setting priorities for what should occur and laying out timescales for actions. Occasional projects are supremely catalytic either because they embody the essence of the overall vision or strategy or because they send out a key signal of intention. Getting these right is crucial even though they might fall into the difficult scale.

Importantly initiatives need to happen simultaneously and they will be of different types, for example, awareness raising, the planning of major infrastructure and putting on a festival, but there needs to be an overview of what this all adds up to so as to ensure the long-term aims are in focus. A useful analogy is that of an orchestra with an element of a jazz jam session with each instrument coming in as appropriate, partly independently and partly connected to others yet each reinforcing the other and building up as a symphony with a variety of highlights along the way.



KEY STRATEGIES

1 SHARING A VISION: A PERSUASION AND ADVOCACY PROCESS

For the Creative Lewisham project to get to the starting block the overall vision and associated action plan need to be shared in broad outline by key stakeholders. This needs to involve an advocacy process starting with the Commissioning body, the Council, and then cascading out to other parties. This process should be co-ordinated as a series of presentations, seminars and discussions that lead to its more formal acceptance by relevant parties. This will provide direction and an element of certainty and stability to those already involved as key actors and those seeking engagement with the borough. The aim is to infuse people with the power of possibility and passion. The vision sets the pre-conditions for everything that follows and once its essentials have been absorbed the ideas will flow and actions follow.

Phase One of the advocacy process from June to December 2000 is the initial drive followed by a second more fine grained exercise over six months seeking to embed the vision more deeply into organisations, which will involve perhaps more detailed working up of plans and projects according to the new perspective. In June 2002 the vision and its implementation should be revisited in a more major event.

Once the vision has been absorbed a dynamically interactive process, starting at either end of Robert Dilts' Logical Levels model below, can occur, affecting how actors see themselves and what they can do for Lewisham.

A changed, more open, risk rewarding operating environment sets the context for changes in the behaviour of individuals. This in turn raises issues around whether they have the appropriate skills and capabilities to work in the new environment; once new skills have been acquired and successfully implemented, they affect beliefs and people's sense of identity and the role they can play, which ultimately shapes their sense of mission. In reverse starting from vision a similar process cascades down leading to a changed operating environment.

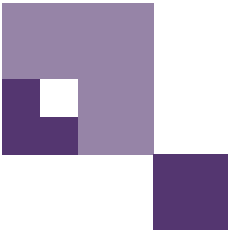
This is the challenge for Lewisham in order to create a self-sustaining momentum. It sets the preconditions for a changed mindset and needs to happen at the organisational and individual level simultaneously as well as being top down and bottom up.

The above effectively becomes a public awareness raising strategy which builds support for the Creative Lewisham agenda amongst Lewisham's political, educational, intellectual, media, community and economic leaderships, with a view to developing advocacy sub-strategies targeted at different individuals and organisations. A kind of education programme like this should be initially led by the proposed Creative Lewisham Agency but over time will be self-generated by organisations acting autonomously. It should also be seen as part of the citizenship development agenda because it helps sets the pre-conditions for people to make informed creative decisions as well as feel they have the power to generate ideas and plans.



2 EMBEDDING THE CREATIVE LEWISHAM AGENDA

Creative Lewisham provides a number of responses to the challenge of building an integrated culture and urban development strategy in the borough. A central task is to think through structures so that the Creative Lewisham concept is infused throughout. Inevitably the Council is a leading player, but not the only one, so the Creative Lewisham thinking needs to lock into collaborative arrangements as well as inspire independent initiatives to respond to the opportunities the agenda represents. We conclude that a dedicated external entity, to be reviewed after three years, be set up to assist the Council and other stakeholders to pursue the Creative Lewisham agenda.



2(A) THE CREATIVE LEWISHAM AGENCY

In an ideal world it would not be necessary to set up a dedicated entity as each organisation of its own accord would identify, unleash and harness its creative resources and maximise synergies. Creative Lewisham would be the acknowledged corporate agenda and the new ethos driven from the top. As this is not yet the case we propose an independent entity perhaps called the Creative Lewisham Agency (CLA) whose objective is to tightly focus on helping to deliver this agenda.

CLA is proposed as a small, flexible, helpful, supportive device to the stakeholders of Lewisham. This light-footed organisation should be reviewed after three years. Its style should not be to seek to accrue power, but rather like an impresario to generate ideas, assess feasibility, trigger and help launch initiatives, seek synergies and in doing so to devolve and sub-contract whenever possible. If it does its work brilliantly it will devolve itself out of existence.

Its remit should cover the whole of the borough yet it will be aware of the issues in balancing breadth and focus. The objective of the small core team is to have a reinforcing effect, to be practical and to deliver results in order to show that the Creative Lewisham vision is not just words. Its major role would be to help kick-start and support the strategies outlined below including those for: funding, animation, urban design, education and culture, the creative industries, communications and public awareness. Given the existing scope of opportunities it should have a number of priorities and therefore appropriately dedicated staff. One of its initial primary tasks is to maximise the North Lewisham opportunity elaborated in detail within the Creative Industries Strategy (see below). This has two dimensions – seeing how the physical aspects of the Creative Enterprise Zone could work and working through how the creative industries can develop. The latter will also assess how other parts of the borough can benefit from the creative industries. Further priorities likely to emerge include: looking at the communication and public education aspects of the Creative Lewisham agenda, developing a fundraising strategy for the borough that links with the private sector, and auditing opportunities especially those in the South. Although the agency will seek to sub-contract whenever possible a core staff in the order of five people is likely to be necessary.

The agency would be supported by a critical friends group – an Advisory Board – made up of approximately nine members with strong reputations from outside the borough who would be paid for their time. Its legitimacy would derive from the acceptance of the Creative Lewisham vision by stakeholders. The agency would provide advice and views, either from steering group members, the core staff of the agency or sub-contractors for which the agency would have a budget.

It is important for the agency to have its own resources to be used as an incentive to pursue the Creative Lewisham agenda and to helpfully influence resource allocation by others. Through its connections it would help access external resources. The agency would therefore be more than a forum or advisory board, but less than a task force which would be more executive. The agency and its steering group therefore earns the right to authority by adding value to the system and from the decisions it takes. To trigger the Council's intent it is proposed that the Council set aside a significant sum to be put at the group's discretion to lift quality and ambition.

If the CLA is agreed there should be an understanding that over time it will generate a substantial proportion of its own resources for special projects and assignments. The CLA's Advisory Board should in collaboration with the Council appoint the Agency's Director. The first task for the Agency's Director is to review the strategies and recommendations of this report and with relevant stakeholders to assess where it adds value, what its precise role and brief should be as well as the role of partners.

In reaching these conclusions we assessed many models including the Bristol Cultural Development Partnership (BCDP) set up in 1993, the Creative Town Initiative (CTI) in Huddersfield set up in 1997, the Sheffield Cultural Industries Quarter Agency set up in 2000, Manchester's Northern Quarter Executive, which has operated for eight years, Temple Bar Properties Ltd. set up in 1990 and Coin Street Community Builders Ltd. set up in 1988. We were also aware of foreign examples such as how the IBA dramatically helped transform the massive Emscher Park area in the Ruhr through culture and urban development initiatives.

We have tried to learn from all the models, especially the notion of dedicated entities pursuing targeted culture and urban development objectives and, also, why it was decided they should be set up in the first place rather than allowing the issues and opportunities to be addressed through traditional Council or

existing partnership arrangements. We have rejected the precise details of a number as they do not fit Lewisham's circumstances and requirements. For example, Temple Bar and Coin Street are both effectively public development companies which had local authority land vested in them and were empowered to assemble sites and develop schemes either on their own or in partnership. This mechanism has allowed them to recycle income into cultural animation activity and low rental floorspace for artists and creative businesses. Although attractive, in Lewisham's case the geographical scope of the proposed CLA is far larger and there is not the land available for vesting. We also set aside in our thinking the Manchester Northern Quarter model which initially essentially made packages of assistance available to businesses and property owners and then later established an arm's length executive in partnership with local business in order to raise the economic profile of the area. This and the clever use of marketing and image building has produced, nearly 10 years down the line, self-sustaining investment in the area. In Lewisham the issues are more complex and the activity base different. Some parts of the borough are overheating, in others the dynamic has hardly begun and in those there is not the same small to medium sized business potential as there was in the Northern Quarter which is essentially a city centre area. The Sheffield model is also circumscribed to a focused area with a concentration on creative business development and, in addition, it is now being empowered to create landholdings, the profits of which will help support the agency. Again the idea of generating independent income stream is important, but in the case of Lewisham it is unlikely to be through landholdings.

There are major elements of the Bristol and Huddersfield experience that are useful. Both adopted the impresario style and have helped trigger initiatives through their core support and resources they raised, especially from the private sector, for specific projects. Given the value added they have generated for their cities they have been supported vigorously by their local public, private and community sectors.

Bristol Cultural Development Partnership (BCDP) has instigated major Millennium bids and succeeded in a number of them. It developed the Festival of the Sea; it kick-started @Bristol, a combined science centre and digital zoo; it is currently developing a 'legible city' strategy and has already helped affect the signage in the centre; it is managing Bristol's 2008 City of Culture bid. Its core staff is two people and it takes on staff on

an as-and-when required basis. The 2008 bid involves four additional people. Its core costs are around £100k yet it levers in resources far exceeding that amount. It is managed by a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, with directors coming from the Chamber of Commerce, a key instigator, from the Council and other stakeholders.

CTI similarly had a small core which managed a several million pound budget, initially the result of a successful bid to the European Union's Urban Pilot Projects fund. It has helped launch around 20 projects from setting up incubator units to creating live/work spaces, developing a media centre, innovative training schemes using the arts, and promotional strategies for the town as a whole. The effect of this has been to raise awareness about Huddersfield and so provide opportunities. For instance, the CTI initiative inspired a local businessman to put up £750,000 to launch a Millennium Challenge for the town to initiate creative projects from environmental improvements to social cohesion. CTI was steered by its own board but institutionally was part of a SRB partnership called Huddersfield Pride.

As bodies connected to, yet outside of, the mainstream structures they have been able to raise resources from, for example, the private sector which would have been impossible if they had been locked into the public domain. They have acted entrepreneurially as opportunity seeking organisations, focusing on strategic bidding and making connections, and so are well networked. Typically they have identified possibilities through creating synergies between organisations and the imaginative auditing of possibilities; they have then undertaken the feasibility and helped raise the key resources allowing the key partners then to make the final decision. By sharing credit and remaining small they have sought to avoid self-aggrandisement. Effectively they manage a network rather than an organisation.

The directors of the Bristol, Huddersfield and Sheffield agencies have agreed to hold a seminar in Lewisham to discuss their experiences.

2(B) LEWISHAM COUNCIL

2(B)i The Council's Directorates of Regeneration and Education & Culture

To prepare the Council for the Creative Lewisham agenda requires an uplift in resources, personnel and skills for the Cultural Department and similarly for some aspects of the work of the Regeneration Directorate. It requires a shift away from reactively responding to proactive agenda setting, to opportunity seeking and connecting. This requires an entrepreneurial way of thinking.

Firstly, within the Directorate of Education & Culture, the Culture Department for a period has been on the defensive working within constraints and has built up a portfolio of work to match its proclivities and inevitably reduced ambitions. These ambitions now need to be greater to meet potential. The department needs to develop a strategy for which the Commission's work may be a helpful starting point, and within that strategy further initiatives need to be devolved. The ambit of its concerns should increase to include: firstly, greater awareness of the dynamics of the creative industries and the commercial cultural sector in general; secondly, to embrace design in its broader sense, such as how arts fit into the urban environment; and thirdly, to connect more regionally, nationally and internationally.

This implies intense collaborative working, for example, with the Economic Development department – and in turn Economic Development needs to understand more about the dynamics of the cultural field – as well as Development and Planning. This can happen through will, incentives or new practices. The separate and legitimate agendas, for example, of the Culture Department and the Regeneration Directorate will tend to compartmentalise, and so weaken will. Incentives on the other hand have potential: by, for example, developing joint projects to mutual benefit where opportunities abound and for which external resources can be won; setting up short task based teams with flexible job descriptions bringing colleagues from different departments together; top-slicing mainstream budgets which are put into a development fund for which collaborative projects bid, as has happened in Kirklees.

An additional opportunity lies in the fact that the Regeneration Directorate is dealing with resources and a scale of project that

far outstrips those in the Culture department and a segment of this resource, such as feasibility monies, can be twisted to joint culture/regeneration initiatives. The Council then has the opportunity to use its own assets to greater regenerative effect in supporting the cultural agenda. At one level, this can be as simple as making sites and buildings available at reduced rates as with Laban Centre London, or even at no cost such as hard-to-let shops on housing estates. At the more sophisticated level, the Council can use capital receipts from the sale of its housing or commercial property to support regeneration projects, provided these are developed strategically (as "in/out" deals) and that 50% of the total funding comes from the private sector. Indeed, the creative industries lend themselves particularly well to such an approach – they support economic development ends, and are almost always the result of the public/private partnership approach that is a pre-requisite.

Secondly, there is insufficient person-power in the department to act proactively to create a 'bidding machine' to access the dizzying amount of resources that are potentially available. This requires clear focus on spotting opportunities and connections and someone with the entrepreneurial mindset to maximise potential. To name but a few: Lewisham is already a Creative Partnership pilot, but other possibilities include accessing cluster funds from the London Development Agency, the New Opportunities Fund, setting up a Lewisham version of a Creative Advantage Fund (a venture capital fund in the West Midlands for the creative industries), perhaps jointly with Greenwich; gearing people for NESTA's Graduate Incubator Grant Scheme; the possibilities arising from the 'Schools: Building on Success' report or the £270million available through the Music Standards Funds and the £30million from the National Foundation for Youth Music mainly for music outside of schools; the joint AC/DfEE Arts Mark award, which, whilst not directly giving money, opens the door to funds; the Arts & Business £6million New Partners Scheme to encourage existing sponsors to fund innovative schemes; RALP the regional arts lottery programme and so on.

Thirdly someone needs to manage and spot opportunities arising from connecting to the pan-London and wider agenda. This ranges from strengthening Lewisham as part of a reinvigorated South London performing arts circuit to re-organising the festivals programme, already underway, so it can achieve higher impact, to considering whether opportunities like the European Cultural programme are worth bidding for. Furthermore the

Culture Department should proactively seek out partners and projects they feel add value to the borough.

Lastly whilst the Cultural Department has focused with vigour on the community development, training and performing arts scene there is the visual arts, design, public art and architecture dimension that has achieved far less attention, which should emerge increasingly as a priority.

These tasks are above and beyond existing work in sustaining and encouraging its existing portfolio, which as a matter of good practice should itself be critically re-assessed. Therefore the department needs both to strengthen its staff, farm out aspects of its work and have access to greater resources so it can lever further funds and generate activity, such as replicating good initiatives from one part of the borough to the rest.

The Regeneration Directorate has a parallel set of issues to deal with – it responds more than it wants to and finds too little space to be pro-active. With its back against the wall it is less creative than it wants to be and could be. It has little person power to identify and go after interesting developers and investors, whom Regeneration feel could shape a Lewisham vision; insufficient people resources to work in a sustained way with these developers to increase quality and the opportunities accruing to the borough. There are practically no resources to provide urban design guidance, generate areas plans or to provide structure and guidance to investors.

Staff have little opportunity to be inspired by other best practice large and small, to travel, to inform themselves – not as junkets, but as a means of helping Lewisham enhance its own knowledge base.

With a lively development scene this means the agenda is set by outsiders creating possibly negative downstream effects. This puts the directorate in a defensive position instead of being able to grasp the initiative and shape opportunities, saving time and money downstream. The resources it is dealing with in terms of project value are immense yet with some shaping, fine-tuning and re-orientation they could create far more value added for Lewisham as well as be re-gearred so the directorate can shift to a more entrepreneurial agenda.

The positive effect of making this happen would mean that in relation to complex applications, the Council could develop its own specific practice to ensure time and resources are available

for officers to act pro-actively and creatively without being sucked into day-to-day operations. They should be supported by complementary skills on an 'as-required' basis from culture to technology development or history, so providing richer perspectives to generate more holistic ideas and responses. Opportunities like the Seager Building and Convoys Wharf will only be properly harnessed in this way.

Within Regeneration the realignment of the Urban Design function is an interesting and central question; in particular how it relates to the statutory planning function. Planning as it exists is in essence more of a procedural, legalistic activity than a design oriented one. Many Local Authorities are beginning to address the issue and given the impact of the Urban White Paper and activities of organisations such as the Commission on Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) many more will do so in the future. Birmingham, for example, has set up the country's first in-house urban design unit, taking on tasks previously co-ordinated by the planning and architecture department and the property and maintenance duties performed by their economic development department. In the near future there will be other such attempts.

To some extent Urban Design includes that aspect of spatial planning that is visionary and in that sense should lie above the more technical statutory development control functions. It is also clear that the traditional UDP based methods are too long-winded and inflexible to drive a physical vision of places. The pressure of initiatives such as Community Plans is likely to shape the detailed plans for a circumscribed area within five years. If in addition Urban Design achieves a higher profile this might leave traditional Planning floating somewhere in the middle. Whatever the precise organisational details we recommend one key principle for future action: Urban Design assumes a specific identity within Regeneration as well as being enlarged and better resourced.

2(B)ii Championing and co-ordinating the Creative Lewisham agenda within the Council

We considered various options to embed Creative Lewisham which by definition is a cross-cutting issue. For example, structural re-organisations such as: should Culture be part of the Regeneration Directorate again? or should there be a separate Directorate of Culture linked to an enhanced Urban Design unit? We concluded that Lewisham has undergone a number of reorganisations in recent years that have a cost in terms of personal strain, effectiveness and resourcing.

On balance we believe that the success or failure of the Creative Lewisham agenda will depend on the culture of partnership and collaboration within Lewisham both between the Culture Department and Regeneration Directorate as well as beyond. If the spirit of working collaboratively is strong and there are mechanisms to match, then Creative Lewisham will work. Indeed the potential of a Creative Lewisham can only work if there is a reinvigorated sense that synergy maximises potential. Therefore we are not proposing structural change.

In a more perfect world the issues Creative Lewisham addresses would not require special championing or co-ordinating. Yet for the foreseeable future, a championing and a co-ordinating role is essential. The championing role needs to come from the top and be pushed by the Mayor and Cabinet. This is separate from the co-ordinating role. Where should this be located – within Education and Culture, Regeneration or on its own as part of the Mayor's office?

