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# **The Emergence of Culture-led Regeneration: A policy concept and its discontents**

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## Abstract

This paper is an analysis of the concept of 'culture-led regeneration' and the national policies and policy frameworks within which the term has gained meaning and credibility. The period of time covered is 1997—2007, concentrating particularly on the shift in policy priorities under New Labour in the UK between 1999-2004. The first section is a discussion of the semantics of the term culture-led regeneration, and the diverse contexts in which it has been used. The second section offers an account of the historical backdrop to the term's emergence – the rise of urban regeneration policy in its manifold forms. Through a consideration of key urban, social, cultural and arts policies, the paper identifies the political motives and Government interests which have animated this history. The third section of the paper considers 'design-led' regeneration – a major variant of culture-led regeneration. The fourth section is concerned with the role of DCMS and ACE and their role in promoting culture within urban regeneration. The paper seeks to demonstrate that culture-led regeneration is not a single coherent term, but has multiple meanings and applications. More significantly, under New Labour the economic instrumentalism of the previous Conservative regime was supplanted by a *social instrumentalism*, where culture was only defined in a policy context in terms of a supplement to social or urban policy aspirations. Culture and creativity were means to generate an already existing process of social reconstruction, but this came at the cost of an impoverished concept of culture.

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## **ACRONYMS of organisations and governmental bodies cited**

AC: Audit Commission  
ACE: Arts Council England  
ACGB: Arts Council of Great Britain (1994 became ACE)  
ATCM: Association of Town Centre Management  
BURA: The British Urban Regeneration Association  
CABE: Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment  
CO: Cabinet Office  
DCMS: Department of Culture, Media and Sport (1997 –)  
DCLG: Department for Communities and Local Government (2006 –)  
DOE: Department of Environment (1997 became DETR)  
DETR: Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (1997—2001)  
DTI: Department of Trade and Industry  
EP: English Partnerships  
GOR: Government Office for the Region  
NDPB: Non-Departmental Public Body  
NESTA: National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts  
LA: Local Authority  
LGA: Local Government Association  
ODPM: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2001—2007)  
PPG: Planning Policy Guidelines  
PPS: Planning Policy Statements  
QUEST: Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team  
RAA: Regional Arts Association  
RCC: Regional Cultural Consortia  
RDA: Regional Development Agency  
SCD: State of the Cities Database  
SRB: Single Regeneration Budget  
UDC: Urban Development Corporation  
URC: Urban Regeneration Companies  
UTF: Urban Task Force

## **Introduction**

Most of the population of Europe live in densely populated urban environments. The way in which urban environments are organized has a bearing on much more than our physical movement and functional need for services, facilities and a secure habitat. Urban territories both exhibit and express cultural difference and identity in no small part through their management of space – their architecture, distribution of natural vegetation, the way their towns and roads are planned, and so on. This constitutes the ‘feel’ of a place, region or country – its socio-cultural distinctiveness. It also manifests what we may call its ‘urban intelligence’ – the way social, cultural and environmental values, and their historicity, reveal themselves and create a cognitive horizon for people’s everyday lives. The extent to which the physical infrastructure of the urban environment determines the ‘experience’ of our own lives – the way the ‘qualities’ of our physical environment are co-extensive with a substantive ‘quality’ of life – is a question that has been traditionally ignored by state urban planners in the UK. ‘Quality of life’, however, has become a major policy concept, and animates the ‘discourse’ of urban regeneration. This discourse is broad, and encompasses realms diverse as national social and urban policy, local community strategy, contemporary public art practice, and many other fields of interests. In this, or any, research paper, only a summary of this discourse can be attempted. The purpose in attempting a summary, however, is that a summary in the form of a critical overview can offer insights into the conceptual constitution of the discourse, and the many ideas that have emerged from it. This will offer us some pointers for towards a more detailed cultural analysis and policy research.

The intended audience for this paper is the interdisciplinary fields of cultural policy studies, arts management, and contemporary art studies. My primary intention is to examine the concept of ‘culture-led regeneration’ through constructing a narrative of its policy contexts. Of course, there is an endless trail

of policy documents one could consult; this is not a reconstructive exercise in tracing the historical-semantic emergence of the concept, and this paper does not engage in analyses of specific policies. My purpose is to identify the major policy strands that have contributed to the development of the concept of 'culture-led regeneration', to identify their contribution in terms of ideas, claims or authoritative statements, and describe how this concept of 'culture-led regeneration' is not singular but multiple and not wholly coherent; moreover it is never hermetic but always embedded in shifting politically-driven agendas. My method is for the most part conceptual analysis, assessing the discursive function of policy claims in constructing our multivalent concept of 'culture-led regeneration'. The rationale for this is as follows:

- While there are a number of research articles on specific aspects of urban or cultural policy relating to the concept of 'culture-led regeneration' (Hall and Robertson, 2001; Bell and Jayne, 2003; Bailey et al, 2004), there is no broad policy overview available, considering the development of the national policy framework in the UK.
- A policy overview of the broad spectrum of policy at national level offers us an insight into the diversity of policy fields contributing to the development of 'culture-led regeneration' as a concept, but also the political motivations that animate policy initiatives, tied as they are to national government political agendas.
- Constructing an historically-informed narrative on relevant policy frameworks is an important prerequisite for a thorough critique of national regeneration policy and its uses of culture.