Even though the central mission of the Creative Lewisham agenda is to be cross-cutting and to shift the way existing structures and departments assess their opportunities we still need to create the best mechanism to ensure that neither Regeneration nor Education & Culture feel they are subservient to the other. Whichever option is chosen, knowledge of culture, planning and development issues are a pre-requisite to drive the agenda forward as well as having ideas and being able to implement them. How can the co-ordination role have access to these different forms of expertise? One option is to appoint someone as a kind of Creative Lewisham supremo located 'above' Culture and Regeneration with a mixed culture and development skill sets who directs and guides and is charged with delivering the agenda, similar in concept to what happened

with equality units in the past. This seems at first sight the simple solution, but would it embed the Creative Lewisham agenda throughout the organization? Within the supremo model issues of authority and boundary battles would inevitably emerge which might be problematic since embedding requires more of a nurturing role.

An alternative option, which we favour, is to take a group approach to embedding the agenda where the Co-ordinator is answerable to a corporate project board or steering group made up of appropriate directors and section heads with an interest in Creative Lewisham. This board/steering group should also have a number of representatives from the Creative Lewisham agency to ensure a level of seamlessness between the implementation of the external and internal Creative Lewisham agenda.

The Co-ordinator has no operational role but a facilitating one, ensuring both that the agenda is embedded in all aspects of the Council's work and that the connections between the different directorates, the agency and other stakeholders are created, maintained and nurtured.

This option requires a different skills set from those required in a Supremo. Greater focus would be placed on promoting and facilitating the implementation of Creative Lewisham, highlighting the skills of co-ordination, the ability to pull people and partners together, to create networks, to facilitate the implementation of projects, to communicate across boundaries, to pursue an educational role in spelling out the benefits of Creative Lewisham and checking that the agenda – as represented by the strategies outlined below – is being followed through and opportunities maximised.

The dynamic generated by the Champion, the Board and the activities of the Co-ordinator would then affect the way in which projects are delivered on the ground.

In the longer term once a Mayor is elected the Council should assess the merits of placing the co-ordinating role for the Creative Lewisham agenda within the Mayor's Office.



2(B) iii Spreading the Creative Lewisham message throughout Council

Whilst the Creative Lewisham agenda within the Council has been largely the concern of a number of key individuals within the directorates of Regeneration and Education & Culture, it needs to spread deeper both within these directorates and to others outside.

Most importantly the £52million Schools PFI provides a unique opportunity to achieve Creative Lewisham objectives whilst at the same time bringing various parties together. The danger is that the operational dynamics of the PFI can reduce quality and design standards and it is recommended that a specialist consultant with understanding of PFIs is commissioned to help the borough maximise its opportunities.

In addition, the Housing Department could consider how it can inventively increase design standards, for example for Housing Association initiatives, and the Economic Development Service (EDS) should assess whether it is doing its maximum to help creative industries micro-businesses. Our sense in the latter instance is that an important start has been made. For example, Economic Development funds the Prince's Trust through the Business Information Centre. The Trust provides general start-up advice for businesses yet a majority of those they have helped in Lewisham are in the creative sector – ranging from textile designers to internet businesses for world music. With the Trust, work has been sponsored for final year students at Goldsmiths College to provide a short series of seminars run by the University Careers Service to inform potential graduates how to start small businesses and how to work on a self-employed/freelance basis. EDS is working with Art in Perpetuity Trust, the Prince's Trust and Goldsmiths graduates to design a training model for new businesses using ICT. The key for much of this activity is the availability of premises to create a ladder of opportunity from low-cost incubator space, such as Drake House, to low-cost commercial premises, possibly Mechanics Path and then the open market. Furthermore EDS is looking to reuse unlet shop units on some estates for creative businesses. The funding available for the basic refurbishment can be used as an investment to attract further revenue to support new business. The spin-off is that it supports neighbourhood regeneration in places like Honor Oak and Silwood by bringing properties back into use and counteracting the general air of dereliction.

Other issues EDS might explore include: how the vocational agenda and strengths of Lewisham College can be further exploited and so support that part of the ladder of opportunity they are creating.

Equally the Education Directorate can influence individual schools to take arts initiatives more seriously. The DfEE and DCMS have begun to provide a wide range of opportunities and funding streams. In order to access this some baseline auditing needs to occur. For example, by looking at arts education activity, resources and available buildings or accommodation, by ensuring that the arts are included in school development plans, by disseminating good practice and examples in arts education, by planning for continuing professional development for arts teachers and by encouraging schools to make more use of artists and musicians as an addition to the school staff. In addition the Schools PFI provides an interesting way of combining a number of agendas, including infusing an arts approach into the built environment.

The Policy and Resources Directorate, and within it Property Services, will play an important role in helping smooth the route of the Creative Lewisham agenda. If given clear political direction they will be able to re-assess resource allocation and the criteria against which the cost-effectiveness of proposals can be judged. This is necessary as the trade-offs often involve a combination of tangibles and intangibles. For example, should the Council receive less immediate receipts in favour of benefits, often subtle and complicated, that are difficult to measure in the short term? The Drake House sale to Cockpit Arts is an example, where maintaining light industrial use in the growing creative industries sector is seen as more important than receiving higher receipts for a housing development that would reduce Creekside's vitality.

Over time it will become more natural for directorates and departments to reflect on how their programmes can be bent to support the objectives of Creative Lewisham. In the meantime spreading the message of the potential of the Creative Lewisham agenda to Council departments and well beyond will require both political direction and legitimacy as well as more detailed advocacy work and assistance on the ground. This might take the form of providing evidence, such as the tangible and cost-effective benefits of certain arts and health initiatives or direct support like the interesting example of the Culture Department helping Planning with its budget to develop a vision for a Creative Enterprise Zone.

2C PARTNERSHIPS

2C i Infusing the Creative Lewisham agenda into partnerships

The Local Strategic Partnership concept can, with political will, be one organising device to drive Lewisham's development – it is the partnership of partnerships. Its governing body is largely representative but it needs a delivery vehicle, perhaps a Lewisham Renewal Agency – below which there will be individual projects such as the Lewisham Interchange initiative. All projects in theory relate back to LSP. The make-up of LSP and the sub-entities should include people, currently not foreseen in the LSP discussions, with cultural and urban design understanding as well as an inexorable drive for quality and inventiveness. Getting this perspective to be taken seriously in partnerships will present a challenge as representatives from sectors such as Housing or Health come from solid institutional frameworks and interests and with budgets to match, whereas the culture and arts and urban design dimension might seem vague as well as having looser affiliations. The output, say, of Housing is housing – something clearly visible. With culture and urban design the aim is to change the way representatives in Health, the Police and so on view their approach and possibilities. So, for example, the Health Authority would then acknowledge more widely the power of the arts to help well-being and the power of good, sympathetic design to shorten hospital stays – ultimately saving costs.

The direction given by LSP should provide a lead. However, it may well be that another partnership takes on the role of stimulating the Creative Lewisham approach in turn affecting the LSP. Indeed if LSP does not generate legitimacy the same process proposed above of embedding cultural and urban design awareness should take place through each partnership.

2C ii Educational stakeholders

The larger educational institutions – Goldsmiths, Lewisham College and Laban Centre London – are already firmly committed to making North Lewisham a creative hub. The fact of their existence has largely created the dynamic in the first place. There remains an element of competitiveness between the institutions, which in part is healthy as they target and address the needs of different audiences. However in order to capitalise on the bigger opportunity of making New Cross/Deptford a significant destination, more seamless links, movement between institutions and the initiation of joint projects seem advisable. This has already begun. Through the New Opportunities Fund, a Lewisham Arts Summer University for two hundred 15/16 year olds will be held at Lewisham College involving the College, Goldsmiths, Laban Centre London, Irie Dance and Second Wave. Lewisham College and Goldsmiths are jointly putting on an Arts Foundation course to tap into local talent and in turn this will have spin-offs such as making Goldsmiths feel more accessible.

One essentially non-educational area where Laban Centre London will be setting a standard is in creating an inspiring visual environment for creative education. Lewisham College and Goldsmiths can both improve. The latter has the opportunity to make its mark in its new Gateway Building and the adjacent student housing is hopefully the last gasp of the ‘up to a standard down to a high price’ mentality. The main two buildings of the Colleges each in their own way disappoint: not reflecting the creativity of their leaderships, of the courses being run and the student body attending. So the bid Lewisham College is making for its Centre for the Creative Arts to become a centre of excellence is extremely important. If this succeeds capital resources for a new building will be attached, which if housed at Deptford Bridge should become a significant landmark as an entry point to the borough

2C iii Other stakeholders

The business community is so far insufficiently involved in the broader Creative Lewisham agenda. In part this is because, Citibank aside, it is weak in the borough with the Council and Health sector as the major employers. A Chamber of Commerce for Lewisham is being set up, which is a beginning. Developing the proposed fundraising strategy outlined below will provide an opportunity to begin a coherent conversation about their broader participation in civic life, yet through its focus also on business outside the borough it can bring in new stakeholders who might share the Lewisham vision. This in turn might change the landscape of how initiatives and developments proceed away from a reliance on SRB and related programmes, useful as these are.

2C iv Community stakeholders

The opportunities for citizens to participate in and to shape the Creative Lewisham agenda are immense. This involvement is buttressed by the ethos proposed within the report which stresses engagement and the willingness of power-holders to devolve power to the lowest effective levels, which will hopefully become a more significant identifier of the Lewisham culture. Engagement in the more narrow sense of culture and urban development can occur through multiple roles – learners, users, consumers and protagonists. Examples of this breadth are access to arts courses put on by Community Education Lewisham, people's involvement in the design of their own street, participation in the creation of events.

Yet an inevitable question will still be asked: 'what is the role of the community sector?' by which people usually mean structured groups. This is difficult to answer as the sector is incredibly diverse – a recent audit of community indoor spaces in the borough revealed 800 spaces, which gives a hint of the variety. Some community groups will already specifically be concerned with art or design and their role is easier to identify whereas others are concerned with broader citizenship and campaigning issues. What makes this even more complicated is that people often wear a number of hats simultaneously as individuals, as members of a group or as affiliates to others.

A starting point would be to discuss how the community sector can tangibly contribute to implementing the aims of this report involving organisations such as Voluntary Action Lewisham and its wide-ranging membership.

Significantly the Creative Lewisham report is part of a change process in the borough – a process that is continually negotiated. The intention is that Creative Lewisham helps make the gains from change greater than the losses by, for example, being aware of the possible downside effects of gentrification.

3 OPPORTUNITY SCANNING STRATEGY

A series of opportunity scanning exercises should be initiated and launched by the Creative Lewisham Agency in collaboration with appropriate partners. They should assess potential from a cultural resources perspective, which is identifying that which is unique, distinctive and special about the Lewisham environment rather like 'cultural cartographers'. The auditing processes should shift from assessing needs or existing provision to auditing desires, entrepreneurial opportunities or dreams. In this way people move beyond the provision mindset to becoming engaged in visioning, which inevitably involves individuals and groups more tangibly as they will take responsibility and put in their own resources to make suggestions happen.

Once set in train, opportunity scanning requires a strategy for resourcing and procurement, which in turn involves a type of action research to audit and mobilise networks, contacts and gateways of opportunity. Such a strategy requires a different type of fundraiser, thinking well beyond local authority funding streams, being able to exploit contacts with vision and helping groups get money. This kind of fundraiser then becomes a facilitator of opportunities and checker of the wellbeing of projects, effectively giving blessing to certain projects around which coalitions can be formed.

The audits will provide a baseline reference map for Lewisham giving potential partners a source of high level intelligence and stakeholders the basis upon which to base strategies. In addition the data should become a dynamic tool by sketching in, for example, how different cultural services and different public spaces are used for which purposes at different times of the day, different days of the week, different seasons of the year.

Audits to initiate might include:

AUDIT A

The potential of public spaces and buildings

To gain a better understanding of what urban spaces exist the audit should look at traditional and non-traditional indoor and outdoor spaces from parks to schools, churches, offices or rivers and odd open spaces as possible venues, recreation zones or incubator units for cultural activities, and recognise development, marketing and event opportunities for these spaces. The key stakeholders include both the Regeneration and Education & Culture Directorates, as well as Glendales, Lewisham's parks manager, major property owners, festival, event and installation organisers and retail operators. The objective is to assess possibilities for treating a space, to provide decision guidelines for event location and suggestions for place management. A second phase would develop a design and activity brief for individual spaces.

AUDIT B

Arts and the curriculum

To comparatively assess how well Lewisham schools are doing in terms of the arts, whether there is anything to learn from local authorities elsewhere and the extent to which informal organisations can more fully help local teachers.

AUDIT C

Analysis of research at educational institutions

To assess how past, on-going and proposed research at Goldsmiths, Lewisham College and Laban Centre London can help the Creative Lewisham strategy and to speculate how future research, perhaps joint, could meet Lewisham needs. In this process the recent research assessment exercises and graduate retention strategies should be reviewed as well as activities of lecturers and students which, when appropriate, can be bound more closely into Lewisham objectives. To take an instance, Goldsmiths College has a Caribbean Centre that is looking at Caribbean party culture. Might this not have relevance to the Lewisham vision? Indeed many students may help in the overall auditing process. In this way the educational institutions become even greater resources for Lewisham.

AUDIT C

Heritage assessment

To assess how Lewisham's heritage can be more creatively exploited for place marketing and cultural tourism purposes with the objective that Lewisham is present in London guide books in five years.

AUDIT D

Mapping Lewisham's 'evening economy'

To assess the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and obstacles for developing Lewisham's evening economy including performance venues, pubs, bars, restaurants, night clubs and outdoor spaces as well as the underlying organisational capacity and financial strength of impresarios and others to deliver a product to the borough.

AUDIT E

Rethinking the potential of cultural institutions such as libraries and museums

To assess whether libraries and museums are being used to their full potential and to undertake a best practice review in order to assess whether they can play a more central role in the Creative Lewisham vision. This might result, say, in libraries becoming more self-consciously interactive social centres or multimedia hubs for local citizens, able to support initiatives in local broadcasting; or functioning as distribution points for locally produced CDs, DVDs, books, crafts and visual arts objects, playing a key part in enhancing the communication capacity of more excluded people.

These auditing processes whilst useful in themselves would fit into the requirements of the DCMS definition of cultural resources and their requirement for local strategies.

4 URBANISM AND URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

Urbanism is the discipline that allows us to understand the dynamics, resources and potential of cities in a richer way, yet it is not acknowledged in Britain – even the word is uncommon. Urbanism is based on tying the perspectives, insights and expertise of different disciplines together. These include: land use planning, urban economics, design, aesthetics, architecture, transport, social affairs, culture, history, anthropology, ecology.

Urban design is a sub-set of urbanism and is ‘the collaborative and multidisciplinary process of shaping the physical setting for urban life’. ‘Collaborative’ in that it involves many stakeholders from professional to non-professionals; ‘multi-disciplinary’ because it requires many perspectives to be effective. In creating the physical setting urban designers not only visualise the physical form of places, but also how people interact with spaces, move through them, use them and feel and experience a place.

The practice of urbanism, urban design and planning requires a cluster of skills bringing together a wide range of disciplines, expertise, and experience in order to promote dynamic urban change taking into account both how cities work as living entities as well as their physical characteristics. Some skills are to do with physical elements from landscaping to built form and others with an understanding of how people interact with place and culture. A key understanding is the way a city’s social, cultural, economic and political forces configure in order to create solutions that work for everyone.

It is this broader perspective on the urban development of Lewisham that the Regeneration Directorate should make explicit in its strategy making – in much of its current work it is implicit.

Yet many people shape the look and feel of the city and often it is not the decisions made by planners, architects, designated urban designers or urbanists. Just as likely it is the impacts of the thinking of accountants, engineers, financiers, property developers, fire and licensing officers, festival and events organisers, quangoes responsible for transport, health or education, statutory regulations and of course local politicians and ordinary citizens. Good urbanists try ‘to shape these shapers’ of the city so they agree on a framework of how a place should develop.

The overall objective of the Urban Design Strategy element of the Urbanism and Urban Design Strategy is to make urban design one of the guiding perspectives for decision making that impacts on the physical environment in Lewisham. It then has to set up a mechanism to ensure that this happens. This will involve enlarging, resourcing and realigning the urban design function. Clearly its focus will be in the Regeneration Directorate and within that it will be connected to the statutory planning section as this function will seek to enforce guidelines provided, but a sense of urban design also needs to be infused within Housing and those responsible for major development initiatives. Yet to be widely effective cross-departmental awareness and political support is key. The activity of Regeneration abuts many departments and, unless they too understand the logic of the urban design framework, faulty decisions may be made. For example, the short term cost of applying the urban design principles may be more costly and this may affect how the Policy & Resources Directorate and within that the Valuers view a proposition. Equally the relative success of cultural initiatives is often determined by urban design considerations.

The goal of the strategy should be that within a 10 year period every part of the borough has been reflected upon through an urban design lens. In order to do this the research generated through the opportunity scanning and auditing process will be helpful. The results of this work should be visible in the physical landscape and the strategy should set targets for various areas. The strategy should contain a landmarking strategy, bearing in mind that landmarks can be small and large, and could range from a school to a skyscraper, a well-designed road to a commercial facility or a square to a riverside setting, a station to an interchange. The key point is that places, areas and centres are put together with high quality, an element of inspiration and imagination.

The strategy may also propose a Lewisham Design Guide, reassessed at appropriate timescales, that would lay down key objectives and principles against which all development will be judged. This would provide a clear starting point for developer innovation and local interpretation such as: how environmentally sustainable solutions can be achieved through innovative design, how movement of people by walking, cycling and public transport can be encouraged to reduce both dependency on the car and air pollution, how local distinctiveness can be embraced to promote quality and protect existing features of cultural, visual and historic importance and finally how landscape and ecology can be enhanced by integrating open space, townscape, landscape and natural habitats to mitigate the impact of development.

This would be linked to other tools available to ensure and improve quality as projects go through the planning process, including: Supplementary Planning Guidance, development briefs, site specific planning briefs, local distinctiveness studies (similar to conservation area appraisals) and area studies or master-plans.

In this respect some strategic initiatives using these tools have already been undertaken. For example, the Planning Service has successfully secured a number of innovative schemes that provide live/work units in the borough, targeted at creative sector businesses. Havelock Walk in Forest Hill, the GLE development at the former Medical Innovation Centre on Plough Way, the live/work element in the Deals Gateway development – all have required the planners to ‘stick their necks out’ for proposals that are not necessarily the ‘ideal’ solution for developers. The disposal of the Creekside depot to Laban Centre London was a turning point in the thinking of the Council to use its planning powers to attract creative uses to key sites in the borough despite the ‘opportunity cost’. Most sites can be sold for much more for housing developments. The ‘planning gain’ sought in Laban Centre London’s case was the provision of community dance facilities and activities, and the development is being used to open up the riverside walk in the area. Similarly, the Planning Service secured (in principle) the use of one of the commercial units at Deal’s Gateway for the Stephen Lawrence Technocentre; and the provision of at least one or two new galleries in Deptford will be secured, if agreed, through the redevelopment of the Old Seager Distillery buildings for a landmark new mixed development.

The proposed strategy may furthermore address the need to develop mentoring and training for council departments as varied as Property Services or Health & Social Care and for Councillors as their decisions can impact on the look and feel of Lewisham. It may suggest too that study tours be organised for Councillors, decision makers and opinion formers to see good practice elsewhere.

The strategy would comment on consultative procedures such as the design panel. This panel should be inclusive in that it combines those concerned with innovation and design adventure as well as heritage interests, bearing in mind the overall desire with existing and potential developments to be bold with imagination, yet sensitive. On balance it is better to have possibly opposing views around the table rather than in separate committees. The Rotterdam design panel model should also be considered: a bi-annually changing team of world renowned architects assess the city’s major built environment projects. As part of a broader educational programme the strategy should focus on bringing in significant outsiders as visitors or Lewisham Fellows, as well as developing high profile activities for which there are many examples. For instance: 20/20 visioning exercises, competitions, paying a series of respected urban regeneration specialists to develop site briefs who in turn may become longer-term collaborators.

Another dimension to address is finding the means to devolve power to local people to create urban design solutions. This may involve using design facilitators, but has the additional spin-off effect of bringing communities together. Organisations such as the Architectural Foundation or the authors of Placecheck could be brought in as advisors and indeed their approaches to involvement and creating better environments should become standard practice.



5 EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING STRATEGY

The education and community well-being strategy has three strands. The first is to get greater acceptance of the arts in secondary education, the second is to assess how the arts can impact on well-being, health and other social issues and the third is to build on the strengths of Lewisham's remarkable further and higher education provision.

In terms of the first and second, this will only happen if the educational establishments, teachers, community and health professionals recognise the positive transformative effects which the arts and an urbanistic approach to development can have in raising achievement, tackling social exclusion, creating job opportunities, increasing social and health prospects and transforming the built environment.

Arts education plays a key role and it is timely to take a strategic approach to looking at its potential in order to tie together the need for advocacy, to maximise opportunities and to make achievements more visible. The foundation for this has been set in the key objectives and programmes for the Art of Regeneration, the mini Education Action Zone and in the work being commissioned by Laban Centre London. Indeed the DCMS have taken a particular interest in this work as a model of good practice.

In order to move forward there is a need to create the base for advocacy and strategy making by auditing arts education activity and resources right through the spectrum. From this a number of issues will emerge, such as: how to include the arts in school development plans; how to raise the profile of arts education and how to assess how good arts education initiatives, whether in the formal or informal sector, are made more visible; how to promote and publicise possibilities for arts education, especially when someone lives in an area where little is taking place; how to tap parents' participation and to link this to audience development; what mechanisms are needed to encourage schools to make more use of artists and musicians as an addition to the school staff and how to get accreditation for them and resources for the initiative; how to give a higher profile to the-out-of-school programme; how to develop progression routes for people interested in a career within the arts which are well defined in some areas and not in others; how to support and build on the work of non-statutory organisations such as Second Wave, Irie Dance or MIDIMusic; how to maximise the unique role and capacity of the Libraries network.

In terms of higher education other connected issues emerge, some with substantial implications. Whilst this cluster of educational providers represents a potentially seamless thread, each has their own distinctive role and specialty. As one instance the eco-design or urban studies courses at Goldsmiths. Yet the review might as a start suggest a strategic body involving Goldsmiths, Lewisham College, Trinity College and Laban Centre London in order for them to create more linked, collective projects along the lines of the Arts Summer School. By doing things together greater resources for programmes such as community education or broader regeneration objectives could be tapped from funding streams such as SRB 7. Important, too, for the higher education sector is to have a secondary school in the borough with specialist status for the arts, like Thomas Tallis in Greenwich, as well as a formal forum where employers can meet training providers.



A potentially major initiative with strategic impacts is the proposed Lewisham Institute of Life Long Learning. This presents a vision and structure for the re-organisation of post-16 education within the borough by transforming its accessibility, delivery and structures by taking advantage of a conjunction of technological, political and economic possibilities. The Institute would unite within a single framework, system and federal structure all aspects of non-higher education, post-16 education and training within the local area, spanning the work of a wide range of existing organisations.

The advantages of such a system could be great: there could be a seamless web of post-16 opportunities for all residents and workers in Lewisham; access to education and training through many different points and at many different levels; common quality assurance requirements guaranteeing high provision throughout the borough; a rational and inclusive map of educational opportunities minimising duplication of facilities and targeting resources across the borough; strong progression routes established from work related education for 14-16 year olds in local schools to strong links with employers or higher education institutes leading to employment, upskilling or higher education work; and finally a single point of reference for the Learning and Skills Council placing the Institute in a much stronger position than several separate organisations.

Other important opportunities include: how to maximise the potential of the Creative Partnership initiative, a significant pilot programme combining the work of the voluntary sector with schools. Similarly the Schools PFI and the Space Development projects provide urban design opportunities for schools to be appealing, modern and well designed around the kind of curriculum that they wish to offer.

Furthermore within this strategic overview there should be acknowledgement of the possibilities generated by organisations such as Age Exchange and Community Education Lewisham in offering opportunities for adults to gain skills and hence employment in the informal economy, as well as of their success in using the arts to empower older people and the socially excluded.

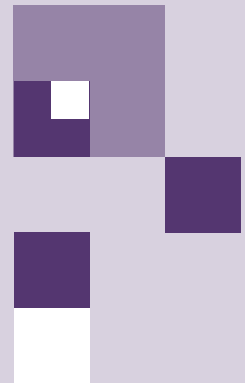
Within the community development remit of the Education Directorate there should be greater emphasis on spelling out how Social Care & Health can incorporate and mainstream arts into programmes at the design stage rather than as an afterthought. Good examples already exist in the borough's social inclusion work, particularly with young people. For example the 'sexual health jams' and the 'save rave evenings' which have been jointly run with the Health Authority, or the work of Artslift, Entelechy and Heart & Soul.

In sum, this combination of initiatives could change the personality of education as a more flexible and fluid activity providing bespoke training, delivered in a range of sites with some institutions becoming brokers of opportunities. This can only happen within a developed, coherent and well marketed overall plan.



6 ANIMATION AND VIBRANCY STRATEGY

Animating a place is to bring it to life by creating an environment with which people want to engage as spectators, passers-by or participants, organisers and investors. Done well it gives a space or geographical area a sense of place. Animation may involve any kind of activity from the orchestrated to the incidental, from programmed performances to encouraging a specific choice of shops, from instigating the setting up of facilities to organising a festival, from identifying a series of niches for markets and then promoting these to creating an environment where bars or restaurants want to locate, to being concerned about what happens in entertainment venues. It is about what happens in the street and inside buildings and venues. Animation is concerned too with the conditions that surround any activity such as safety and security, transport links or overall well-being of visitors. The urban design challenge is to provide the physical conditions, such as lighting or the capacity to move about easily; to encourage high quality facilities, which in themselves encourage people to use the spaces and to engage or enjoy themselves. The architectural challenge is to create assemblages of buildings that provide interest and a sense of occasion yet are useable. The activity programming challenge is to use spaces well at different times of the day and seasons and to ensure that venues and other indoor and outdoor centres are active and inspire people to take part. Animation involves all aspects of the Commission's brief and the proposed strategy needs to involve those concerned with activity such as events organisers and economic development people, as well as hard infrastructure interests from site assembly to transport specialists. By definition it is a cross-departmental and multi-agency task.



It is clear that Lewisham can become much more animated. The opportunities are immense and a strategy is proposed simply to order thoughts, clarify priorities on where to focus and to establish budgets, rather than being a talking shop. Most importantly it provides the opportunity for the various interested parties to come together in an output oriented way. The steering group to develop the strategy and to assess opportunities should be broadly based, and include those with knowledge of the world of commercial theatre and music promotion, festival organisation, events management and markets as well as representatives concerned with the physical environment. Ideally there should be Lewisham based people as well as acknowledged specialists from the outside.

The advantage of developing a strategy will be to create connections and opportunity as well as to assess, for example, whether there should be an annual calendar of events and the extent to which the public sector can intervene and what can be expected from other partners. Importantly too it can address the respective roles of different actors and financial requirements. For example, it seems clear that the Cultural Department is an enabler of opportunity, a kind of One Stop Shop that reduces obstacles and opens gateways. What can other parties, like the three town centre managers in Lewisham, do?



The strategy should break down the borough into its component parts and assess the kind of programming appropriate to different areas without falling into the trap of offering a little something to everyone. The objective is to create something both for the people of Lewisham as well as to affect its external image by encouraging outsiders to visit. The challenge of animating Lewisham as a whole is immense, so a start needs to be made at key nodal points. These might include: Lewisham Theatre and surrounds, Deptford High Street and the Creek, Forest Hill, Lewisham Town Centre and some of the secondary shopping centres, such as in Brockley and Downham. Ideally occasions should be created where the different parts of Lewisham can come together, as happens in parades.

The strategy should draw on the work of the opportunity scanning exercise such as its evening economy audit and audience research and the thinking which has already begun, like the paper on the future of festivals.

Yet it might be useful to kick-start the process in an unconventional way by bringing in a series of renowned specialists to work with Lewisham for a few days and then to present their ideas to a wider audience. In this way Lewisham not only gets advice from the best, but they are likely to become Lewisham ambassadors and possible collaborators. One thinks here of John Fox from Welfare State International, Stella Hall formerly from the Green Room in Manchester, Artangel and Lift as well as people who understand the cultural circuits and dynamics of London in terms of music, theatre, dance and the visual arts.



7 A CREATIVE INDUSTRIES STRATEGY

The creative industries are one of the main drivers of the new economy as providers of content for the vast array of businesses that use communications media as well as the entertainment industries. Britain is strong in this sector and so is Lewisham especially the North, and much analytical background work has already been undertaken. What is now required is to take that work further: to look more specifically at the potential of each creative sector, to assess gaps and opportunities, to think through required business support mechanisms, property development opportunities and how to attract further businesses into the area, to identify funding as well as assess whether the creative industries dynamic can be spread beyond the North of the borough. Issues of equity and opportunity are of course central, but the potential currently lies in the North and this should not be missed.

In order to maximise possibilities, a strategic approach is required that assesses the implications and potential of each aspect of the creative industries across the value chain. Lewisham should assess how well it is doing in terms of the production chain as well as in terms of comparable places throughout the country and whether it has thought through and applied the policy options available to it – see below.

The Creative Lewisham Agency should drive this process and needs to ensure it has good connections to artists and arts businesses, the higher and further education sector, the voluntary cultural scene, other partnerships which impact on culture such as the Art of Regeneration SRB project, the Arts and the Learning City initiative and so on, ensuring that they all work towards common aims.

Perhaps most important is to assess the creative industries production chain in Lewisham. This chain has five components and by breaking down the creative industries in this way a number of strategic issues emerge that Lewisham needs to address:

a Ideas generation and development

To what extent is Lewisham able to identify, develop and harness people's skills in the creative industries? Is the borough seen as creative and what are features unique to the borough or individuals and organisations working within it? Are there any blockages? Are there sufficient initiatives to help people to develop ideas and dreams?

In this respect Lewisham and its nearby surrounds are served by a remarkable cluster of further and higher education institutions – Goldsmiths, Lewisham College, Laban Centre London, Trinity College of Music, Ravensbourne College and the University of Greenwich. Furthermore the new Laban Centre London, Goldsmiths Gateway Building and Lewisham College's proposed School for the Performing and Creative Arts will strengthen that base.

The main issue is ensuring that the institutions work together to provide a co-ordinated and comprehensive programme in the arts, the creative industries and the study of culture, as well as in business training for students, graduates and non-graduates. Furthermore as a group they should assess whether more can be done with their potential; for example, can the institutions co-operate – say on SRB 7 initiatives or in terms of generating national and international profile?



b Turning ideas into reality

How is this 'creativity' turned into production? Are the people, resources and productive capacities available to aid the transformation of ideas into marketable products? Here the lack of dedicated business support mechanisms could emerge as a problem as well as the need for greater cultural management provision. The strategic question to ask is whether they need to be in Lewisham or can suppliers just as easily be based elsewhere? Are the infrastructure requirements present in terms of accommodation at different price levels? It is clear to most that property issues need to be addressed with urgency and a Property Development Strategy should be put in place to secure space at affordable rents so people can take the first steps in employment. Importantly the creative sector needs both the existing freelance and micro-business sector on which it is currently based, but also needs to encourage more substantial firms (up to 50 employees) which have the capacity to grow, to provide work for smaller entities and to generate the need for support business.

c Networking, circulating and marketing ideas and products

This concerns the availability of impresarios, managers, agents and agencies, distributors and wholesalers (say in film or publishing) or middle persons, packagers and assemblers of product. Is promotion of the creative industries adequate, can public intervention help and, if so, is it desirable? Do local producers need such resources actually to be based in the borough? It should consider also issues such as whether there should be a marketing consortium, a branding initiative or a need for broad band connection across Deptford to link education institutions, galleries and performance spaces and studio complexes.

d Delivery culture and creative services

Are there sufficient venues, exhibition spaces or shops for creative products to be consumed, enjoyed, seen, experienced or bought? Here again the question arises, do all these facilities need to be based in the borough? In turn what is the situation for people wishing to locate their creative activities in the borough, is there sufficient encouragement and can incentives be created?

e Audience development

How aware is the local public of this creative activity either through word of mouth, publications or media in general and does this make any difference to them? Can the audience be increased in the borough and outside? Can people from different economic and social backgrounds be encouraged to experience culture? Furthermore can the buzz about Lewisham be used beneficially in other ways such as for image or inward investment possibilities?

Below is a framework within which Lewisham might wish to assess its policy options.



WEAK INTERVENTION

FIGURE 1: POLICY OPTIONS FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES SECTOR (with Lewisham annotations)

A SUPPLY SIDES	B DISTRIBUTION & NETWORKS	C DEMAND SIDE
<p>1 Directories, guides, explanatory leaflets, databases/yearbooks, trade conferences/services.</p> <p>There is little done in this area, basic festival and event guides exist.</p>	<p>1 Coalition building, conferencing, agenda setting through public discussion.</p> <p>Creative Industries Forum a good starting point. Opportunity for Awareness raising programme exists.</p>	<p>1 Promotion of creative sector at local level and beyond.</p> <p>Underdeveloped, word of mouth e.g. widespread knowledge of the artists' community in the borough. Visibility budget and tourist initiatives important starting point.</p>
<p>2 Small firm R & D support, business advice services.</p> <p>Business development services in the borough have not sufficiently geared their services to the creative industries sector nor do they have sufficient internal experts</p>	<p>2 Joint public/private goalsetting and collaboration on objectives.</p> <p>Educational sector joint working and Forum a start, but private sector - apart from micro-businesses remains weak.</p>	<p>2 Market research on existing and potential audiences.</p> <p>Not developed, setting up this capacity a priority.</p>
<p>3 Niched business spaces or art centres, managed workspaces and districts.</p> <p>Major crisis looming, needs strategic planning</p>	<p>3 Sector analysis and strategy development.</p> <p>Overall analysis exists - much fine grained work on sectors necessary.</p>	<p>3 Public/private purchasing or leverage.</p> <p>Not yet considered as a possible policy, only in terms of building based initiatives.</p>
<p>4 Project funding and initiation.</p> <p>Great potential for funding, but needs pulling together by a Strategic entity</p>	<p>4 Leveraged access for creative operators via policy shifts, preferential vouchers systems or financial incentives.</p> <p>Nothing happening as yet.</p>	<p>4 Festivals, trade fairs.</p> <p>Could be stronger.</p>
<p>5 Training and vocational education.</p> <p>Very strong and getting stronger - major opportunity for further synergies. Links between education, training and management for enterprise development not yet well developed. Careers Advisory service needs to be aware potential of sector</p>	<p>5 Direct investment in network(s) or in public/private collaboration: e.g. Marketing consortia for the arts, or fashion consortium</p> <p>Nothing happening yet.</p>	<p>5 Creative industry education initiatives and cultural policy research.</p> <p>Strong in most areas. Skills needs audit essential</p>
<p>6 Cultural agencies, commissions (e.g. film, public art, design).</p> <p>No dedicated agencies. Should be explored</p>		<p>6 Technology and facilities subsidies, pilot projects and flagship creation.</p> <p>Flagships exist and more coming. South of the borough an issue</p>
<p>7 Borough creative industries policy with regional, or national focus. Strategic support for champions. Joint network risk-taking.</p> <p>As yet not developed, Commission report seeks to influence</p>		<p>7 Fiscal policy shifts (VAT rates, interest rates etc.)</p> <p>Difficult to do in local context, however lobbying possible.</p> <p>Strong Intervention</p>

STRONG INTERVENTION

8 FUNDRAISING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

A fundraising and development strategy should be designed to maximise opportunities and enable local cultural players to develop sustainable funding relationships outside the subsidised sector. In this context 'fundraising' refers to the process of attracting money into projects from private sources and 'development' to the process of building coalitions for projects, which offer both financial benefits and support networks. Such a strategy should be action-oriented and focus on deliverable results within the timescale of the Creative Lewisham agenda. Such a strategy needs buy-in from key decision-makers at the highest level, and its development will itself act as an educational and advocacy process.

No local authority has as yet attempted to run a sustained fundraising and development strategy for culture which links the subsidised and non-subsidised sectors, with an emphasis on the financial and non-financial rewards of public-private support. Such a strategic approach could be a model for other initiatives across the country. It would deliver a holistic funding and financing framework to complement the public subsidy commitment of local, metropolitan and national funding agencies.

The Creative Lewisham agenda should be enriched by situating culture within the thinking and action of the private sector so achieving a better balance between sectors. Public-private partnership has become an accepted element of the cultural funding landscape, including business sponsorship, social investment (driven by a burgeoning corporate social responsibility agenda which is slowly coming to see culture and within that the arts as possible partners), corporate patronage, individual philanthropy and trust and foundation support. These sources of finance are increasingly complex and inter-related, and are inter-related too to public funds driven by regeneration objectives. Yet private finance is an essential leverage tool for public money, which can bring with it not only wider support networks, but also improved managerial practice and higher profile. A Fundraising and Development Strategy seeks to help back up the cultural ambitions of the borough.

Businesses can provide significant levels of funding for not-for-profit culture initiatives and the arts sector. Additionally, they can be key investors in small innovative businesses as the wall between sponsorship, philanthropy and social investment is becoming increasingly porous. There is particular scope within the creative industry sector, where small scale investment can produce valuable returns, but where investors often require levels of understanding, belief and commitment that lie outside the classic investment approach. Importantly the partner search should not be merely focused on the local business environment - significant opportunities exist within the wider London business world who might wish to exploit the longer-term potential of the borough as a site for future business development (a potential linked to the strategic growth of other regional initiatives such as the Thames Gateway Project). In addition, the professional and technical skills of the business sector should be harnessed to build connections, as well as to provide the management security levels which are required for sustainable growth.