This paper is a first-step in the analysis of national policy frameworks – and this first step is thus concerned with constructing a narrative of the emergence of the concept of culture-led regeneration. This central concept has in the last few years provoked several substantial special issues of academic journals: for example, *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 10: 1; and *Urban Studies* 42: 5/6. Journals

as diverse as *Landscape Research*, *Planning Perspectives*, *Journal of Urban Design*, have also recently published articles on topics that range from the use of urban 'masterplans', public art and public consultation, the aesthetics of urban design, the cultural identity of individual cities, the economic impact of culture on a city, the management of stakeholders on regeneration projects, and so on. The subject spans a multitude of disciplinary concerns. This present paper is exclusively concerned with British Government policy and the policies of a select number of Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs). This is not a parochial affair – the issues and measure of socio-cultural change that this study attempts to register is both structurally homologous with, and internally generated by, international and global forces. On the global front: as the major UN-Habitat report *The State of the World's Cities* (UNCHS, 2004) demonstrates, global urban change is now characterised by alignments of economic and social with cultural forces. The rising centrality of 'culture' as an economic-political factor is both recent in UK national politics, and significant. The characteristics of so-called 'globalisation' – cross-national market integration, ethnic migrations and increased mobility, global communications and media, and the rise of minority 'rights' – inform the policy-making process even on purely national issues. For example, the relation between the two factors of mass migration and 'rights' based primary legislation has made an enormous impact on social and urban policy at every level; these two factors have also been responsible for the emergence of 'culture' as a subject of mainstream social and urban policy. Also, the twin mechanisms of global transportation and cultural tourism have facilitated a new urban self-consciousness with regard the 'appearance' of the city from without, and the experience of the city to visitors within. The term 'global city of culture' has emerged, and we can witness a culture-led economic regeneration that many cities of the world are attempting, from Bilbao to Singapore (UNCHS, 2004: 4-5; 34—48; Sasson, 1991).

The changes in policy that concern this paper were also animated by international motivations and reference points throughout. Referring merely to

'the influence' of Europe would betray a parochial lack of awareness of the degree to which UK policy and implementation is now structurally unified with EU law at many levels. The policy fields of urban and cultural policy are intrinsically bound up with EU wide policy formations on four levels. First, environmental policy: this is a large and complex policy field, but of late the re-framing of all of UK urban, social and even cultural policy by the concept of 'sustainable development' has been generated by an EU agenda. 'Environmental sustainability' was adopted as a key EU aim in the 1987 Amsterdam Treaty and has grown in influence propelled by the concern over global climate change. Second is town planning, now a part of the broader 'spatial strategy'. An EU conference of ministers and planners [CEMAT] has been held regularly since 1970, and in 1983 produced what is known as the Torremolinas Charter, a European regional spatial charter of principles. Adopted by the Council of Europe, this gave rise to a larger enterprise, *Guiding Principles for Spatial Development of the European Continent* (2000). Apart from 'models' like charters and guidelines, which are adopted incrementally through influence, the EU now directly determines a great many of the core principles that ground UK land policies, environment, construction and development control. The third and fourth EU characteristics of UK urban and cultural policy are economic and aesthetic: the economic is evident, and a tangible force in urban regeneration in the form of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), which contributes to most major infrastructural developments in the UK; the aesthetic one would expect to be *non-tangible*, but is, however, equally as tangible in the form of adoption by UK architects, planners and developers of the use of the 'plaza', boulevard and street café as necessary components of inner city re-design.

To return to the subject matter of this study – after an extended introduction, defining the concept 'culture-led regeneration', I will be attending exclusively to central Government policy initiatives, reports and statements, and concentrating largely on the 'paradigm shift' in urban and cultural policy with the advent of New Labour (concentrating on the years 1999-2004, though considering some recent



policy statements also). The policy documents I will cite involve reference to primary legislation, Government strategy, guidelines, reports, evaluations and politically motivated 'PR' statements of various kinds. The study of policy in its broadest sense would entail considering the process of policy-construction from the inception of a policy through specific political ideas, manifesto or party commitments, or simply just government 'inheritance', then the raft of primary legislation proposals, policy drafts and consultations, publication and reception, implementation and evaluation. The process is extensive and fraught with complications, not least the 'translation' of national policy in regional or local frameworks, with their own political dynamics and priorities. This present study is perhaps cursory, but whose purposes lie not in policy analysis itself, but the extended conceptual framework provided by a field of co-extensive policies within which we understand the phenomenon of 'culture-led regeneration'. I am interested in the absorption of an 'aesthetic' (and thus 'cultural') dimension to mainstream urban policy: this is signified by the use of central concepts such as 'quality of life', 'well-being', 'urban renaissance', 'liveability', and so on. They are all highly nebulous terms, and yet have become axes around which central policy ideas have revolved. Their significance lies in their appeal to an 'aesthetic' dimension of life to which, by implication, Government policy must be centrally concerned – the realm of human 'experience'. This experience is not simply a sensory 'happiness' but a state where the citizen is optimising their individual potential in an environment that is stable, just, secure, and will continue (is sustainable, in policy terms).

There is a large measure of truth in stating that policy only becomes 'policy' in its implementation, and that my consideration of policy documents together as co-extensive – constructing a 'conceptual framework' – has no substantial *raison d'être*. This raises the theoretical problem of defining the relation between the policy document and 'reality'. On the significance of policy *concepts*, the following can be said: since 1997 and the accession of New Labour to Government, policy statements have become both politically charged and placed under a scrutiny of

self-imposed audit, monitoring and assessment; the demand for 'results' that has characterised New Labour's style of governance has generated policy documents that do provide a conceptual framework that is interpreted literally on a local level of implementation. Importantly, single driving policy 'concepts' (in various forms, such as the media 'soundbite') have gained a specific significance: policy concepts have become intrinsic to party political Public Relations under New Labour. Second, and following from this, the strengthening of central government has meant that policy on a local level is often a literal transcription of national policy; and we could further add that New Labour's political pragmatism is no less ideological for eschewing historical ideologies, but that ideology has become embedded to a greater degree in the central mechanism of pragmatism – policy.