There are a number of strategic steps and areas to be addressed:

A SKILLS

Obviously the development of appropriate skills among local players is the key element of a public-private compact for culture in the borough. Fundraising training and ongoing support are central to this, not only to equip projects as well as the local authority with the required fundraising skills but also to track and evaluate them over time. It is important that there is a 'knowledge bank' about the local environment which is both exploited and conserved, with the aim of creating a competitive but collaborative fundraising environment in the borough.

B NETWORKS

Projects need to build support networks as well as appropriate 'safe spaces' and partnerships. One of the aims of a fundraising and development strategy should be to link very small-scale players with larger institutions in the locality (or indeed more widely) in order to provide endorsement for people and projects.

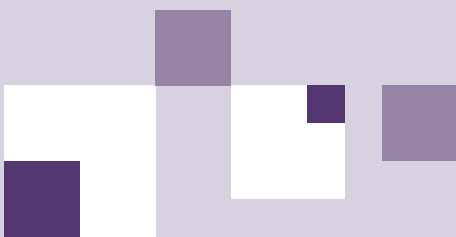
C INFORMATION

Access to information and advice on fundraising is a key issue for both small business start-ups and for the small and medium scale arts and heritage sector. A method of delivering this is required which is sympathetic to the needs and particularities of the sector. In the short to medium term it may need to be provided on a sub-contracted basis by local specialists. Over time as informed personnel emerge, sources such as local libraries will become significant, as will high-technology solutions such as simple funding and financing websites along the lines of those developing in the US.

D ADVOCACY

It is essential to raise knowledge and awareness of the cultural ambitions and richness of the borough among potential funders. Local businesses may not identify with Lewisham's potential, nor may metropolitan business and high net worth individuals, some with family or historical connections to the borough. There is a need for clear messages and a consistent voice to promote the potential of the cultural sector to key decision-makers. This may not always have a direct fundraising objective, but it should always be fundraising relevant.

This strategy should be kick-started by CLA in collaboration with partners who should appoint a consultant to develop the work.



9 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Lewisham needs a communications strategy which should be concerned with three things: image and projection issues; networking and connecting; and best practice tracking. It should be the responsibility of a partnership initiative – as the sum of what Lewisham is, the mixed stories of a diversity of stakeholders, civic, private and community oriented. It can be triggered and set in motion by the Creative Lewisham Agency, although much of the follow-through will be left to other entities such as the Council's Communications Department. Indeed the Council's in-house Communications Department will be a key partner, but it should not be solely responsible for communicating what Lewisham is. The projection has more credibility when coming from a partnership entity.

The objective of the strategy is to project a consistent set of messages about Lewisham, fleshing these out over time with greater subtlety. It is not concerned with chasing every Lewisham minutia.

a Image and projection

Before the strategy begins there should be a benchmark snapshot about internal and external perceptions of Lewisham against which the work of the Creative Lewisham project can be assessed, measured and monitored over time.

Lewisham has to communicate to itself and the outside world a sense of self-belief about what it is and where it is going – that it is a creative place in parts and aspires to be more creative, imaginative, urban design focused and quality driven. It has to put across a sense of the rich texture that is Lewisham – a mixed borough of potentially far more flourishing neighbourhoods. A place in transformation. Yet the hype must not proceed reality; it is far better for reality to push hype.

A picture with some clarity needs to emerge. So far there are multiple images of Lewisham and these differ for insiders, who often have deep loyalty to places that outsiders push aside with an off-hand remark. Few people outside Lewisham have a clear sense of the borough and its component parts, its bright and not-so-right spots.

The image should be built up step by step, firstly creating a sense that there is a 'Lewisham', a set of connected, flourishing, and distinctive neighbourhoods, places or villages; then, secondly, that it is a multi-faceted richer experience than people might think at first sight; and then finally to spell out its depth. Inevitably the arts and urban design will play a central part in creating images for Lewisham. The target is regional, national and international, yet given its resources Lewisham needs to identify niches to which it can market rather than using a scatter-shot approach. The remarkable cluster of educational institutions in the North of the borough is one obvious niche that can be worked through, yet others will emerge.

b Networking and connecting

The second part of the communications strategy is to assist others in networking the borough in order to attract investment, interesting developers and artistic and other talent so drawing the best into Lewisham's web. This may involve, for example, the Regeneration Directorate putting on a developer event, or a town centre manager identifying interesting market stall holders, or the Culture department putting on an event about public art. The list could be extensive.

c Best practice tracking

The third element is to keep track of good practice in terms of creative places and to seek means of drawing attention to these in the borough. At the same time those responsible for the strategy might find ways to ensure that Lewisham stakeholders see and experience good practice elsewhere.

The task then is to describe and communicate Lewisham's identity, to organise events and seminars and to publish materials through various media as appropriate. In this way it is hoped Lewisham will have nurtured deep and meaningful relationships with a series of authorities who will, in effect, become ambassadors for the borough.

CATALYSTS

There are many projects that will signal Lewisham's intent and aspirations. Some are already happening, the most visible being Laban Centre London, and they need to be executed and orchestrated with quality and panache to provide momentum for the Creative Lewisham process. These projects are important to showcase, as much of the preliminary work on Creative Lewisham will be invisible, involving providing background and persuading partners, and they should be announced ideally as part of the launch of the Commission's findings. Once implemented these model initiatives should develop a self-reinforcing dynamic. Within the next 12 months the following projects can begin or their intent be publicised. They include:

- Creative Enterprise Zone: confirming the status for the zone in Deptford, launching an associated area plan and completing the sale of Drake House will send a signal giving confidence to partners such as the Creative Forum and educational sector to execute their own plans with greater vigour. In addition, bringing the railway arches at Mechanics Path in Deptford into productive use. In partnership with Spacia (Railtrack) and the London Development Agency refurbishing 30 arch units will considerably improve the immediate surrounding environment and Spacia is keen to work with the Council to encourage creative industries to locate in these premises
- PFIs: signalling Lewisham's intent to use the borough's schools and hospital PFIs as innovative test cases to show that the scheme can generate quality and innovation. This may require an experienced PFI consultant.
- Convoys Wharf: the Council has laid down a marker by engaging Ricky Burdett of the Urban Task Force and his colleagues at the LSE Cities programme to prepare an Urban Development Framework that has high quality design and cultural aspirations at its heart. News International's new team has demonstrated both sympathy for the approach and enthusiasm for the enormous opportunity that Convoys Wharf presents – not just for Deptford, or indeed Lewisham, but for the Thames Gateway sub region. A truly ambitious development, Convoys connects Deptford's past heritage, contemporary arts and future opportunity, and is possibly the borough's most significant potential catalyst.
- New Cross Gate: the recent award of £45 million for New Cross Gate through the New Deal for Communities Programme provides an opportunity – indeed an obligation – to develop a major new flagship building for community/health uses. In tandem with the proposed £70 million redevelopment of Kender Estate, and the opportunities presented by the development site at the former New Cross hospital site, the Council has the opportunity to pursue design excellence and transformatory projects across a large area of this challenging environment.
- Sundermead Estate: the first phase of the Lewisham Renaissance SRB 6 programme should be used to set the standard as the comprehensive redevelopment of the town centre is set in train. The Council has the opportunity to ensure that the social housing to be provided at the outset of the redevelopment is of the highest design quality. A benchmark here is the famous social housing project in Vienna designed by Hundertwasser. The Council will then reap the benefits as the value carried into the private/for sale housing of the later phases will be added to the entire scheme. The provision of a new park will also provide an unrivalled opportunity for the Council to signal its commitment to the public realm, and the leisure facility proposed as the final phase should again be a state-of-the-art building. The Lewisham Interchange feasibility process is connected to these developments and should again signal the borough's high ambitions.
- Announcing the building of a new Downham library/leisure complex as part, importantly, of a broader urban design scheme for the centre of Downham. Perhaps involving a competition for mixed teams of architects/urban designers/cultural planners.
- Ensuring that the new Goldsmiths Gateway Building reflects strong imagination to mirror the creativity associated with their students, yet at the same time sets in place a means of making the surrounding community feel they are part of the process both in terms of involvement at the level of implementation and offer.

- Art of Regeneration and Laban Centre London: the DCMS is extremely interested in the evidence of impact emerging from this initiative. By next summer a number of arts projects within schools should have been short-term evaluated by the innovative methods proposed by the Art of Regeneration initiative.
- The 24 hour school: this imaginative concept should select three schools to work around the 24 hour school notion involving creativity and community learning as well as parent involvement and cross-generational work.
- Artsmark: two schools within a year receiving the Artsmark gold standard and one school achieving specialist arts status.
- Creative Partnerships: within the year establishing two enduring relationships that result in an agreed longer term programme.
- Lewisham Arts and Education Network: ensuring that LEAN have a base within the Professional Development Centre as a means of easing their work and increasing their impact.
- Spreading creative industries impact: a plan to develop new arterial routes and linkways should be identified to ease the pressure in deep Deptford and spread opportunity; these might include Brookmill/Lewisham Way.
- Making known through appropriate means that the Council is searching out and targeting new partners to collaborate on initiatives such as markets development, animation initiatives and housing. New partners may include organisations such as the Architectural Foundation, Urban Space Management, Argent and Cultural Co-operation.
- Instigating some visionary design and feasibility work around Catford Town Centre; engendering debate with businesses, residents, stakeholders and Transport for London to increase expectations and encourage stakeholders such as St.Modwen, TfL, housing providers and the Council itself to reinvest in the centre.
- Capitalising on the re-launch programme of the Horniman Museum throughout 2002. Its collection strengths in ethnography and, within that, music uniquely dovetail into the Lewisham vision. Links with the Music Village/Diaspora project or the World Tea Party initiative, given the Horniman's tea connection, are but two of the obvious ideas. The visibility of Horniman's could be strengthened by developing physical connections to Forest Hill station both along the route as well as making the museum part of the station itself when it is re-developed.
- Using the town centre management initiative to develop a stepped, timetabled vision for Forest Hill including the library/leisure pool redevelopment, the Sainsbury's re-furbishment, Horniman's and the new station to reflect the diversity of Lewisham.
- Following the Forest Hill initiative with a similar process in Sydenham.
- Developing a youth planning forum as in Birmingham as a means of demystifying the planning process, encouraging involvement and keeping in touch with generational ideas.
- Making at least 20 empty shops available for transitional activities, including for creative businesses or exhibition.
- Holding an evaluating and monitoring event in June 2002 with best practice examples from the UK and abroad being presented.
- Hosting a high level symposium to assess how to maximise the imaginative capital in education in early 2002.
- Instigating a range of lobbying initiatives, including extending the DLR to Catford, changing the business rate collection system, altering the RSL/PCI bandings.



THE LEWISHAM SURVEY



THE LEWISHAM SURVEY



THE LEWISHAM SURVEY: OPINIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

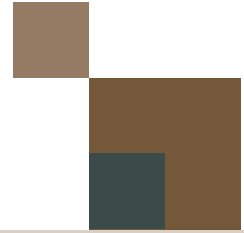
This section of the Commission's report summarizes the opinions gathered from around 60 individual interviews and group meetings involving around 300 people, a number of whom came from outside the borough. It represents an audit from which many of our recommendations emerged. It has four sections: the first looks at Lewisham's general situation, the second at the arts picture, the third at urban design and the final one at image and the Council.

SECTION ONE: OVERARCHING DYNAMICS

FUTURE SCENARIOS

In discussing Lewisham and its future, three basic scenarios were continuously contrasted which shaped our view of the whole Commission process and the urgency to act. One was 'do nothing', another 'don't do much', and lastly 'move forward with strategic focus and commitment'. We explored these in workshops. In terms of the first two (do nothing or not much) people felt that the ambitions of organisations such as Goldsmiths, Lewisham College and Laban Centre London would be frustrated, there would no vibrant sector to work with, the key change agents would retreat into themselves and slowly move elsewhere across borough boundaries. SMEs would be squeezed out, the arts and leisure services would struggle on with an occasional highpoint, synergies would be missed. Residents would look elsewhere for stimulation and to self-improve. The quality of the urban environment would improve slightly, given the rise in more expensive developments, yet there would be a ghetto and gated feel to the area with the South forgotten and increasingly inward-looking. Lewisham would be a dormitory for those working North of the river. In sum Lewisham would become another 'nameless' borough without profile.

In the other scenario (move forward with strategic focus and commitment) people said that, with a vision, their energies, motivation and commitment could be tapped, their willingness to work on shared agendas would increase. They said they would give of their time and resources and fight for a better Lewisham - a Lewisham that nurtures and retains talent, a Lewisham that feels it is going places, a Lewisham that feels visually attractive with elements of surprise. The public sector would trust itself to take risks within a framework of accountability and equity and the private sector would be inspired to understand that social responsibility is in their own longer term interest. Being late to tackle cultural issues and the feel of the urban landscape, but not too late, could be turned into an advantage provided the lessons from elsewhere were learnt. People told us: 'The key is flexibility within a structure that provides stability and consistency yet is based on high expectation' and they added: 'we want to be part of creating that future Lewisham'. This they said would increase their pride and so generate a virtuous circle of development. That is the gauntlet they threw down to decision makers.



COULD LEWISHAM BE 'A LIVING WORK OF ART'?

The essence of the Commission's feedback can be summed up by 'reconceiving Lewisham as 'A Living Work of Art' by moving culture centre-stage'. This clarion call can increase expectations citizens have for themselves so fostering their aspirations through inspiration. This message people felt should be targeted at both Lewisham residents and local stakeholders as well as outsiders who come in contact with it. It implies increasing the threshold of expectations and therefore quality, it means legitimising and infusing the imagination, especially the artistic one, in everything Lewisham does from unleashing individual empowerment and harnessing talent to how it deals with the physical environment.

It means recognising, too, that a key driver of urban development in large conurbations world-wide is creatively to deal with diversity, difference and distinctiveness so shifting the debate to an intercultural vision for Lewisham. This is easy to say, but difficult to do, but will need to be at the heart of where Lewisham wants to go.

THINKING ABOUT CULTURE DYNAMICALLY

In getting this sense of a possible Lewisham future the Commission's work used the word 'culture' in both its wider and narrower sense. Culture is a slippery term as it can mean different things to different people. More broadly culture is about what makes a place and its people distinctive, unique and special and how that is etched into people's minds, habits and imagination. Its results are seen in behaviour and in skills and talents as well as in how people transform their living and built environment. As such, culture frames how a place came to be, and what it is now which shapes its possibilities for the future.

Crucially culture is about the values of a place. What survives as the local culture is what is distilled from the continuous sorting process from the past defining what is remembered and

considered important. These values are seen in how people think and behave, in what is produced and how surroundings are transformed. Inevitably everything is culturally saturated. But it is not a static thing; culture develops, adapts and transforms as it confronts changing circumstances.

An underlying principle regarded by the Commission as crucial was to go with the grain of local cultures, both those cultures that have been in Lewisham a very long time and those which are new. It generates the motivation to face an inevitable shifting future. It provides a backbone and confidence giving anchor to be more open minded and to accept outside influence and stimulus. By contrast, by neglecting local hopes and fears we create a culture that turns inwards and acts like a defensive shield with little scope to develop.

The cultures of a place like Lewisham are its resources. They provide the raw materials and value base, its assets replacing coal, steel and gold.

This broader definition helped us look at a central feature of culture – the arts from the performing to the visual – far more dynamically. The arts have unique qualities that give them a privileged position, which is not to say that aspects of culture like faith, sports, food, or hobbies do not also have impacts; it is simply that they do not replicate the power of the arts. Involvement in the arts taps the imagination and harnesses creativity, a central feature to survive in today's world; it fosters exploration, self-expression and self-understanding as well as helps develop the critical faculties to question orthodoxy – essential for development. Its transformative, empowering effect can be immense. As a result the arts establish and anchor identity without which it is difficult to operate in the world. The arts also help bind collectivities and groups as well as creating legacies and things of lasting meaning that define us, our place and our age.

The arts have immense spin-off impacts. The industries of the arts – the creative industries – are key drivers of the new economy, generating substantial employment and wealth – over 6% in London; they shape the image and perception of places and so

can determine inward investment opportunities; they provide the focus for tourism. Their social impacts are equally strong from generating life-skills to helping social development. The educational impacts have been amply demonstrated too; one instance is the recent analysis of the Department of Education's NELS database of 25000 students which showed that those with high levels of arts participation outperform 'arts-poor' students by virtually every measure. The work of Ken Robinson and Francois Matarasso has reached similar conclusions and provides evidence for the wide-ranging impacts of the arts and culture from community expression to high arts to the creative industries. In spite of this evidence it is surprising how many people still regard the arts as an add-on only to be taken seriously once the 'more important' other issues have been dealt with.

Looking at culture broadly and narrowly simultaneously allows us to ask what can culture and the artistic imagination do for transport, for planning, for social services and health, for environmental awareness raising, for economic development as well as regeneration and urban design in general? Seen so, the marriage between a cultural perspective in thinking through opportunities and problems as well as using the artistic imagination can add value and inspiration, mutually benefiting any solutions found.

Why was the Commission concerned with culture and urban development? At its simplest they are inseparable. The built environment is a cultural artefact dependent on what we regard as acceptable quality. Successful places around the world both historically and today are concerned about the physical quality of their environment.

What is the point of helping to unleash the imagination, potential and skills of individuals whilst throwing them into environments that depress and deflate and do not reflect a similar imagination they are applying to their private work? The city and urban environment is itself the most challenging 'living work of art' – a slogan Lewisham might adopt for itself. The Urban White Paper agenda chimes well with the Commission's objectives, with its underlying assumptions about needing to 'love cities' and its emphasis on urban design and aesthetics. The city or borough is a lived experience so shaping the perception of place. This leads us to assess the experience of the urban setting and the extent to which it stimulates and uplifts and how it can be made better.

AWARENESS RAISING

In order to generate momentum about Lewisham, people felt stakeholders needed to accept that the connection between culture and urban regeneration and good urban design adds value and is not a fad. Its value is based on substantial evidence. In fact, when resources are well spent on culture, those resources should be seen as an investment and not a grant. It is an irony that at the moment when this is widely recognised the arts fabric in the borough is in danger. The withdrawal of Arts Advisors is an example, even though in external inspections Lewisham schools are doing very well in terms of arts education and are beginning to gain national recognition. A central problem, it is argued, is that the perception of art in the borough is outdated – seen more as a hobby with too few decision makers having had the lived experience of the impact of arts.

LEWISHAM AND THE WIDER WORLD

Lewisham is not an island unto itself. It needs to assess its potential in a wider context as being affected by global dynamics and in turn making its own unique contribution to those trends. This is both an opportunity and a threat. It is positive in that the borough can feed off developments generated elsewhere such as the rise of the creative industries. It is a threat, because Lewisham is in competition with other parts of London: South London and South East London in particular, whether for strategic development opportunities, such as becoming the location for major new employers or to attract talent. How these decisions are made is often based on perception of place – their attractiveness, buzz, quality of life and a simple feel-good factor. So if Lewisham looks and feels uninspiring it is unlikely to attract the inspiring.