Admittedly, there are other characteristics of policy under New Labour that mitigates against my reasoning here. First, policy under New Labour has changed with startling rapidity (as have ministerial posts under each Government department). Second, there is a constant and confusing conflation of specific policy issues with changing departmental responsibilities (for example, the recent rapid rise and demise of the ODPM has meant the dispersal and re-assignment of their urban policy responsibilities; moreover, policy responsibilities can be re-allocated or shared, such as minority educational responsibilities from social to cultural policy, for example). There is the constant political pressure to conform to the dictates of current Governmental political priorities, and the current leadership strategy of a 'strong' premiership (Prime Minister and his Cabinet Office policy staff), as well as multiple EU directives. The policy-making process is subject to several severe demands quite outside the issue of policy implementation and its effectiveness. This does entail two general consequences for our reading of policy documents: (i) policy language and its generic terminology – the political phraseology of Government merges with the lexicon of specific terms distinct to that policy area (sometimes supplanting it), so that the specificity of key definitions and applicability of key ideas can seem vague and even conceptually vacuous; (ii) policy documents themselves seldom explain their 'position' within

the network of extant policy documents, nor their mode of application – the relation between the ‘white paper’, the many policy statements that follow from it, the strategy document, the action plan, policy guidelines, policy reports, evaluations and assessments is never wholly clear. The function of the individual document is of course clear by virtue of political convention, but the way in which they travel vertically downwards to local level, and the morass of memos and directives that can circulate around them, is never predictable nor uniform.

The multiple complexities of the world of policy making will, fortunately perhaps, not concern us directly. This paper attempts to respond to some more basic questions, questions that emerge from a concern with the implications inherent in our central concept: ‘culture-led regeneration’.

- What is ‘urban regeneration’ and how does culture ‘lead’ it?
- In what contexts is the term ‘culture-led regeneration’ used?
- How has the term emerged?
- What urban situations have ostensibly necessitated involving culture in regeneration initiatives?

These questions largely concern the meaning, emergence and use of the concept of culture-led regeneration. There are a number of routes one can take in offering a substantial response to these questions; I have chosen to consider national policy and policy frameworks (though, as we will see, a discussion of this also involves identifying key policy making or research-producing bodies and organizations). The reason I have done so is that despite the growing body of academic research on urban regeneration in all its forms (mentioned below), the specialization of academic interests usually precludes a general critical overview of the whole spectrum of national policy. Further questions then follow:

- What Government policies have been instrumental in facilitating urban regeneration?
- What policies have explicitly acknowledged the importance of, or urban uses for, cultural activity?

- How did major policy documents change the framework for thinking about urban transformation in the UK?
- To what extent have governmental bodies responsible for culture played a strategic role in the 'uses' of culture within an urban regeneration context?

As I hope to demonstrate, the national policy spectrum maintains a 'cognitive' function, as through it our concept of culture-led urban regeneration is made intelligible and given modes of application. This study is just the first step in a research project, which will proceed by considering policies in more depth: the conclusion of this paper is an articulation of critical research questions that have emerged from this broad policy overview.

## Section 1: **Subject overview**

'Regeneration' is a term used to refer generally to urban transformation through the redesign, reconstruction and often re-allocation of urban land. The term initially denoted land reclamation or rectifying severe urban decay, and despite the term's now popular use in relation to urban design and planning or cultural planning 'regeneration' can still be used as a synonym for land development or simply rebuilding (DETR, 2000c; DCLG, 2003; Amin et al., 2002). Throughout the 1980s the term gained a general usage largely within urban policy and social initiatives, and most regeneration concerned de-industrialised urban areas (urban regeneration is quite a distinct topic from *rural regeneration*, which has of late become a concern with the decline of agriculture and fisheries in the UK). In more recent policy contexts the term regeneration has regained some of its older metaphoric uses, as an organic metaphor with a range of meanings from the renewal of national culture and patrimony to the 'holistic' growth of sustainable communities, and has been central to national 'urban policy' now for the last three decades (Lees, 2003; Bailey et al., 2004; Amin et al., 2000). There is now a European-wide aspiration for systematic international regeneration – such as the pan-Europeanist organisation INTERact and its network of regenerated cities, calling for the European integration of transportation systems and infrastructural utilities. And as the 2004 UNCHS report, *The State of the World's Cities*, illustrates, 'regeneration' is now a global phenomena, adopted as an explicit urban policy by many of the world major cities (UNCHS, 2004).

The breadth and quantity of regeneration projects in the UK prohibit a summary here, and any adequate descriptive cannot but acknowledge their entanglement in local politics, local interpretation and application of government directives, long-term planning strategies, Europe-funded regional economic development, and so on. If one consults the journal of The British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA) and the industry magazine *Regeneration and Renewal*, the breadth of the subject from a professional vantage point becomes apparent –

from housing, commercial property and industrial development, civil engineering, construction and architecture, public-private partnerships and their finance, property development economics, and environmental issues like soil stabilisation and the treatment of contaminated land. It now seems to be the case that the single term 'regeneration' generally signifies the more basic industrial land physical reconstitution and development, whereas 'urban regeneration' refers to the development of the orbit of social habitation: it involves communities and the social-cultural infrastructure. Urban regeneration strategy implementation often goes unnoticed by the public and cultural sector if it involves only housing or the recommissioning of 'brown field' de-industrialised land. However, urban regeneration strategy is famously responsible for the reconstruction of waterfronts, docklands, and new retail and culture developments, some of which are evident in every major city in the UK.

For a concise definition of urban regeneration and its interconnected concerns, Bob Catterall's paper 'Culture as a Critical Focus for Effective Urban Regeneration' (1998) offers the following:

- the environment (including the urban/rural interface) and sustainability;
- information technology, communications (including transport) and citizen involvement;
- the relationship between local and external needs in urban development, employment, the needs and energies of the poor and marginalised, and the role of the 'third sector' (in addition to business and government)
- an approach to architecture, planning and cultural policy and to ethical and religious concerns that is related to the three dimensions listed above (Catterall, 1998: 3).

As this summary definition adequately illustrates, and as we will see with our policy study below, urban regeneration has become enmeshed in a confusing mass of sociological and cultural issues. We will return to the last of these points later in the paper, save to say that 'urban regeneration' has become a regulative

policy concept providing a strategic articulation of planned socio-cultural transformation in its largest sense. Given its expansive concerns, urban regeneration has a suitable breadth of stakeholders – from property developers to cultural institutions to creative industries businesspeople to local government; and its range of professional interests run from contemporary experimental architecture to tourism to town planning to ecological sustainability. There is consequently no one academic discipline that regards ‘regeneration’ as a natural object for their methodologies, save perhaps for the new interdisciplinary fields of ‘urban policy’ (see Amin et. al., 2000, and Amin et. al. 2002). The range of disciplines and interdisciplinary fields that have contributed to the literature on urban regeneration are too numerous to mention: for this study they centrally included the following: (i) *cultural policy*, from ‘think tank’ organizations to government departments, non-departmental public bodies [NDPBs], and academic researchers (Bianchini and Landry, 1994; DCMS, 2004a; Arts Council, 1989; Gibson and Stevenson, 2004) (ii) *urban design studies and architecture theory*, whose academic research has been codified by various NDPBs, such as Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and English Partnerships, the national regeneration agency (Punter and Carmona, 1997; Urban Task Force, 1999; CABE, 2000; English Partnerships, 2000); (iii) *urban policy studies*, whose research is also utilized by central government and local authorities [LAs] (Deakin and Edwards, 1993; Imrie and Raco, 2003; ODPM, 2004); and (iv) *art and cultural criticism and interpretation*, which is intrinsic to areas common to (ii) (Miles, 1997; Julier, 2005).

Interdisciplinary cultural policy research has indeed maintained a concern with urban regeneration (*IJCP*, 10 (1), 2004). Franco Bianchini and Michael Parkinson’s Europe-wide study *Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration* (1993) was a substantial formative publication, although largely concerned with specific case-study based analyses (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993). Their aim was to reveal the increasingly strategic (and instrumental) function of cultural policy within European cities’ economic development, city marketing and urban

renewal; their conceptual framework was the governance and management of inner cities, where social, cultural and economic issues were not distinct in the realms of urban development policy and its implementation. The initial context of urban regeneration analysis for cultural policy research tended to be the study of the city as a distinct socio-geographic entity.

In 1994 Bianchini (with Charles Landry of research agency *Comedia*) published a paper entitled *The Creative City*, which developed a methodology for examining 'urban vitality and viability' (Bianchini and Landry, 1994). This extended paper submerged cultural policy analysis within a broader urban strategy analysis, and indicated one distinct direction cultural policy research was to develop. An example of this development was Comedia's 2002 report *Releasing the Cultural Potential of our Core Cities*, which followed a European wide initiative for regenerating the major cities (In response to which the ODPM set up the Core Cities Initiative, identifying a designated eight core cities in the UK: ODPM, 2004). Two years after *The Creative City*, another collaboration between Bianchini and Comedia (involving Lesley Greene and François Matarasso as well as Landry) was entitled *The Art of Regeneration: urban renewal through cultural activity*, which re-framed social and urban developmental strategy back within a broader cultural policy analysis context. The oscillation between a cultural framework of analysis and one constructed from empirical sociological categories tends to characterize research in urban regeneration, and is symptomatic of more than just a change in focus or a different emphasis. As we will observe later, the profound interconnectedness of the social and culture in urban regeneration demands an acknowledgement of the non-visible and unquantifiable elements of experience, community cohesion and identity, quality of life, and yet these elements pose a severe problem for methods of analysis (particularly in a policy context). The discursive struggle to construct an emphatic concept of culture – a concept able to ground both models of analysis and evaluation and a strong justification for creative activity – is an ongoing process that has not been resolved. In the literature from the late 1980s – from which the idea of 'culture-



led' regeneration as a policy concept began to emerge – we find a bifurcation of the language of 'aesthetic' or artistic value: one trajectory remains within the hermetic world of 'the arts', with its own historical and philosophical traditions; the other trajectory heads into a direct engagement with the socio-urban context. It is this latter trajectory we are concerned with, and within this trajectory (particularly in Section 4 of this present paper) we find a struggle to present 'culture' as a socially credible framework of validation. The Arts Council of Great Britain's *An Urban Renaissance: The Role of the Arts in Urban Regeneration* (1989), and the British and American Arts Association's *Arts and the Changing City: an agenda for urban regeneration* (1989) both exhibit (and as documents are symptomatic of) this bifurcation. They both refer to a philosophically strong tradition of aesthetic and artistic thinking and yet at once admit that this tradition is not credible or useful within a broader and rigorous context of urban and social planning: both call for a new conceptual framework for advocacy for arts and culture.