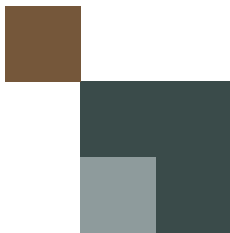
More locally, consider the impact of Tate Modern and Peckham Library in Southwark; in Greenwich the development of the Dome in spite of its problems; developments around the Thames Gateway; Bromley's attempts to ensure its position in the shopping hierarchy; Croydon's 20/20 visioning exercise which has led to a transformation of the borough's image including initiatives such as its museums/library complex and the way its skyscraper landscape has been enhanced through lighting.

Some may prefer to keep a cosy anonymity for Lewisham, but in the long term people felt that would not be a sensible strategy as

it is likely to create a vicious cycle with resources, from money to brains, draining out. Furthermore other boroughs such as Southwark and Greenwich are moving faster in some respects and have been able to attract major investments and visitor attractions. Yet they have not gone through a Commission process, itself rather innovative, and Lewisham's timing is right. The DCMS and GLA are taking note of the Commission's approach as a model of best practice.

As the Lewisham opportunity is also part of that of South London there will be times when what happens elsewhere is significant to Lewisham and cross-border collaboration will be key. For instance, developments at Trinity, what happens at the Dome, speeded up land assembly, new government guidelines for creating affordable B1 sites resulting from lobbying. The message is unity is strength and boundaries should not constrain thinking.

Areas rise up and become trendy and can then get left behind with an undesirable legacy. Yet when the dynamic starts, as it has in Lewisham, there is no possibility of pretending it is not happening. This highlights the sense of urgency for all stakeholders to act with foresight, clarity and focus.



THOUGHTS ON VISION AND PERSPECTIVE

There was a recognition that the future strength and attractiveness of Lewisham will depend on creating a mixed use suburb, including wherever possible a variety of residential housing types at different price ranges as well as ample scope for commercial and industrial uses. The danger is that Lewisham could become a monotonous dormitory for the Docklands, creating what a cluster group called 'Fairviewville' or 'Barrattown' where uniform executive housing dominates the landscape. This implies the Council working both with and at times appropriately against the market to safeguard diversity. It will mean making hard choices in the longer term interest, such as on occasion favouring light industrial use over housing even though short term receipts could be higher by selling to house builders. The lure of selling the family silver, without ensuring a future income stream or safeguarding assets that can be used down the line for the public interest is ever present.

The lesson from urban regeneration and subsequent gentrification processes is that if inclusion issues are not addressed divided communities follow. For example, gated executive estates can be socially divisive, storing up problems for the future. Indeed some people might not even spend their free time or money within the borough, so reinforcing the dormitory notion.

UNDERSTANDING TRENDS

Trends were highlighted. They include: Lewisham's demographics have changed and are continuing to change, with what are called 'the traditionalists' moving out. This could be better absorbed by reinforcing local cultures rather than denying them. The nature of households is now different with more singles, and the use of dwellings is becoming more multi-purpose so that ideas such as live/work become much more relevant.

Lewisham does not want to miss out on the revolution in the economy where the creative industries play a more central role. The consequent need to equip the population with new skills for the 21st century puts arts education in a completely new light.

Lewisham cannot ignore the so-called 'experience economy' – a rapprochement between everyday living, consumption and spectacle shaping what cities look and feel like. It will affect planning, land use and use orders. This process is turning retailing into a part of the entertainment industry often blurring the boundaries between shopping, learning and the experience of culture. It involves creating settings where customers and visitors participate in all-embracing sensory events, whether for shopping, visiting a museum, going to a restaurant, conducting business-to-business activities or providing any personalised service from haircutting to arranging travel. Design, multimedia applications, theatrics and soundscapes move centre stage. Whereas in former phases of economic development it was either capital or information technology that drove economic processes, it is now creativity applied to every process, product and service that has a central role in generating value added.

BROADENING THE CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

The Council and key stakeholders in the borough have been leaders in recognising how in regeneration everything is inextricably inter-connected and that housing on its own is a weak regenerator. They know that physical renewal cannot occur without social renewal, and economic development needs to encompass capacity building or appropriate incentives structures.

The idea of regeneration now needs a further twist – the cultural dimension, an understanding that the success of development is culturally defined, because it has to work with the values of those affected. Even the World Bank has taken this on board – without cultural sensitivity development is more likely to fail.

This has implications, for example, on how culture is organised, what its status is, and where it sits in a Council setting as well as on budgets. It requires a generic understanding of its importance across all departments, but how can this best happen? Probably by people over time absorbing the message in the same way they have absorbed the sustainability agenda. Ideally everyone should have a learning experience concerned with creativity, culture, arts, aesthetics and urban design. In the environment field Kirklees for example had an Environmental Services Division as well as an Environment Unit; the first being about enforcement and the latter about awareness raising on sustainability and culture change. The objective is that over time the unit should disappear. The equivalent would be to have the Cultural Department dealing with the delivery of services such as libraries and arts programming with another time dated entity to be defined focusing on infusing the creative and culture agenda throughout the Council.

IMPROVING THE VISIBLE AND MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

What is visible in Lewisham like its physical infrastructure often has a bad image; what is invisible like its arts education work has a good image. The invisible needs to become visible and more strongly profiled. Too much that is good about Lewisham cannot be seen such as the educational work in places like Goldsmiths, Lewisham College or Laban Centre London or in smaller projects with high profile like Second Wave, MIDI, Entelechy, Lewisham Young Peoples Theatre, IRIE dance, the Get Set for Citizenship programme, the Council's reputation as a progressive innovator yet solid borough, good Ofsted reports, the work of the Youth Offending Team; the list could go on.

As a consequence Lewisham has no image or a negative one based on usually unfounded, old stereotypes, for example, that it has high crime rates when in fact it has one of the lowest in London. This sets a challenge for how the borough and others project themselves and conceive of events, programmes or more broadly reflect its vitality. Deptford X seems to be a step in the right direction.

The perception people have of a place is based on the visual environment – roads, signage, housing, litter, attractiveness – and the lived experience of place – vitality, feelings of well-being and safety. Substantial regeneration resources have been garnered by Lewisham, reflecting well on the Council's leadership and officers, but from an urban design point of view there is not much to show to the uninitiated.

On the built environment front the forward plans of institutions like Laban Centre London, Goldsmiths and Lewisham College provide opportunities to start thinking through visibility issues. Yet these are clustered in Deptford, so appropriately equivalent high-profile initiatives are needed elsewhere, too, from Catford to Crofton Park to Bellingham.

WHAT IS LEWISHAM?

'What is Lewisham?' people asked as this affects image and identity. Lewisham is both an administrative construction and a place. This double naming causes confusion especially for outsiders. By common consent Lewisham is best conceived as a collection of neighbourhoods or villages and resonates well with residents who have a fierce loyalty to the component parts of the borough such as Catford, Forest Hill, Blackheath, Brockley, Deptford, Downham or Sydenham. But when people say Lewisham do they mean the local authority or the place? Equally outsiders already have clearer perceptions of the bits, like Forest Hill, whereas Lewisham feels hazy. Place perception is made up of associations – history, events, the media, direct experience and so on – and these associations firm up when a richer, deeper story can be told. When that story is too disparate, vague and diffuse – like Lewisham – there is a tendency to fall back on older images or stereotypes as the 'disparate' story has too little focus, vitality, replenishment and depth to break through to shape what is remembered.

Another aspect of identity (and invisibility) is history. Whilst the built remnants are often visible, it is a challenge for the cultural department and others to bring the personalities to life as inspirers, role models or quirky characters, which still have relevance today. This will tap a rich seam of themes. To take a random mix just think of Shackleton from Sydenham, surviving in adversity; Gabrielle from Catford, local girl made superstar; Ferranti, Irene Macmillan, Dire Straights, those associated with the Docks. History is an under-utilised resource that can enrich the Lewisham story.

To maximise Lewisham's opportunity, the authority needs to slipstream into an existing positive dynamic in image terms – the South London and South East phenomenon and create associations with it. In communications terms this means creating the link that Deptford first = South London and then = Lewisham. Internationally the associational structure may be slightly different: Deptford = South London = London = Lewisham, thereby riding on London's world city status and 'hipness' factor. Or alternatively Deptford = a London neighbourhood = the place where it is happening in South London. Only when individual neighbourhoods have a stronger profile can the name Lewisham come into play as the primary brand.

THE NORTH SOUTH DISTINCTION

We cannot pretend the North/South distinction in the borough is not there. The focus of current opportunity is in the North of the borough: this is where development is strongest as well as potential assets. Here new opportunities are continually being built on. Just take the powerful cluster of educational institutions – Goldsmiths, Lewisham College, Laban Centre London and Trinity. Of the 550 or so cultural industries over 400 are in the North and merely a handful are in Bellingham and Downham.

In strategic terms the style and priorities of development will need to be different depending on area. The Deptford mix that is at the core of Lewisham's opportunities is difficult to put into Bellingham or Downham, added to which there is a psychological distance between South and North. As someone noted: 'Downham is a closed world'.

In the North the focus is more on shaping the dynamic, providing frameworks for the private sector to operate, and fine-tuning public investment, whereas in the South it is more about creating one. We have to accept that Deptford is the gateway to Lewisham from which the rest can benefit, and seen from the other end, Blackheath. Just because they have more potential they should not be disadvantaged.

QUALITY

What is low quality, what is high, what is mainstream, what is innovative? Interviewees felt each level of provision had quality in its own terms and appropriate to its purpose. For some a non-threatening and comfortable offer is the best of its kind. At times it was assumed that the Lewisham audience is not ready for a different level. The evidence suggests otherwise – Lewisham Youth Theatre's performance of *Woyzeck* being but one example.

In urban design, quality issues are difficult to enforce. For example, the UDP highlights the need for quality and even innovativeness on various occasions, yet the results do not match expectations. The 'devil is in the detail', and developers tend to go with safe options. Lewisham needs to raise its thresholds and judge itself by Europe-wide standards. More precise and explicit design briefs with visual indications of what is required may be one way forward as is the tried and tested competition route.

The private sector to some extent needs help and guidance and it may be worthwhile to spell out the opportunities such as RIBA grants for good design/sustainability. All these known ideas have implications on resources, yet the overall message is 'only the best and imaginative will do for Lewisham'.

FURTHER DYNAMICS

Further points highlighted include a combination of the good and the bad. Lewisham is on the turn in terms of desirability and potential, although that has not filtered down into a broad profile and image. One effect is the rise in property prices especially in the North, which might create difficulties for the Council's broader objectives.

Lewisham does not have much diversity in terms of employment and needs to deal strategically with its few possibilities to avoid the threat of becoming a dormitory where people move out during the day with its implications on spending patterns and the feel of the borough. So, the borough's desire to be seen as a set of mixed-use communities is difficult to create with so few light industrial sites, which are crucial, for example, to creative industries development, and at the same time more mass house builders want to move in.

Lewisham's educational structure has a mixed profile that is good for under 11s and higher education, but in the 11-16 band the perception (as distinct from reality) is that schools in Bromley and elsewhere are better. Many able pupils leave the borough causing a brain drain thereby reinforcing a geography of disadvantage and lower expectations for those left behind.

There is a feeling that Lewisham's profile as an innovative borough can be taken one step further so that it could lead the way in implementing the principles of the Urban White Paper. The question remains whether this can happen within the existing incentives and regulatory regime or without dedicated sub-area agencies. Particular issues concern the need to find ways of being more responsive in terms of land assembly issues or the power to implement due to capital controls.

PERCEPTIONS

The Commission's work implies a culture shift in aspiration. Yet aspiration and ideas are easy and implementation difficult, because it challenges existing ways of operating. Inevitably large organisations have aspects of institutional lethargy and the operating environment often cannot be bent to new purposes. Most interviewees, inside and outside the Council, were honest about these dynamics, whether it concerned Council operations or changing education courses to adapt to new circumstances. Such honesty is helpful as it provides the basis for moving forward.

The consultation highlighted a number of issues applying to a wide range of institutions such as: initiatives seem to be budget and not vision driven; insufficient long term planning or strategies are in place; risks are not taken because of short term views; a number of private sector interests are too narrow minded and unimaginative; inter-agency working does not happen effectively; inter-departmental links atrophy because of the pressures of the day-to-day; organisations such as the Highway Authority have not even begun to understand the dynamics of cities from a broader perspective; doubts whether there is sufficient political will to provide direction and guidance.

Many criticisms were to do with perception without recognising what has actually happened ('nobody consulted us about Deptford Town Hall') or are based on an individual instance that is generalised ('it is very difficult for small enterprises to get a licence; as the policeman said to me "what's it going to do to my stats?") or on a partial view ('the current success in arts and culture happens in spite of the Council').

In terms of obstacles we take the 'glass half full' approach and note merely that culture shifts are necessary, but the fact of the Commission and its open procedure itself is a signal of willingness to adapt and change.

There are far bigger more deep-seated obstacles which the Commission will seek to turn on their head such as 'diversity is a problem'. We note merely the recent Home Office Report on Migration which estimated the net contribution of migration to the UK economy at £2.6 billion. The report also noted a polarisation in the socio-economic profile of migrant communities, with migrants over-represented at the top of the income distribution but also highly concentrated at the lower end of the income distribution. A question for Lewisham to consider is how it can encourage a more even spread of resources through enabling the emergence of an entrepreneurial black middle class.

Another obstacle is the cliché that transport people, engineers and planners apparently have little understanding of aesthetics or design. In some cases yes, but many of the major development processes in cities we now admire were initiated by engineers: Melbourne is a good example of this. Here we challenge the cultural community to prove what it can do for transport, engineers or planners.

EXAMPLES FROM ELSEWHERE: FROM PLACE MARKETING TO PLACEMAKING

People noted that Lewisham is not the first place to have thought of the culture and urban development nexus and highlighted instances. The inspiring examples on a world scale only need a passing reference to show what the impact can be. The essential point is that they made the shift from place-marketing and image-building to place-making.

Take Barcelona. What was our perception in the early 1980s? The Olympics in 1992 helped, but long before that they had initiated the 100 pockets parks programme linked to the development of a sophisticated public arts programme that combined Catalans and renowned international figures. Take Rotterdam, once seen merely as a dirty port city and now a European City of Culture with vibrant architecture and home to the country's national architecture institute and increasingly a hub for the creative industries. Take Bilbao: merely 10 years ago would we have considered it a weekend destination? When you mention Bilbao, everyone thinks of Gehry's magnificent museum, but long before that was in place the city had begun to invest massively: in its human capital, by re-training its workforce; in its urban and environmental capital, by cleaning up the river and the air and building a new transportation system; and in housing (40,000 new apartments) in the poorest neighbourhoods by making the city a good place to live for all its citizens. Less well known is Muenster in Germany where a sculpture project has brought in famed outsiders and connected them to the city such as Sol Lewitt or Jeff Koons, making Muenster a destination. Closer to home the Walsall Art Gallery both because of its building and accessible programming has clicked with the local imagination in unexpected ways.

In terms of creative industries strategies, mostly widely known is Sheffield's 20 year strategy focused on its Cultural Quarter: the growth in the sector is now beginning to show in employment statistics. The jury is still out on the effectiveness of Tower Hamlets Cultural Industries Development Agency. The other well-known clusters have been more market driven such as Manchester's Northern Quarter, the developments in Hoxton or in Digbeth in Birmingham. Yet there are foreign examples worthy of exploring such as the Pop Cluster in Tilburg, which combines the development of physical infrastructure with training and marketing programmes.

Of particular relevance to Lewisham is the Creative Advantage Fund, set up in March 2000 with a budget of £1.3million. This is a venture capital investment fund dedicated to the creative industries in the West Midlands and funded by a combination of ERDF, the Regional Development Agency, West Midlands Arts, the Arts Council, Birmingham City Council and the private sector. It has so far invested £800,000 in nine projects ranging from film development to software, to magazine publishing. Other regions are now exploring setting up similar agencies, especially as the DTI has offered each region £20-£30million for developing venture capital funds and there is a mood to capture some of this for the creative industries.

All this activity could not have happened without a solid educational base and we need to see the continuum from schools, through voluntary activity, to non-commercial and commercial activities with experimental programmes often providing the R&D that are later taken up by the mainstream. Indeed some argue that access to the arts should be seen as an entitlement in the same way we regard literacy or numeracy.

STRATEGIC DILEMMAS

Putting these brave words into practice is not straightforward if we are to ensure that development is balanced and not just whizzy for creative artists and those attracted by the buzz. The strategic dilemmas that Lewisham's vision, strategy and implementation have to deal with can be summed up as follows:

- Encouraging development without creating too many negative side-effects of gentrification.
- Creating a mixed-use environment which balances local production of culture with its consumption.
- Balancing conservation and especially the more hidden historical assets with innovative, cutting edge development.
- Ensuring a mix of flagship projects that may suck in energy and resources, whilst encouraging and paying attention to small initiatives which replenish the base.
- Attracting outside stimulation and initiatives whilst building on home-grown talent and projects.
- Combining, therefore, a strategy of small steps, such as incremental improvements to the streetscape with big ideas such as re-creating Lewisham Interchange.
- Leveraging in commitment from the private sector and its desire 'to get on with it' within a more equitable public interest vision.
- Assessing whether the incentives and regulatory framework within which Lewisham operates work to achieve its vision. Will the borough need to argue for a special status for designated areas? Is the Council able to deliver its culture and urban development objectives within the existing structure?

2

SECTION TWO: THE ARTS PICTURE

THE CONTEXT


Lewisham has a surprising number of cultural assets, some of which are under-recognised, though it has to be said that most are clustered in the North of the borough especially Deptford. They include the world renowned educational institutions such as Goldsmiths, Laban Centre London and just a stone's throw away Trinity; centres of national significance such as Lewisham College, a beacon in further education and the Horniman Museum; the nexus of creative businesses some of which have national profiles such as IMT Hurricane which devised the City and Guilds accreditations for sound technology or Hales Gallery and the Rivoli Ballroom; projects such as Lewisham Youth Theatre, Second Wave, Heart & Soul, Entelechy, APT, Irie Dance or MIDI. Many are examples of national best practice. Advocacy organisations such as Lewisham Education and Arts Network (LEAN) are helpfully beginning to encourage the need for greater attention to the arts and education agenda. There is also the Albany, at one time a beacon and now possibly set for reinvention. Last but not least there is a large cluster of individual artists. Some claim there are 2000, most of whom made their way to Lewisham via Goldsmiths and initially occupied hard-to-let premises, for example on the Crossfields estate. They represent one of the largest artist clusters in Europe and some of their number are known internationally, exhibiting and selling from New York to Tokyo and Sydney.