In the last ten years a more extensive debate has emerged on many details and aspects of culture-led urban regeneration, conducted within specialized fields of cultural geography, town planning, architecture, urban design and public policy administration, among others, and all of which have attempted to generate more nuanced critical frameworks (see the breadth of approaches in Verwijnen and Lehtovouri, 1999; INURA, 2004; and Zardini, 2005). 'Urban regeneration' broadly speaking has thus become a strong self-sustaining discourse – with a spectrum of research outputs from government documents to think-tank research, consultancy or professional advocacy, and specialized academic analysis. However diverse, research concerns often converge and we find many shared issues from national to local policy frameworks, guidelines and legislation, major examples of which will be summarized shortly. There is no substantive categorical distinction between mainstream urban regeneration discourse and the more 'holistic' form of 'culture-led regeneration', as we will find. On both national, regional and local policy framework levels there has been a concerted political

effort to integrate mainstream 'regeneration' (physical-economic infrastructural development) and 'cultural' elements, in the form of urban design 'aesthetics' and 'quality of life' concerns, usually with a unitary development plan or a regeneration strategy, utilised now by most local authorities (Coventry City Council, 2001). Many major public policy 'quality of life' indicators (such as current Audit Commission indicators) do not themselves contain any significant cultural content – health, security, education, and social services and so on (Audit Commission, 2003). However, from street furniture design to the 'new genre' public art or even more traditional community art, cultural activity has with some marked effects been increasingly deployed in these areas (Lacey, 1995; Arts Council England, 2003b, 2005, 2006a).

It was during the 1990s the 'cultural' dimension of urban regeneration emerged strongly in policy contexts, and it did so most visibly through two practices: urban design (including architecture) and public art. The national policy statements on 'design' in regeneration were stronger, placing design matters as central to urban and economic planning (DOE, 1997; DETR, 2000a; DETR 2000d). Positively, cultural concerns slowly gained currency through design matters within the traditionally 'philistine' context of town or urban planning, and did so in part due to the creative strength of British architecture and the quantity of design theory and criticism that emerged throughout the decade of the 1980s. The prospect of integrating design, cultural activities and urban regeneration gave rise to some imaginative policy claims: a purview of any literature on the subject from the mid-1990s – policy, professional advocacy or critical literature – will find these common and recurring aspirations for urban regeneration:

- the 'humanization' of the built environment – where the urban-physical infrastructure gives priority to people and public life, not roads or buildings.
- the reconstruction of civic identity and expression of collective aspirations.
- a creative interaction between culture and commerce, social and institutional life.

- inspiring visionary ideas providing an impetus for cultural change and social participation without traditional social divisions.
- a visible expression of international cultural consciousness.
- an enlightened integration of advanced environmental, ecological and material technology.

These ‘aspirations’ animated the policy-making imagination, and in terms of policy methodology were ‘holistic’, ‘integrationist’, synthetic, and visionary: seeking in broad terms to conceptualise ‘quality of life’, and doing so by integrating the aesthetic and economic. These aspirations crystallized during the late 1990s with New Labour’s aspiration to unite the torn halves of British society – an innovative and entrepreneurial private sector and a rich public culture (Labour Party, 1997; Hills, 1998). The discourse of urban regeneration gained a measure of significance as it broadly embodied New Labour’s integrationist political aspirations.

At the close of the 1990s one could clearly identify four major categories of ‘culture-led’ urban regeneration on the urban landscape of Britain: (i) ‘*flagship*’ *cultural facilities*, such as signature style architecture or a new cultural institution (such as Tate Modern in London); (ii) *landmark sculptures or public art schemes* (Antony Gormley’s *Iron Man*, and the Birmingham Centenary Square regeneration); (iii) *innovative structural engineering*, such as bridges or archways (Coventry’s ‘Whittle Arch’ or Gateshead’s Millennium Bridge); and (iv) *unique performances, events or festivals* (such as The Kendal Mountain Film Festival in Cumbria). Such new buildings, art objects or cultural events could be either a preliminary to, or an integral part of, a broader urban regeneration project, usually in the form of a development and reconstruction of part of a city centre.

In their study, *The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in the UK: A Review of Evidence*, Graeme Evans and Phyllida Shaw outline three quite distinct alignments between culture and urban regeneration: ‘culture-led regeneration’,

'cultural regeneration', and 'culture *and* regeneration' (Evans and Shaw, 2004: 5-6). Culture-led regeneration is 'culture as catalyst and engine of regeneration' (Evans, 2005: 968); this might be a regeneration project driven by an arts project, centred on a key landmark building whose significance is lodged in its design or architecture, or an area structured by a public art project. Cultural regeneration, however, is where culture is fully integrated into an area strategy, where design, art, architecture, arts and cultural activity is indissoluble from a way of living, using and occupying social space. Culture *and* regeneration would simply utilize or feature cultural activity at some level, but would not be integral to the project. In fact, public art is often added in an urban location as a way of concealing a distinct lack of attentiveness to the aesthetics of urban design at planning stage. To this short list we could add 'artist-led regeneration', though the category is an anomaly and could belong to any three of the above. The term is used with relation to places like Hoxton or Clerkenwell in East London, which have become desirable property locations because of the emergence of some form of 'raw' culture in the form of artists' studios and galleries, with emerging café life and a increasing cosmopolitan population. This phenomena is allied to 'celebrity-led' regeneration – a vivification of a place (such as the impact of famous pop musicians relocating to London's suburban Crouch End in the late 1980s), or the process now known as 'gentrification', which itself is a form of culture-led regeneration, where cafés, restaurants and galleries emerge after the renovation of value-increasing property, as many Victorian suburbs of London experienced in the 1990s.