The work of Goldsmiths itself cannot be underestimated. Consider its very high research ratings or its strengths in the visual arts (the Turner prize winners are only one indication), media, drama, as well as niche activities such as its path breaking work in arts therapy and eco-design or its extra-mural activities making it the second largest extra-mural department in Europe. Twenty percent of students are from ethnic minorities - a good record. Similarly, Laban Centre London has transformed how we consider dance and movement and its broader role in society and its new building by Herzog & de Meuron will profile that institution and Deptford (and by implication Lewisham) even more strongly. Lewisham College, in terms of further education, similarly plays a model role often leading the way in terms of developing programmes and innovative ways of delivering provision.

There are other examples of best practice that touch at times on the arts such as the work of the Youth Offending Team, in relation, for example, to graffiti; the Sure Start Parenting Skills programme; the work of the Health and Education Action Zones; the Connections programme for 14-17 year olds; the work of Community Education Lewisham in its unique citizenship role.

Furthermore the situation is not static - Cockpit Arts, an acknowledged leader in training and creative industries enterprise development, is relocating into the borough bringing many businesses with it. The innovative Art of Regeneration SRB, which uses the arts as a capacity building tool has recently started and its proposed longer term evaluation programme on measuring the wider impact of arts involvement could become a national landmark project in its own right.

This critical mass has been reached through time, reputation and support by key actors such as the Council. Its mass is now developing synergies and potential well beyond the borough. As noted: 'Deptford has been fermenting for 15 years and is now coming to the boil and the networks have reached critical mass'.



So the discussion as to whether the arts regenerate areas is slightly academic as they have already regenerated the North of the borough. Crucially these projects, and especially those supported by the Council, have not come out of nowhere. They are rooted in the borough; indeed many have existed for well over a decade. They are run by committed arts activists who have social inclusion, skills enhancement and empowerment agendas. Their resources come from a variety of sources but they probably have insufficient financial stability to plan ahead with confidence. They need to twist and turn and constantly remodel themselves to fit into the objectives of various funding regimes and probably spend far too much time on applications and dealing with the arts and regeneration funding infrastructure. A number of key people are tenuously holding their organisations together and are on the verge of burnout. Many of these problems are outside the Council's control, yet if they were more recognised across the Council beyond the Culture and Education Division for whom they are stars, support for them could be increased.

When one asks what can arts do for economic development and social services it is prudent to consider that it costs the government £25,000 per annum to hold someone in prison for a year; the economic and social impact of drug addiction and associated crime runs locally into several £million. If the impact of these combined projects just saves a handful of people from going this way it represents the equivalent of the Council's annual revenue arts budget of £225,000. That budget significantly has recently received a capital boost with the £2million allocated to Lewisham Theatre.

Is involvement in the arts as transformative as claimed? The evidence from academic research is powerful, yet even more powerful is direct contact with those whose lives have been positively changed. Before stakeholders make any future decisions they should find ways of coming into direct contact with those affected and should experience at first hand the impact of arts involvement.

An important issue is to assess whether other cultural investments like sport have equivalent effects and whether similar claims can be made for them. It is invidious to make comparisons. Undoubtedly involvement in sports can transform people's sense of themselves and their aspirations, but the skills the arts transmit have the topical and urgent advantage in that they lie at the core of the emerging new economy which is based on creativity, the visual, new media and other communications skills. The challenge for decision makers is to assess the relative impacts of alternative investments, but they should note that in regeneration the emphasis is shifting to recognising soft as well as hard infrastructures. So the focus might shift to dealing preventatively with the source of problems in order to reduce dealing with consequences later. In the context of low expectations and under-achievement, arts education both formal and informal is perhaps a bedrock – a key resource.

In sum, Lewisham can regard itself as extremely fortunate. To project the borough as a centre for creativity is not hype but reality and we need to remember that in the many cities around Europe who profile themselves in this way, hype usually precedes reality.

DISCUSSION POINTS

INTERCULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The key urban issue at the beginning of the 21st century is dealing with diversity and difference. This can be seen as a threat or opportunity. London, of course, has only become a world city because of its influx of immigrants. In Horniman's Museum, Lewisham has a key London-wide asset with whom it should explore a programme of activities and, ultimately, the setting up of a centre of national significance that is novel in concept, character and design because of its focus, feeling and format. Together, they should:

- Celebrate London's cosmopolitan richness and show the contributions that immigrant communities have made to developing and sustaining London's role as a world city. This will stimulate, foster and support intercultural understanding.
- Provide a focus for community pride and identity and thereby contribute to breaking down barriers between communities, races, religions and geographical areas.
- Target locals, Londoners, people from further afield, tourists from home and abroad, and consult with these communities, groups and projects London-wide, nationally and beyond as part of an ongoing process. The reach should be wide – providing a focus for communities throughout London and Britain, linking with their projects, signposting them as well as making international connections, both real with the historic homes of immigrant groups, and in a virtual sense, through new technologies.
- Consolidate and build upon the growing awareness over the past decade that London's multicultural diversity is a major asset and that intercultural understanding is a need, an opportunity and a worthwhile promise.
- Reflect and celebrate the positive dimension of mixing cultures as distinct from the problems it creates by focusing on the contribution of immigrant communities to London, economically, culturally and intellectually.
- Focus on how mutual understanding and tolerance can positively transform people and create the new cosmopolitanism needed for us to live and work together more harmoniously in the 21st century as the canvas of cities, regions and nations is increasingly drawn by diverse mixes of people. Globalisation, rapid flows of capital and mass movements of population triggered by the new world production order accentuate this need.
- Seek to show how the core concept of intercultural understanding can help solve a range of urgent current and future problems such as distrust or social fragmentation and in that process it will be more possible to unleash potential, creativity and confidence. The spin-offs could be surprising – greater wealth creation, more jobs and increased inventiveness.

London with New York is the most cosmopolitan city of the world with 33 nationalities of over 10,000 people. London has been a haven to a succession of immigrants, including Huguenots, Irish, Jews, Russians, Afro-Caribbeans, Bangladeshis and currently Kosovans.

They brought with them trades, skills, crafts and talents that have helped underpin London's role as a world city. There is evidence everywhere – in historic buildings, craft forms, food, traditions and cultural expressions, such as the jewellers in Hatton Garden, Little Italy in Clerkenwell, the textile trades in Spitalfields, the furniture makers in Shoreditch, pottery in Southwark. Equally important was how the creation of the City of London's financial and banking power was supported by immigrant groups.

This initiative should explain its mission by starting with the easy and accessible and lead people back seamlessly into the difficult and contentious. It should engender a feeling that 'history starts with me, I am part of it, I am a maker.' In this way it will allow many voices to come in. It should be a mirror, reflecting the richness of who we are and providing a microscope in order to explore in depth.

The story might initially be told through our common, yet different, experiences – food, music, clothes, dress, products, events and festivals, but always going deeper explaining the why, the how, and the when. This exploration could be supported by demonstrations, seminars, workshops and conferences. They might cover: how new trades, skills and products helped underpin London's economic strength; how the mix of cultures have changed and enhanced our cultural life from food, to music, to dance as well as intellectual life; how cultures of immigrant groups have both developed and created new hybrid forms such as bangra music or salsa, new clothing styles, new products and services.

THE NORTH/SOUTH DISTINCTION

In planning terms this positive picture presents a major dilemma. In order to fit in with the Council's social and geographic inclusion agenda in times of tight budgets there might be a desire to shift Council resources to the disadvantaged South, endangering the health of institutions and projects in the North. This would be unwise. Given their fragility many could disappear if no care is taken. In an ideal world projects like MIDI or Second Wave would be replicated in the South, but they are currently too stretched or reliant on one or two key individuals. Some like Lewisham Youth Theatre are working across the borough and combining often difficult projects like Woyzeck with young people from Downham as well as Brockley or Honor Oak, but they are the exception.

Creating aspiration through inspiration in Downham or Bellingham cannot happen overnight. It will require careful, complex, long-term nurturing and investment as it does not have the equivalent advantages of the North such as the cluster of educational institutions. Taking up the lessons from Deptford one focus might be to develop capacity building, not only through the arts, and thereby encourage a critical mass of new style, entrepreneurial voluntary organisations which over time would become less grant dependent. One obvious trigger is to use the opportunity for rebuilding the library/swimming pool complex in Downham, as already proposed. Provided the initiative aims high in design terms and looks at the site in a far broader urban design context including its linkages and ensuring the community is involved, the result could create the necessary uplift. That in turn could provide the basis for developing the civic pride and aspiration in the community desired.

THE POTENTIAL OF THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Lewisham can count itself lucky to have a substantial creative industries cluster in the borough. A recent cultural industries audit identifies 550 businesses in the borough, but the vast majority are in the North and a couple of post codes only have one. This is not surprising given the link between the educational institutions and the initial development of these micro-businesses. Some have a national reputation such as Cog Design, whose clients include some of the major cultural institutions in the country, or Halcyon Music a major music tour organizer.

This section is brief because significant thinking, report writing, consultancy projects and lobbying have already been undertaken and the time is ripe for decisions and a step change in thinking. For example 'Fortifying the Creative Sector in North Lewisham and West Greenwich' (November 2000) produced by the Creative Sector Development Group spells out in detail why the creative industries are important to the borough, what the precise opportunities are and how they can be maximized.

There have been criticisms that the issues have been highlighted for years without action and now there is a threat that opportunities will be missed. As someone noted: 'I'm just off to Greenwich, they are more arts friendly there'. To make the step change requires clarity and focus on the key issues, which include: Is it accepted that the creative industries are a major opportunity for the borough and can appropriate political guidance be given? Can the B1 uses be both protected and expanded by generating affordable B1 space, especially in Creekside? Therefore can the Creative Enterprise Zone designation be formally announced and the area start to be marketed? Can the business advisory system be geared to addressing the needs of the creative sector? Can a dedicated business start-up scheme be set in place to foster enterprise?

There are now so many initiatives in the extended Deptford/New Cross area from the new Laban Centre London, the Meridian Gateway development, the redevelopment of the Seager Building and Thames Waterworks site, the possibility of the Convoys site being available for development, the Goldsmiths Gateway Building proposal, the New Cross initiative, the New Deal for Communities, the East London Line extension to name the most important and add to this mix the creative industries momentum and desire from house builders to move in. The question arises whether this process can develop coherently within a business-as-usual approach. This wealth of activity cries out for a masterplanning approach for the area if coherence and vision is to be generated and maintained. Laban Centre London has already noted that planning decisions are being undertaken surrounding its new base, which may not reflect the new thinking for the area. Yet the budget for this type of work is very limited.

Creating a physical vision is one aspect, the other is the economic and social vision, part of which would be to attract a major creative industries player. A number of difficult issues will inevitably emerge, the primary one being to encourage development whilst maintaining an inclusive agenda and so avoid the downsides of gentrification; second, can the mass of small commercial and non-commercial initiatives survive this process and its inevitable price hikes, which they were largely responsible for triggering in the first place? Here we must acknowledge that perhaps the incentives and regulatory regime in the UK is not powerful enough to achieve the necessarily contradictory objectives. The mechanics of the Temple Bar development in Dublin may be a useful case study to explore. It might mean that Lewisham has to be even more radical and lobby central government to create a special designation for the area to create more flexibility and fluidity; especially as what is being mooted is likely to go with the grain of the Urban White Paper, the DTI's cluster policy and so on.

Finally, can the possible synergies be generated so that the various funding and development opportunities emerge without a dedicated entity that has a focus on the area?

GOLDSMITHS, LEWISHAM COLLEGE AND LABAN CENTRE LONDON

These three are all in their own way beacons. The sheer size of the Goldsmiths operation and its impact on the surrounding area inevitably generates comment. It is a major employer generating spending power through its 250 full time academics, 500 support staff, 500 part-time tutors and 1100 students living in university residences. The only way forward is to find tangible and visible ways to connect the institution even more firmly with its community. There is indeed 'high ambition and a great desire to do so'. It is to mutual benefit as the college intellectually feeds off its area. As someone noted; 'We need to connect out of a combination of high-mindedness and self-interest', or another: 'We wish to be a centre of excellence in a deprived area as this provides a reality check'. For a global institution to have local links only generates strength. Connections are already happening in innumerable ways such as its schools project that ended up as a Tate Modern exhibition. Goldsmiths recognizes the opportunities of being in a borough like Lewisham and 'is excited by the prospect'.

Design, access, programming and symbolic actions are key. Because of the curve between New Cross Road and Lewisham Way the college looms towards the environment like an enclosed fortress – this feeling needs breaking down. The proposed new Gateway building next to Deptford Town Hall is a significant opportunity both to reduce the sense of enclosure by creating a permeable setting, which invites all comers to pass through and to create an innovative building of visual delight appropriate to the college's artistic concerns. If, at the same time, the building offers public access facilities, notions of insiders and outsiders can break down. An issue emerged as to whether locals can have access to library facilities and the Information Services Building in general beyond July and August. This should be solvable administratively, without disrupting student learning, with appropriate will and suitable safeguards. Ultimately it may only be 100 locals who want to use the library. Yet to be able to market this openness will send strong symbolic signals. Significantly though it may have also positive spin-off effects in terms of local aspiration.

Conceived in this way Goldsmiths could become a new kind of university internationally oriented, yet locally rooted, providing at times a brokering role with local communities and using its facilities and expertise to pull people together.

Lewisham College as a further education institute plays a different role from Goldsmiths. Given that issues of business management and understanding the economic and financial contexts of the creative industries are now becoming key, this may become a niche for Lewisham College. Its reputation in the performing and new media arts and its vocational focus puts it in a prime position to exploit this niche. Goldsmiths, on the other hand, has made its reputation on its research profile so has this issue to think about and may find cultural management does not fit its profile. The implication would be that Lewisham College makes more connections with local businesses and regeneration initiatives and develops a greater understanding of their needs ranging from joint product research to skills development. In turn the linkage between arts and economic development highlights the need for policy handshakes between the two. In addition its proposed Centre for Cultural Arts could become the anchor point for vocationally oriented activities in the borough linking with Goldsmiths College, even the London Institute and smaller organizations such as Irie Dance. By accommodating incubator units for fledgling creative industries businesses, by creating cultural industries employment facilitators and by marketing its mission to employers, industry advisory bodies, educators and arts practitioners, its impact could be significant. In addition if the Centre were in a building with the architectural quality it desires the whole conception of what a further education college can be would be completely transformed. That is already happening with Laban Centre London whose new building puts a spotlight on the fact that its approach to dance is unusual and distinctive.

Goldsmiths by contrast could explore opening courses on a range of urban topics, such as 'the culture of cities', 'urban design' or 'urbanism'. Given the pace of getting academic accreditation this would take two years.

The above pinpoints the necessity of establishing a dedicated 'Creative Enterprise Zone' in the area, now proposed in the UDP, a pre-condition to safeguard B1 uses. This is again mutually beneficial as college students then replenish the area with skills and enterprise feeding ideas and projects inside and outside.

The Colleges together could also contribute to the lobbying process to make New Cross Road a more human experience and thereby contributing some of their artistic imagination.

ARTS EDUCATION

LEAN in its discussion document on 'Education and Youth' (February 2001) has usefully summarised the key issues. In highlighting the national context it notes what all those concerned with creativity and the arts know - the national curriculum undervalues the contribution of the arts. This is a supreme irony given that government policy has focused on the need for creativity to reinforce Britain's competitive position and at the same time it takes away legitimacy, tools and resources to do so. The National Committee Report on Creative and Cultural Education chaired by Ken Robinson however after lying somewhat dormant for 18 months may at last turn the tide.

Lewisham Council has shown considerable commitment to the issue of Arts in Education, witness the establishment of the Education Action Zone 'Creating Success', the Art of Regeneration SRB bid and its support for LEAN itself. Yet the arts advisors are no longer in post.

A first step is to find out what is happening in arts education formally and informally and, as part of this, to raise the profile of arts in schools and advocate its development and disseminate best practice. This will generate an action plan including addressing issues such as ladders of opportunity, linkages between schools and arts organisations and artists and how schools can be incentivised to become involved. As part of the audit, a linked assessment should be made on youth culture in the borough and how creative learning and the arts can enhance aspirations, foster skills development and thereby job opportunities. The principle underlying any resulting strategy should be to recognise young people's entitlement to high quality arts activity, as LEAN notes, 'of their own choice, in their own time and on their own terms'.

RETHINKING PROVISION

What is a cultural event? What is a venue? What happens in an arts centre? What is the role of a library, a theatre, a park, a play area? What is an appropriate future oriented festival for Lewisham? These issues emerged again and again in discussion. A central message was that in an ideal world the cultural experience in Lewisham should not be confined to specific spaces and places. It should infuse the everyday with happenings occurring on the street from music making to performance, generating surprise backed up through a visual experience of place that matches the unexpected - in sum an animated environment. As someone noted: 'Art is kept in a small room and no-one goes in to find out what it is and what's going on'. An urban animation approach addresses audience development issues.

Festivals should be rethought: why not an art and creative industry ball, an annual award for the most inspiring arts event or one for best practice in urban design? A number of people felt that the People's Festival was 'old hat'. Indeed the arts department has already drafted a set of proposals for rethinking festivals in 2001 which goes some way along this line of argument. In this way mindsets would change and as another summed up: 'Lewisham is not just a collection of houses, there are things that can be done here, and you don't have to go to Croydon for nightlife; it could be better here and you could play a part'. Looking at the future backwards these are crucial issues because what we will expect from experiences and how they are delivered will change.

The above has implications for what planners, licensing authorities and the police can do to create an environment within which cultural expression can flourish. It might mean rethinking budgets to harness resources and these cultural budgets may come from a diversity of departments.

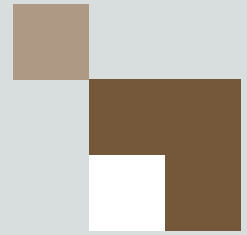
THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE LIVE ARTS

The impact of the live arts is more extensive than often imagined. For example, when Blackheath Halls was under threat of closure, it was private sector companies such as taxi firms and restaurants that were most concerned. When over a year approaching 100,000 visitors come to a venue it is clear that these audiences make a major contribution to sustaining the local night-time economy with further spin-offs down the supply chain. Catford in principle has possibilities, but Lewisham Theatre, by contrast, is unable to generate a similar effect as the local restaurant infrastructure is simply not there.

To create real benefits for the borough it is important to attract people from outside Lewisham which means providing an offer that is compelling enough to make people travel. Here Lewisham has a bad starting point. Lewisham Theatre is insufficiently known amongst the broad base of music entrepreneurs whilst it has a high reputation in some niches such as black theatre. Blackheath Halls has attempted to attract high-profile names but at a cost which the authority is not yet willing to sustain.