It is easy to weigh in with a dismissal of the success of 'culture-led regeneration' as a policy phenomenon by looking at its fragmented achievements to date, or by pointing to the continued dominance of non-cultural or even anti-cultural motivations within urban regeneration broadly speaking. Whatever achievements are made on the level of policy-making, policy implementation is fraught with difficulties beyond the control of any one agency. Urban centres never present a tabula rasa for the designer or architect; regeneration is usually an incremental

and piecemeal rectification or past planning mistakes, often involving locations that are structurally problematic. And as much as a local authority may want to prioritise cultural elements, urban development is almost always enacted under political pressures to favour immediate concerns for urban decay and social deprivation.

On the level of policy, an urban regeneration strategy is usually part of a rolling programme of 'phases', often within a 25 year city development plan. An urban regeneration project usually operates through a complex strategy hierarchy constructed and implemented by a local authority, often political charged and sometimes highly volatile (Griffiths, 1993). This strategy hierarchy will feature region-specific strategy guidance from the central government ministry for environmental affairs, national planning guidelines, a regional economic development strategy, regional spatial strategy, a public-private sector partnership community plan, perhaps metropolitan or borough guidelines, then the city-based unitary development plan (spanning up to 25 years) and various urban development strategies issuing from this framework. There are various strategy documents that run parallel on the lower part of the policy hierarchy, such as the arts policy, heritage strategy, sports strategy (all part of a broader local cultural strategy, but often in a state of revision). Priorities within the policy hierarchy are determined by a local authorities' corporate plan, with this being constantly responsive to the changing priorities of HM Treasury's comprehensive spending reviews. The multiple decision-making contexts of local government operate within such a matrix of policy documents, documents which are not necessarily in harmony. Of the sixty strategy documents that commonly inhabit the orbit of a local authority, 'culture' is often a small and continually shifting priority.

The unstable local authority policy matrix does not necessarily entail an incoherent, incrementalist approach to regeneration. For those who remember Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool and Newcastle city centres in the 1970s will award

urban regeneration policy of the last fifteen years some measure of credibility: and culture played some role in all these cases. 'The northern renaissance' as an idea emerged as an express acknowledgement of the importance of culture at least to the notion of a 'successful' regeneration (see DETR Urban task Force report, 1999; DETR Urban White Paper, 2000d). Central to the Initial examples of 'culture-led' regeneration was Glasgow. After its role in 1990 as the European Capital of Culture, the very idea of a culture-led regeneration gained credibility (if the reality was not quite what it seemed; Booth and Boyle, 1993). On a local level successful precedents of culture in regeneration, such as Liverpool and earlier Birmingham, gave weight for an internal 'lobby' within city councils. However, as 'culture-led' regeneration gained in credibility – culminating in the late 1990s – local authorities became increasingly subject to a national political agenda, emphasising social and community welfare; for example, 'housing-led' regeneration has since become a political imperative for all local authorities.

Returning to the tripartite scheme of Graeme Evans and Phyllida Shaw above: we will find later in our study that urban regeneration policy has since become allied to 'environmental sustainability' on the one hand and 'community strategy' on the other, and this alliance has generated a form of 'cultural regeneration' (albeit without any 'artistic' culture). This recalls the position advocated by Bianchini and Landry in *The Creative City* (1994), which attempted to move beyond past policy categories, 'social', 'cultural', 'urban', 'environmental' to an integrationist understanding of our dynamic urban environment. The policy aims of Birmingham City Council in the early part of the 1990s, and Coventry in the latter, were perhaps an example of more integrationist approaches to urban development (Birmingham City Council, 2003; 1994; Sargent, 1996; Coventry City Council, 2001): culture remained allied to 'the urban' and 'the social' at planning stage. An example of 'culture-led regeneration' would perhaps be Gateshead, where the *Angel of the North*, Baltic Art Gallery and Sage Music Centre has spearheaded a broader socio-economic project, working a dual function of symbolic contribution to a renewed identity and a provision of physical

cultural facilities. They are not however integral to broader community-level changes. Evans and Shaw's scheme has a genuine empirical validity, but with regard to policy it is not difficult to find a 'cultural regeneration' strategy that is phased over time and for most of the life of the project operates as 'culture *and* regeneration'; furthermore, the visible culture of a radical cultural regeneration project might be less *visible* than a culture-led regeneration project: Gateshead could be an example.

The initial wave of regenerated city centres, such as Birmingham and Glasgow, prompted two categories of critical response, which dampened the initial optimism for culture-led regeneration as a policy framework. The first we can summarise using the above mentioned Comedia Report, *The Art of Regeneration*, which expressed a good empirical grasp of the then current expectations and outcomes of culture-led regeneration in the UK: (i) regeneration is invariably based on capital projects, and these are detrimentally expensive to maintain post-facto; (ii) the construction industry benefits more than the arts sector in terms of capital gains; (iii) large capital projects, on completion, absorb large amounts of public sector funds, funds diverted from other beneficiaries; (iv) it does not necessarily connect with local needs and interests; (v) it is usually a metropolitan phenomenon, not involving smaller communities (Bianchini, Landry et. al. 1996: ii and *passim*).

A second category of response emerged from interdisciplinary 'urban studies', a broad field involving art and architectural theorists and critics. One such critic was Malcolm Miles, whose interdisciplinary work has interjected mainstream post-Marxist critical theory into a growing regeneration discourse (Miles, 1997; 2000; 2004 *passim*). Using his broad-based critique we can summarize this category of response as follows: (i) the structure of the city is no longer governed by need or production but by leisure and services, where central spaces become areas of pure consumption: this negates their use as public spaces of cultural participation; (ii) the range or breadth of building types is contracting; everywhere

we find quasi-continental architecture, whose formal vocabulary is generic, placeless and stylistically facile; (iii) the new aesthetics of the city are the aesthetics of 'gentrification': it is a renovation of past building types simply to create new urban spaces for an emerging incoming upwardly mobile professional class; the economics of renovation entails a displacement of the lower class indigenous population; (iv) the policy rhetoric of culture-led regeneration uses the language of culture to mask the Government's political prioritisation of a 'leisure—retail led' regeneration, in which public ownership of space as a concept is being dissolved. This last point is coextensive with McCarthy's notion of 'entertainment-led regeneration' (McCarthy, J., 2002).

To whatever degree the cultural component of urban regeneration was masking forms of economic development that were actually destructive to cultural development, the emerging idea of culture-led regeneration did however produce some significant by-products. It did engender an obligation for cultural institutions to become active within urban policy construction, and to re-conceptualize their cultural activities and facilities in terms of a coherent 'cultural infrastructure'. As Graeme Evans historical study indicated, a degree of cultural planning emerged with regeneration imperatives (Evans, 2001); this was not systematic, but the initial development of the idea of culture-led regeneration introduced a conceptual framework within which (at least) cultural services became subject to broader social and urban policy questions and issues.

A second 'by-product' was the emerging interest in the concept of 'city branding'. While as a term, city branding did not gain full circulation until the late 1990s, the basic conception of 'branding the city' among local authorities certainly did (for a recent example: Edinburgh City Region Brand, 2007). Whatever commercial motives this interest embodied, it created a conceptual framework in which a more holistic concept of the city could emerge. Cultural facilities were re-cast in the city's policy consciousness as capital assets and thus the need for investment became the subject of a credible argument. The 'Bilbao miracle' or



'Bilbao effect' as it became known played no small part in this (Vegara, 2001; Crawford, 2001). In 1997, American architect Frank Gehry completed a commission for the American Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, a museum in the unlikely location of the depressed northern Spanish port town of Bilbao. This one architectural structure provided the local economy with a brand-icon and a cultural tourist magnet, leading to phenomenal external investment and socio-cultural growth. More importantly perhaps, the Guggenheim demonstrated that cultural facilities could play a major commercial role (in the macro-economic context of the city) *without* being drafted into instrumental social-engagement programmes, compromising their non-commercial function as an institution.

A third by-product was the way the funding that followed urban regeneration enabled the emergence of a sector of art and cultural consultancies. Many of these, like *Groundwork UK*, have their origins in government or local authority patronage, and continue to supplement policy delivery directly. Some are more independent. *Ecoregen* is an ecology-based approach to environmental regeneration, providing practical and creative templates for professionals and local community based urban reorganisation. *Freeform* is one of a number of new genre arts consultancies, specialising in urban arts. From such organisations a substantial quantity of research, information and networking in the contemporary art world has been generated in the broad framework of urban regeneration over the last twenty years. Moreover, through these new generation agencies and consultancies, artists themselves have found a route into public commissions and social programmes that a few decades ago were rare.

Returning to Malcolm Miles' scepticism concerning culture-led regeneration policy articulated above – there remains a strong case to be argued that the 'culture-led' component of regeneration maintains an unwitting ideological function in de-politicising (obviating the rationale for political opposition) the private sector colonisation of public cultural terrain. The staggering impact and stealthy progress of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) in the last few years is adequate grounds for this suspicion (Monbiot, 2005). There is no doubt a

demonstrable politically-strategic relationship between corporations, private interests and cash-strapped local authorities offering up public property for private interests (usually provoked by desperate need for investment and its economic benefits). This has entailed places of public congregation, historic buildings or cultural institutions being turned over to leisure consortia or simply converted into 'pay-to-view' visitor space – where even citizens in their own city now function socially as 'visitors'. Moreover, local cultural provision has been re-structured and re-formatted to some degree within a sales and marketing driven criterion of consumer demand or popularity and attendance figures (often represented as public 'access', 'inclusion', or simply visitor hospitality).

However, there has also been a concerted attempt to reconstruct the concept of 'the public realm', and a serious renewed commitment to public-urban space. The significance of social identity, cultural productivity and social congregation has concerned policy makers at national level in the last five years as well as major urban regeneration architects and masterplanners (McGuigan et al., 2004; Selwood, 1995), and as we will see in our summary of recent policies below, it is now mandatory for large urban regeneration projects to include major cultural content of some kind, whether in terms of new architecture, public art or the renovation of existing cultural facilities. The situation prior to Comedia's report, *The Art of Regeneration*, has developed significantly in the last decade. Arts Council England's recent three part report, *The Power of Art: visual arts: evidence of impact* (Arts council England, 2006f) constructs a credible case for culture-led regeneration, observing the development of Gateshead and regions in the last ten years. They point to measurable impacts such as a subsequent £100 million of commercial and residential investment in Baltic Quays, new relocation of hitech businesses, increase in tourism by 2.6 million people by 2002, visitors generating £60 million of revenue; Newcastle/Gateshead was voted favourite English city break by *Guardian* and *Observer* readers in 2004; a favourite domestic relocation destination. There has also been massive development in the cultural infrastructure of the region, not to mention the integration and

professionalisation of artists within urban and community development (Arts Council England, 2006f: Part 1, 30—33). This does not nullify the relevance of Comedia's observations, but culture-led regeneration has had a substantive impact in some de-industrialised parts of the UK.