Yet there is an opportunity. South London is under-provided in terms of venues (in addition to the Lewisham venues there is Fairfield Hall) and London promoters are seeking to diversify their offer into South London to balance over-provision in the North exacerbated by the recent opening of Ocean. Promoters in London it seems are looking for a South London axis. The challenge is to put Lewisham on the venue map, which requires an initial investment – perhaps a guarantee fund – in attracting named stars or people with cachet to the borough. This might be triggered by a festival as a galvanizing tool to put across the idea that high profile events can happen in Lewisham. The link with Glendales, who manage the borough's parks, could be useful as the open spaces are essentially venues and Glendales intends to put on 200 events per annum.

Interestingly Lewisham has broad associations with rock, which remain largely hidden as Mel Wright's book 'Rock around Lewisham' reveals. Groups and individuals such as Status Quo, Dire Straits, Gabriel, Jools Holland either were born, lived in or were associated with the borough. This should be exploited – it is a dormant opportunity.



CONNECTING ARTS AND CULTURE TO THE OBJECTIVES OF OTHER DEPARTMENTS

In the mid 1980s Birmingham's arts budget generated more resources for its activities from outside its department than there were in the Arts budget itself. Why? It avoided 'creating environments within environments' and looking inwards, and made connections, fostered synergies and networked. Taking examples from a number of places, we can see that Planning saw benefits because the physical infrastructure was improved; Environmental Services could see that arts programmes raised awareness on sustainability issues; the same for Health and its healthy living campaigns; Economic Development recognised that the creative industries helped their employment generation objectives; as did the Tourism and Promotion departments; Social Services could see that deviant behaviour such as spraying graffiti could be used as a trigger to reconnect the young; Transport saw that roads could be imaginatively humanised; shopping centre managers needed the animation the arts provide to attract footfall.

DEALING WITH FAILURE

We have so far highlighted the positive aspects of arts and culture development in the borough. However, to maintain credibility those concerned with funding the arts have to be honest about inevitable failure and not simply maintain projects and infrastructure simply because they are there. There is a tendency for projects of all kinds to atrophy, lose their entrepreneurial drive and inspiration. The reasons may range from tiredness to lack of funding. Until recently the Albany was in this position even though historically it was an anchor point. As someone noted: 'it was funded to fail - as revenue reduced it had no maintenance'. Fortunately it is turning the corner. But difficult funding decisions, such as that, have their uses as they provide the chance to completely reassess issues such as 'does the outfit work as a building? is its programming useful? is its profile right? does it eat up too many resources? are the right people in charge?'

Any funding strategy needs to deal with innovation and Lewisham has been in a difficult position because all its resources have already been spoken for and so it tended to act in fire-fighting mode. In the future there should be a policy to ringfence a certain proportion of the budget for innovative developments to replenish the ideas pool, otherwise only those groups benefit who historically were at the right place at the right time.

ISSUES EMERGING

Many people were concerned about progression routes and whether ladders or climbing frames of opportunity are fully fleshed out. There seems to be a polarity in some sectors such as the arts and music where there are top performers and then a bottom with an insufficient middle ground or evident progression from bottom to top like traditional career paths. Feeder organisations like MIDI or Second Wave handle initial steps well and Lewisham College increasingly well the next steps, but does the infrastructure exist to move someone from training to a job? There are no dedicated business start-up programmes for the cultural sector. The careers advisory service has as yet little understanding of the sheer variety of employment opportunities in the cultural sector well beyond being a 'creator'. The support and technical services to make a performance, a film or a design work are also cultural work. In thinking these issues through, we need to be aware of expectations as the arts for some is a hobby and for others a livelihood.

The regeneration experience is often negatively compounded by a funding infrastructure that is confusing to the uninitiated. Funders inevitably have their own agenda and are perceived to be inflexible and focused on short-term funding. If there are too many funders to deal with simultaneously, there are too many hoops to go through and decision making takes too long. Deptford, for example, has had nearly £200 million in funds over the last decade, yet delivered by 18 agencies. A start would be for the stakeholders in culture to develop a concerted advocacy programme in order to align regeneration priorities across programmes.

Inevitably there was a focus on youth in many of the regeneration programmes, but what about the less young? We are an ageing population, careers may change in mid-life, active life goes on for longer and the world around older people feels as if it is changing more than for the young. Are there sufficient initiatives in the borough, Age Exchange and Community Education Lewisham apart, which use the arts to help adapt to change, to create work opportunities and even to reinforce meaning? Should there be equivalent initiatives such as Proper Job in Huddersfield whose Lab project has provided inspiration for old and young to regain confidence to handle the future?

Are the different Council departments aligning their policies so that they mesh with arts and cultural objectives? Work still needs to be done to generate interdepartmental awareness, but improvements are already visible. Cor Blimey Arts had some tribulations when they took over a difficult empty, dilapidated space on the Pepys Estate to create artist studios but their presence effectively helped the Council with maintenance saving them money. Yet they felt they were treated as if they were a purely commercial enterprise to be charged for services and made responsible for renovations that outstripped initial expectations. Responding according to the needs of culture requires political direction for officers working in health, economic development or property management. Specialist officers, say, in valuation, can only give advice in terms of current policy.

What is the nature and scope of the services that can be expected from a cultural directorate? The general policy to farm out whenever possible is sound, but should it be responsible for research, advisory services, audience development, overall marketing, venue development, initiating or creating priorities for training, assistance in bidding, providing long term professional support and so on?

What is the cost and benefit of replicating existing best practice in the borough? The work of many organizations has already been noted. How can these connect to the whole of the borough given that they are already stretched? What would be the incentive for them to extend their activities? Organisations said they were willing to extend their activities in principle provided this was suitably reflected in funding arrangements.

THE NEED FOR A CULTURAL STRATEGY

The existing Council Cultural Strategy is out of date and its current reworking is pending given the Commission's work. This Commission's role is not to develop a precise strategy, so the work of producing a Cultural Strategy needs completing as a matter of priority. The consultation exercise can therefore fulfil a double purpose. The strategy should be geared to the new DCMS template and should focus less on general arguments as these should have already been made, and should identify the principles of Council involvement, such as taking into account community views. Its primary role is to define precise policies in a wide range of areas such as those addressed in this report, rather as happens in a UDP, and link these to particular actions that the Council can undertake. In doing so, it should connect to the work of other departments from Economic Development to Social Care & Health and Regeneration. It would need to take into account the mass of other issues noted. Such a document should address arguments like: 'each community needs their own dedicated hall' – probably not, but what is the argument? – to issues like 'young people feel they have little access to arts opportunities outside of their school settings'. The background documentation of the Commission should be made available to such an exercise.

SECTION THREE: THE URBAN PICTURE

3

What is the physical experience of Lewisham? Does the urban environment uplift or deflate? For those who live and work there the experience is different from that of the casual observer. The former can point out the quiet beauty of serried ranks of suburban terraced housing sweeping across the landscape; they can spot the hidden gem down a little known side street or the historic buildings and monuments; they even see a calming, yet perhaps claustrophobic, order in the Downham estates or detect the original vision behind the social housing in the North; they can see the subdued grandeur in the Forest Hill villas.

Yet Lewisham's offer is both seamless and rather samey and for outsiders can feel disorienting as there are insufficient landmarks or moments of surprise to both guide the visitor, to seduce and encourage them to stay on. The key issue in competitive terms is: 'Is this enough?' We know that Lewisham loses income to other centres such as Croydon or Greenwich which offer more complex experiences. People seem to go to the Lewisham centres for specific work needs, shopping or leisure purposes and there is little to detain and divert them or to encourage meandering. The overall experience has insufficient depth.

What does depth of experience mean? Essentially it is about the range of stimulus each component in the urban fabric provides. For example: layers of shopping, culture or leisure, from the branded to the unbranded, from the cheap to the alternative to the expensively exquisite; levels of activity and interaction at different times of the day contributing to the diversity of streetlife; buildings that might have an overall style yet within range from the pristine to the grotty; layers of living possibilities from owner occupied to the rented at different price levels. It involves too providing ladders of opportunity from learning opportunities to starting up and then developing local businesses. It means being in a place where the city itself becomes a stage that is animated either by structured programming or a commercial offer and incidental and free animation that inspires the passer-by.

For most, first impressions of Lewisham disappoint and, crucially, first impressions are also last impressions. Arrival points are poor. Take the stations. Arriving at Lewisham DLR, the primary entry point, the resident or visitor is faced by an obstacle course while trying to cross the road in order to go through the back entrance of the shopping centre which is framed by the Citibank building with blue glass reflecting back at you. In the near distance a glimpse of a river and park, but cut into pieces with little coherence. Molesworth Road runs like a broad funnel into the yonder. What is the mindset that put this together? and what is the cost of repairing this piece of urban fabric, only recently built, as SRB 6 proposes?

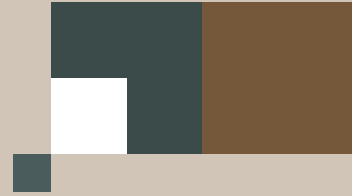
The station itself could be better; as someone noted: 'we settled too easily for second best for fear of losing it, we accepted a middle ground solution and were not thinking about the long term; that quick fix won't do as the DLR obviously has catalyst potential'.

Take the Catford stations, the entry point to Lewisham's civic heart. Catford Bridge has merit, its circular entrance an element of delight, but the overall environment of the two stations feels degraded. The walk down to the Town Hall is not worthy of the Council's ambitions. The space between the Town Hall and Laurence House cries out for a 'Catford Piazza', with a circular glass café at its centre from which to view civic life unfolding, as many over the years have noted. Think of Crofton Park station – a shrine to graffiti, or Honor Oak, and even Forest Hill, now up for redevelopment. The list could go on. Blackheath feels different; the only problem is that people think it belongs to Greenwich, rather like Nokia which people still think is Japanese rather than Finnish. To enhance Lewisham's image perhaps now is the time to 'recapture' Blackheath as part of Lewisham.

Take the roads. The A2 is the entrance to and public face of Lewisham. Coming from the East through Blackheath - not associated with Lewisham - and down the hill the environment suddenly degrades perceptively and clogs up. Coming from the West it is part of an endless stop and go. Yet the section of the A2 in Lewisham is barely a mile and there are enough examples, especially in Europe, of humanising, softening and beautifying road environments. In an ideal world people in cars would notice the difference when they travel through the Lewisham bit. As someone noted: 'Had Lewisham been Kensington, something would have happened, it probably would have been tunnelled under'.

Beyond the roads and stations and leaving aside some of the monotonous public housing so often facing inwards, there are the new developments by the mass house builders drawn into the borough because of rising prices. Too few have imagination, relying on the tried and tested, quickly in and quickly out, claiming always this is what the public want. It is in response to this that the Lord Rogers Urban Renaissance Task Force was set up resulting in the Urban White Paper and the setting up of the Commission on Architecture and the Built Environment with its focus on encouraging greater acceptance of aesthetics and urban design. Much of the environment described says 'no' rather than 'yes, I want to be part of this'. It does not reach outwards towards a public realm that encourages street life.

The general public has little knowledge of how urban environments are put together and often feel these problems are all the Council's responsibility, but many are well beyond even their control: problems caused by a recalcitrant absentee landlord or the Highway Authority, or, for instance, a public enquiry that goes against the Council's wishes as was the case with the new Lewisham police station. The plans for Kender estate, for example, sought to address the issues raised above, and address the A2, but Council authority was curtailed. The Council becomes a sitting target, because people believe it is omnipotent and do not know on whom else to vent their frustrations. The Council is in a double bind; it has insufficient power and needs to find ways of generating creative influence. The design briefs and masterplanning of key areas are ways forward, but with the limited current budget not much can be done.



The Council's UDP or Supplementary Guidance Notes begin to address some of the major questions, but could perhaps be more explicit in spelling out the kind of quality it expects as the basis for discussion with developers and housing associations. Birmingham's 'Places for Living' policy might provide a useful template. This attempts to fundamentally rethink the planning process by introducing a holistic approach to planning which integrates land use, architecture and urban design with a sense of how this affects mental geography and people's sense of place.

The five principles of quality introduced into the development control process, inspired by international best practice, are solid:

- 1 **Places not Estates** - housing should be integrated with employment, shops and leisure
- 2 **Moving Around Easily** - places must be linked up by direct, simple, safe and attractive routeways
- 3 **Safe Places, Private Spaces** - public spaces should maximise their use and foster community, whilst private space should be secure
- 4 **Building for the Future** - places should be environmentally and economically sustainable and buildings adaptable for long term viability
- 5 **Build on Local Character** - design should reinforce and evolve positive aspects of local character but ignore those that are negative, i.e. which do not accord with the four preceding principles.

These principles have begun to be used as a basis for dialogue with developers, and not as a set of hard and fast rules; indeed they provide a structure but also scope for innovation as the example of the recent Mailbox development shows, so enabling the extraordinary to live side by side with the ordinary.

DISCUSSION POINTS AND QUESTIONS

RAISING EXPECTATIONS

If Lewisham's vision is to be the 'best place to live, work and learn' it cannot afford to accept second best and should set its sights at a European level rather than compare itself with Bromley or Southwark. If the borough is 'on the turn' it needs to develop the self-belief that it is not a supplicant and lucky to be approached for development opportunities. An increasing number of developers are themselves changing attitudes and recognising the value of urbanism from their own point of view – the combination of urban design, the wider streetscape and the social life of the city. It is not in their interest to create environments that foster crime or lack of respect.

Lewisham needs to provide the opportunities to inspire its politicians and officers with the best that exists, to understand how this 'best' came about, the constellation of forces that made it possible, the costs and the stretching of rules that opened potential. Research has shown that the experience of seeing innovative examples elsewhere has the greatest effect on developing the imagination and changing minds. This effect is maximised if done in a group.

Equally Lewisham should be proactive in identifying and targeting developers it wishes to attract. This will have additional spin-offs in terms of new ideas generated, profile and word-of-mouth reputation. It can only happen if more resources are made available.

TRADING POWER FOR CREATIVE INFLUENCE

There are a series of obstacles within the existing incentives and regulatory structure mitigating against the Council delivering its aspirational ideas on urban design. There is insufficient vision of what the ideas could be to provide the basis for discussions with prospective developers. Therefore discussions tend to remain at a general level referring back to documents like Supplementary Guidance or the UDP. In quality terms the Council can often only cajole or persuade without visible templates. It would be helpful to draw on imagery. Is the housing image that of the

Netherlands with its more open, airy constructions like Java Island in Amsterdam? Or is it the image of Finnish developments like in Vuosaari in Helsinki? Or is it the housing estate designed by women for women in Hamm in the Ruhr that has already had impacts on other new developments? What are the Lewisham equivalents? Who are you benchmarking yourself against?

It is clear that in order to become more proactive the Regeneration Directorate needs more resources to engage with developers, to explore new partners, to develop the master planning function, to strengthen the planning and urban design section, to develop multi-disciplinary teams with a balanced and mixed viewpoint on the planning and development process that is also aesthetically minded and sensitive to local area and development needs. This could include artists as is happening in Milton Keynes where the rising star Thomas Heatherwick is collaborating on the new Central Milton Keynes masterplan. In short to be able to be more strategic and to be able to put across the message that your regeneration is proactive and not only about control and reaction.

That would convey an understanding that the nature of planning has changed, that it is a more creative process, is more urban-design led and capable of negotiating on more equal terms with outsiders, with implications for status and resources.

There is the issue of balancing looser controls and over-prescription. The complication is that by reducing strict legislation in order to advance there are consequences. For example, if there are problems or fallouts because, say, a law on signage was loosely interpreted, e.g. not being at the correct place at the correct height, the local authority as a political body is liable to litigation. The implications for the Council are more severe and need to be thought through clearly. As someone noted: 'The Council has statutory duties on signs, if there's a problem we'll get the backlash. We need to re-educate the public, press, coroners, if you want to vary anything, because if there's an accident, 'heads will roll'.

MAPPING THE POSSIBILITIES

Lewisham can develop a sense of place, identity and distinctiveness as well as engender a feeling of engagement and loyalty that gives citizens a stake by working with its culturally distinctive features. But any visioning process needs to start with a firm notion of what new trends in living, lifestyle and aspirations are, and by asking where people want to be; otherwise once structures are built they will be dealing with yesterday's problems. The need for live/work developments is one example. Furthermore with corporate buildings or high buildings which often blandify their surrounding footprints, the question should be asked: 'What is the street life of the skyscraper?' Equally the edge of the borough needs careful attention as borough competitiveness can leave these areas unattended. The approach highlighted has a significant impact on what the indicators for success and failure are and clearly the community should be involved in setting them. Within the indicators set, some should be concerned with innovation.

Lewisham operates in a competitive environment regionally and nationally. For it to become a sub-regional powerhouse it needs the elements of national significance that distinguish it from others: Laban Centre London, Goldsmiths' new Arts Building, the Horniman Museum. Equally the deep water liner terminal at Convoys could create a whole waterfront feel and draw the Deptford riverfront back into the High Street, as has happened at Cape Town's Victoria & Alfred Waterfront.

The new buildings in Lewisham feel less new and innovative than they should do. Java Island in Amsterdam and the Rotterdam approach to design quality could be models. Parts of Java Island were given over to 40 architects aged under 40 to experiment with new forms of housing and overall 97 different architects were used. The result is an artistic and challenging patchwork of buildings interspersing different styles, from the wildly post-modern to the minimalist, within an overall concept targeted at different price ranges and audience profiles. In market terms it has been a success. In Rotterdam's Kop van Zuid, the Development Corporation has created a bi-annually changing international panel to select rosters of innovative, often world-wide renowned architects whom developers choose from as a pre-condition of getting building permission. The intention is to create a quarter that becomes an international flagship. Equally their approach to animating underpasses and healing the ravages

of the 60s is worth learning from, such as John Jerde's intervention at Bleursplein, which turned a gloomy path into a vibrant curved walkway with lively shops. A further example is the IBA approach in Emscher Park in the Ruhr which effectively acted as a gatekeeper to government funds by specifying high design standards especially for industrial buildings as well as environmental innovation.

Innovative architecture could equally be used in cheap temporary facilities which might be constructed in re-used car parks or difficult left-over spaces where start-up business might operate or alternative shopping offered. Here Urban Space Management's imaginative approach to developing Gabriel's Wharf on the Southbank might be a model: in 1994 some units only cost £2000 each; perhaps £5000 would be realistic today. Unsightly major roads can be improved as has happened in Melbourne where the highway pillars were concreted into artistic collared shapes as the road was being built.

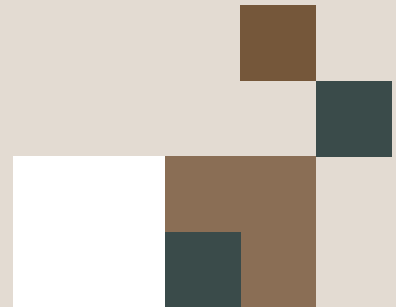
To make Lewisham more of a leader in urban design, the use of public art could be taken much further. Artists working with architects could infuse the totality of Lewisham by transforming offices, the shopping centre, bus shelters, buses, seating, waymarkings, lighting, entry points and portals which, if seen through the eyes of the artistic imagination, could create a sense of drama and expectation. This might be reinforced by temporary installations. When seen as part of a longer-term process the sum of the parts becomes greater than each element. This occurred in Stockholm's world famous 30 year 101 station metro programme, and in St. Petersburg and Moscow, where stations became a daily artwork experience – and major tourist attractions. By increasing quality Lewisham increases its competitive edge and generates civic pride and identity. Interestingly Lewisham could play the new with the old by incorporating heritage components into the new structures – Bologna's micro-galleries are one model. Cheap often transitional solutions should be investigated to show that a new mindset is in operation. This might mean floodlighting of local icons, or having local competitions for signage or use of dispiriting open spaces. Of course, competitions are not everything but they can be useful in raising standards.

THE GOVERNMENT CONTEXT

In terms of central government guidance, Lewisham is pushing at an open door and should be in a position to extend the boundaries of what has been achieved so far. Government has clearly set the agenda for urban design issues to be addressed with vigour and confidence as a number of key policies and legislative documents exist to aid the promotion of good design. Specific paragraphs in PPGs (Planning Policy Guidelines) 1, 3, and 6 relate to the layout of urban environments, the vitality and viability of town centres, their attractiveness as well as the need to focus on opportunities for urban design strategies for large and small sites including individual buildings. The most important of these is the PPG1 (annexe A) advice highlighting the issue of design as a material consideration in determining planning applications. There is now clear government guidance in PPG1 to elevate urban design in the planning process.

Paragraphs 13–20 state that: ‘the appearance of any proposed development and its relationship to its surroundings are material considerations’, and that such considerations relate to the design of buildings and to urban design of the built environment. Paragraph 14 defines urban design as ‘the relationship between different buildings and the streets, squares, parks, waterways and other spaces which make up the public domain; the nature and quality of public domain itself; the relationship of one part of a village, town or city with other parts; and the pattern of movement and activity which are thereby established; in short the complex relationship between all the various aspects affecting the use of space between and around buildings as with buildings themselves’.

Paragraph 15 states ‘good design should be the aim of all those involved and should be encouraged everywhere. It can promote sustainable development; improve the quality of the existing environment; attract business and investment; and reinforce civic pride and a sense of place. It can help to secure continued public acceptance of necessary new development’.



Other points raised in the above-mentioned PPGs include:

- Town and local centres must provide a high quality environment if they are to continue to be places which people wish to visit.
- Government wishes to promote greater consideration of design, particularly urban design.
- Designs that add interest and variety and which reflect local context should be encouraged.
- Design of proposals should have proper regard to their relationship with their surroundings and should develop and enhance local character.
- Designs should avoid presenting blank frontages or being inward looking.
- Car parks should be designed to fit into the existing townscape and be placed away from the street frontage and wherever possible maintain existing building lines.

In addition around 100 recommendations of the Urban Task Force's report 'Towards an Urban Renaissance' have found their way into the Urban White Paper which helps our thinking of how areas should begin to develop in the 21st century, including:

- A new vision for urban regeneration founded on the principles of urban design excellence, social wellbeing and environmental responsibility within a viable economic and legislative framework.
- Creating a quality of life and vitality that makes urban living desirable.
- Design issues emphasise the importance of the quality of the built environment. Well-designed buildings, streets, neighbourhoods and districts are essential for successful social, economic and environmental regeneration.
- New urban developments must therefore be designed to higher standards. They should be integrated with their surroundings, optimise access to public transport and maximise their potential by increasing density. They should seek diversity, encouraging a mix of activities, services, incomes, and tenures within neighbourhoods. Priority must be given to high architectural standards and to the design of public spaces between developments where people meet and move about.

In addition, further government publications such as 'By Design' provide key principles for good urban design forming a basis for assessment and should be included in the set of tools planners currently use to determine planning applications. This can be done by reviewing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to include a checklist which would also aid applicants in improving the quality of both outline and detailed applications. Particularly on key strategic sites and where pre-application discussion is sought, applicants should be encouraged to submit more than the standard requirement of site, elevation and plan. It should include site and street context and 3D information/images and urban design rationale. SPGs might, for example, include design guidelines for shop fronts and residential layouts

USING THE PLANNING TOOLKIT IMAGINATIVELY

The Council has a range of tools which can kick in at different levels and can in principle be orchestrated effectively to achieve objectives if political understanding and will is present. The UDP provides the overarching urban design framework, yet as a strategic document it has an overall life span of approximately 10 years. It is not the ideal tool with which to address site-specific good quality urban design on a day-to-day basis. There are other tools available to ensure and improve quality as projects go through the planning process. They include: Supplementary Planning Guidance, development briefs, site specific planning briefs, design guides, local distinctiveness studies (similar to conservation area appraisals) and masterplans.

For example, a Lewisham Design Guide could lay down key objectives and principles against which all development will be judged. It should provide a clear starting point for developer innovation and local interpretation such as:

- Innovation: to seek environmentally sustainable solutions through innovative design.
- Movement: to promote the movement of people by walking, cycling and public transport to reduce dependency on the car, and air pollution.
- Locality: to embrace local distinctiveness, promote quality and protect existing features of cultural, visual and historic importance.
- Landscape and ecology: to conserve, create and integrate open space, townscape, landscape and natural habitats to mitigate the impact of development.

The above will affect the nature of performance indicators used to assess success or failure.

In addition Lewisham could develop its own specific practice, for example by applying a team approach to address complex applications. Co-ordinated by someone with urban design knowledge the following kinds of skills should be around the

table – design, planning, highways, policy, culture, history, environment as well as social, economic and urban renewal. This will provide a richer set of perspectives to create more holistic ideas and responses.

As can be seen the practice of urban design requires a cluster of skills bringing together a wide range of disciplines, expertise, and experience in order to promote dynamic urban change that takes account both of how towns and cities work as living entities as well as their physical characteristics. It needs to appreciate the way a city's social, cultural, economic and political forces configure in order to create solutions that work for everyone. Urban design is 'as concerned with the process of change as it is with the three dimensional product of development'.

Without doubt the urban design agenda will move centre stage in regeneration; witness the setting up of organizations such as the Urban Design Alliance (UDAL) formed by a group of professionals and other bodies who are committed to improving the quality of urban life through urban design. So Lewisham has an opportunity to be a leader in this process – putting it into practice as part of its planning service.

EXTERNAL PRESSURES

The planning of the urban environment is dependent on regulations well beyond the remit of the specific planning department. These range from licensing to health and environment safety issues to powers within the control of the police as well as external agencies such as the Highway Authority. Yet 'planning' from wherever it is generated is associated with the physical planning department, so affecting its image negatively. At the same time to get the vitality of the urban setting right requires planning people to collaborate intensely across divisions from culture to social affairs which requires awareness of all parties concerned. This means too that culture, for instance, needs to learn about planning issues and planning learn about culture; the same applies to the Highways Authority.

Constraints also include the fact that the financial and other mechanisms available to the private sector are greater than those for the public sector, accounting in part for its perceived lack of pace, quite apart from accountability issues which inevitably slow things down. Furthermore land assembly questions can blunt the possibilities to strategise creatively. There are unique problems too

for Lewisham itself, such as that the Housing Corporation has banded Lewisham as a 'B' category rather than an 'A' category like Greenwich which would provide a greater grant level to housing associations, perhaps to be used to build more interesting housing? One alternative would be to band according to post-code, another to design a banding system more market-sensitive.

RETHINKING GUIDELINES AND INCENTIVES

It is desirable to reconsider how the incentives regime works to get public sector pump-priming going and make it more effective. For example, the Deptford High Street shop front scheme could have tapered grants as values increase e.g. moving downwards each year from 40-30-20-10%. In addition it could have explored mechanisms to plough back value increases so that the leverage capacity of public sector resources increases. Another idea is to reconsider the landscaping budgets within public sector investment or housing association projects, given the crucial importance of the external environment on the sustainability and care taken for developments. Currently the average is only 10% of budgets; it should be 25%. Equally it would be possible to make it a requirement to create innovation in public buildings or publicly sponsored homes. The discussions underway with the developers of the Seager building about setting up an endowment fund are a step in the right direction.

It is worth considering setting up a specialist process for significant developments given that the nature of these projects demands a different variety of skills. Equally the developer might need a critical friend to handhold them so that policy principles are maintained when they are being positively bent. The more typical 'back extension process' would then be different.

Rethinking, too, implies re-assessing how specialist disciplines operate and the indicators used to make judgements. The work of the New Economics Foundation is helpful here. Valuation criteria might be rethought from a regeneration perspective which goes beyond exclusively first cut financial criteria to calculate indirect spin-offs; or highway engineers might re-think their discipline and, for example, road building initiatives could be seen from the point of view of mental geography and psychological effects on residents. The underlying logic of what is being proposed is to encourage joined-up thinking.

LANDMARKS AND CATALYSTS

When conceiving of Lewisham as a collection of neighbourhoods/villages we should also see this as part of a landmarking strategy. This will take time to implement, yet the idea could be piloted in a part of the borough. And indeed what a landmark is should be reconceived as there are simply insufficient resources to give every area something of national significance and also people identify with small places too. In one instance it might be a doctors' surgery, like Rowcrofts in Stroud, in another the library as in Peckham, which cost £5million, and is perhaps replicable in Downham; in another the Lewisham Interchange or a lighting scheme to accentuate the sweep of a road. Yet the social process built in to creating a landmark could be a landmark itself. The key issue is that whatever the results, they should be visible, otherwise there is little evidence to communicate what has occurred.

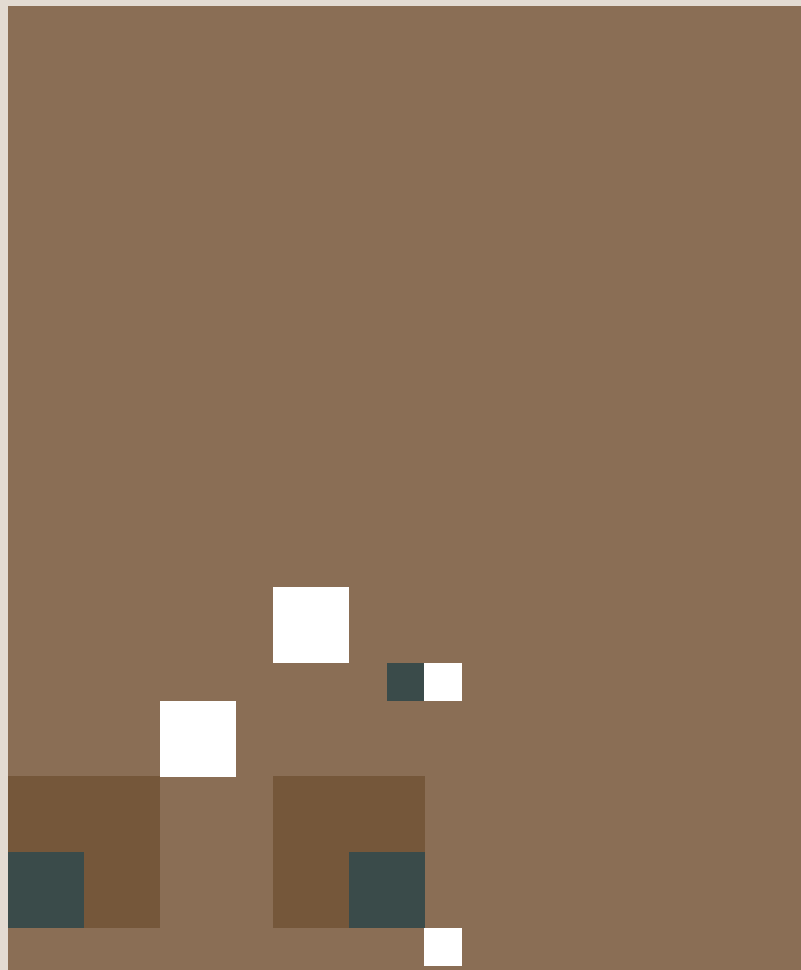
PROACTIVE AGENCIES

The above raises the question: can all this happen within existing structures? Yes and no. Much of what has been said affects internal working, but in some instances special arrangements might be appropriate. The Creative Enterprise Zone might need a specially dedicated agency; each village might need a more empowered body to implement more local visions and to draw in more resources. The discussions and links so generated with housing associations and developers would mean that the shaping of the urban environment is a joint project rather than being seen as led by one party.

To get the overall vision embedded in insiders' and outsiders' minds a range of proactive preliminary steps might be useful, such as holding a developer conference, using Lewisham stars to promote the area, or thinking about broader communications issues, such as using the advertising sites in stations or elsewhere three miles out of Lewisham to welcome people into the borough. The desired objective is to change perceptions of Lewisham. It has always been seen as concerned with housing, social services and refuse – it now needs to see itself as a facilitator of opportunity.

AWARENESS RAISING AND TRAINING

Valuing what urbanism is about – essentially the dynamics of how cities work and their aesthetics – requires awareness raising and training. Indeed the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment has begun to lobby for councillors to have some form of urban design training as a requirement. This idea could be more widely applied and linked to giving anyone concerned with planning environments the opportunity to have training sabbaticals. The negotiations around aesthetics will always be contentious but the key issue is to get the debate firstly onto the agenda and then onto a higher level.



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SECTION FOUR: THE COUNCIL AND THE IMAGE OF LEWISHAM

The Council is a central player in Lewisham, perhaps more so than in other places, and so tends to dominate the environment even though it is not municipalist and backward-looking. It is also renowned as a place where best practices are initiated and piloted, although some claim it sometimes finds it difficult to mainstream. There are many creative projects but often they are invisible, such as Sure Start or the work of the Youth Offending Team linking to police, education and social services. Why, some have asked, if the Council is so on the ball in other areas has it up till now not caught onto the cultural and urban design agenda?

The sheer size and complexity of the Council organisation, the continuing change and re-organisation processes tend to project a place that is inward-looking and focused on fine detail. The battles with the day-to-day, it was claimed, allow too little room to stand back, to think forward, to look at alternatives and to apply more imagination. The Council is seen as good at consultation yet less so at communicating the results. It is claimed that it is good at talking itself up, but not always delivering: 'We keep creating things – I get confused – which one are we following? The Community Plan looks good – but where are we at?' This is compounded by the fact that the Council is often criticised for things that are outside its control. What people judge the Council on is what they see, hear and smell: litter, noise, crime, the built environment and streetscape. The fundamentals of litter and crime are being addressed, consultees said, but the Council will be blamed for every ugly building or blemish on the landscape.

People often want contradictory things such as the freedom to build what they want and also to be confined by a structured masterplanning framework. The UDP highlights some of the priorities, but people cannot visually grasp what is meant in the Lewisham context by 'quality', 'high design standards', 'innovative'. UDPs and related documents need to be completely reconceived so that they spark the imagination, provide a benchmark, stimulate and show visually the best practice Lewisham aspires to. On that basis it is easier to enter into discussion with developers.

There seems to be a desire to break the Council down into more manageable bits with area-based responsibilities drawing in other actors and partners in focused development and taking the town centre management idea much further. This is seen as helping break down the length of communication chains. Yet only a few are aware that the Council is trying to explore new models of local government.

Some note that the Council should move from being concerned in its communications with the reputation of the Council to the reputation of Lewisham – substituting a notion of Lewisham as a place rather than Lewisham as Council management. Many know that Lewisham aspires to be 'the best place to live, work and learn', but what does such a place look like?

Most of these issues concern communication in its broader sense and perhaps the effectiveness of communications across all media and initiatives should be assessed. That department is now being refreshed, but major challenges remain as it cannot alone be responsible for every form of communication from every division.

Another key issue worthy of highlighting was the links between ambition, vision and will: there was a deep desire for direction and guidance from officers and the private and community sectors. A number of outsiders noted that the Cabinet system seemed to be a step in the right direction. The less charitable comments included: 'politicians are village thinkers, party thinkers, they need to work across-party boundaries – they need to think outside their box'. 'Politicians need to be bold, brave and not vote catchers and be capable of 10 year plans and be able to handle criticism and take on board what Ken Livingstone said "I will upset people"'. Or as a private sector contributor noted: 'Planning needs to be empowered by politicians to act with more imagination'. To create that vision, it was argued, members need professional training in a number of subject areas.

IMAGE

The image of Lewisham and its component neighbourhoods/villages became somewhat unexpectedly a central issue throughout the consultation processes. It was raised by insiders and outsiders alike. What was said may not always be true, but perception is reality in this context. The main question is 'what can culture and urban development do to help make it better?' Image clearly needs to be tackled with a sense of urgency as the whole rethinking of Lewisham as a creative place depends on it in two primary ways:

- The sense that Lewisham residents have of themselves and their resulting self-esteem. If Lewisham people feel ashamed that they come from Lewisham how can they aspire?
- The willingness of outsiders to consider Lewisham as a place to be, to invest and enjoy, thereby becoming ambassadors for the borough.

The overall perception is that Lewisham has insufficient streetlife, facilities and things to do, that its markets are not exciting enough, that Greenwich, Brixton and Croydon have more to offer – in short that it is somewhat dull. For outsiders the perception tends to be that they either don't know Lewisham or they have a negative view. But when Lewisham is broken down into its neighbourhoods the picture changes. Blackheath has positive resonances both because of its visual appearance and after-hours offer especially the restaurants; Forest Hill seems to be on the turn – Havelock Walk being an example; the view of Deptford is mixed 'great market, but not much going on in the evening'. Other areas such as Catford get a hard time, whereas Sydenham or Honor Oak lack profile either positively or negatively. There appears to be a fierce local loyalty to Downham and Bellingham, but for outsiders it is 'just somewhere else'.

Focusing on conceiving Lewisham as a collection of villages or neighbourhoods, although obvious and perhaps well worn is probably the way forward. But before embarking on the major image rethink a subtle Lewisham asset audit should be undertaken to include under-recognised assets such as history or discovering and exploiting current stars, and assets such as the dog track or Rivoli Ballroom. Only with this stock of material can an image be built that goes beyond the well-worn cliché.

Looking at the image from the outside it is unavoidable that Lewisham first needs to be attached to the South East London phenomenon and then that Deptford and Blackheath should be seen as the gateway to recognising and branding Lewisham. Within these areas there is a set of rich and deep associations that could build up the 'The Lewisham Brand'. This image should be internationally oriented yet locally derived – that connection will give it strength. Here promotion cannot be accused of being hype. The key issue is to create connections with other neighbourhoods. An important dimension is a local landmarking strategy, such as the new Laban Centre London in Deptford; the fabulous new Lewisham Interchange; the Catford Piazza and so on.

Inevitably the arts and urban design will play a central part in creating images for Lewisham and as the Commission proceeds the details can be spelt out.

Whatever the structure of the communications department to deal with this, it needs to ensure that there is both an internal Lewisham focused strategy as well as one that promotes the borough regionally, nationally and internationally in order to attract investment, interesting developers and talent.

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