So far we have considered the diversity of our subject, and a representative summary of two common responses to the aspirations of culture-led regeneration and its outcomes or broader socio-cultural impact. We have also recognized the cultural by-products of urban regeneration projects in general, where new conceptual frameworks and cultural organizations have emerged, and the evident successes of culture-led regeneration as presented by its advocates. We will now consider the matrix of policy contexts from which culture-led regeneration as a concept emerged.

## Section 2: **Emerging policy contexts and a developing concept**

As Power and Mumford illustrate in their Joseph Rountree Foundation research *The Slow Death of Great Cities?* British urban areas in the 1970s and 1980s were subject to decades-long impact of de-industrialisation, urban flight, insecurity from rising and random crime, unequal mobility, social polarization, and public loss of control over local land (Power and Mumford, 1999). It was in this context that a formative concept of urban regeneration emerged.

State sponsored urban regeneration can be traced back to Harold Wilson's Urban Programme initiated in the late 1960s, which turned the post-war reconstruction programmes that involved most of the major cities in the 1940s and 1950s from land-based issues to social conditions (Hill, 1994). The Inner Cities White Paper *Policy for the Inner Cities* of 1977, and the *Inner Urban Areas* act in 1978 were the next significant attempts of central government at creating a policy structure for regeneration, in part as within the old post-war paradigm there was no specific policy conceptualisation of the 'inner city' as a discrete entity. However, serious social and physical dereliction of inner city communities demanded that 'regeneration' policy attended to social and community struggles, and given the gravity of crime and health issues any 'regeneration' initiative was usually characterised by a pragmatic problem-solving methodology, not given to a great deal of lateral thinking on the possible function of the arts or culture. In part due to Prime Minister Thatcher's antipathy for Labour-run local authorities, the incoming Conservative government in 1979 changed this by constructing a rudimentary private-public partnership investment scheme, and the private-partner relation has been embedded in the very structure of regeneration finance and delivery ever since (Stoker, 1991). Thatcher's contribution to building a coherent concept of regeneration were appointed quangos: the Urban Development Corporations were the largest and most powerful, and arguably became the 'central mechanism' of British urban policy up until New Labour (Imrie and Thomas, 1999: 11). The UDCs – set up after the Local Government,

Planning and Land Act of 1980 – had land re-allocation and compulsory purchasing powers, and by 1990 there were twelve of them making enormous changes in most of the major cities of the UK, from Liverpool Docks and Cardiff Bay to Central Leeds and Manchester. The UDCs generally ensured that regeneration remained property-led for a decade or more, at least until after 1991, when the Department of Environment (DOE) under Michel Heseltine launched five year regeneration programmes called ‘City Challenge’ (Hill, 1994; Deakin and Edwards, 1993; Imrie and Thomas, 1993, 1999).

The City Challenge initiative introduced competitive bidding for regeneration projects, demanded the inclusion of private, public and voluntary sectors in specific projects, and demonstrated benefit to local communities (Robinson, F, 1997; Symon and Williams, 2001: 56-57); with 31 five year projects funded it was the largest of a range of initiatives, incorporating Inner City Task Forces (begun in 1986) and City Action Teams (in 1985), but significantly was where the first real explicit articulation of what became ‘culture-led’ regeneration (Casey, Dunlop, and Selwood, 1996:24). What we now think of in terms of ‘urban regeneration’ was an amalgam of concerns framed around by the concept of inner cities’ social degradation, and it is perhaps relevant to see Bianchini and Landry’s *The Creative City* (1994) in this context.

The Arts Council of Great Britain’s brief policy statement *An Urban Renaissance: The Role of the Arts in Urban Regeneration* (1989) expressed the pragmatism demanded by the condition of inner cities to some degree. As an advocacy document on the role of the arts in regeneration, its argument is explicitly economic – the arts provide amenities, attract tourism, increase employment, increase community identity and pride. They create ‘a climate of optimism – the “can do” attitude essential to developing the “enterprise culture” this Government hopes to bring to deprived areas’ (ACGB, 1989: unpaginated). Presupposing that the argument for art’s social, cultural and aesthetic value was adequately articulated elsewhere, and echoing John Myerscough’s influential report *The*

*Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain* of the same year, this policy statement assumed that the welfare of the arts could be boosted by an explicitly economic rationale (Myerscough, 1988). The instrumental economic-benefit case for the arts was to characterize culture-led regeneration advocacy to the present day, though with the caveat that the arts subsequently became subject to the same instrumental performance indicators as other non-cultural contributions to the regeneration effort. This, of course, placed the arts in a problematic position within the developing discourse, never able to provide enough evidence for the validity of its contribution (as Gordon Hughes had argued at the time: Hughes, 1989).

An appropriate cultural candidate for involvement in urban regeneration was of course public art. As an historic addition to any and every city or even village, in the form of monuments or fountains, public art tended to side-step the more rigorous of the arguments on the economic benefit of the arts. In the 1980s there were significant developments in the area of public art – notably the Department for Environment's sponsored research project resulting in the publication *Art for Architecture – a handbook for commissioning* (Petherbridge, 1987). This project concerned the urban use and social relevance of art in contemporary Britain, examining the management and commissioning of art in urban contexts. The text, while instrumental in its objectives, went some way to professionalizing the position of the artist in the context of urban reconstruction contracts, and under the patronage of the Department of Environment (DOE) the artist gained a degree of professional credibility with the architectural and property development sectors. Art and architecture collaborations were sometimes facilitated by the *Percent for Art* scheme, promoted by the Arts Council through its regional bodies, where local authorities committed one percent of capital expenditure on construction schemes to the provision of art (though the arithmetic of the calculation was never consistent). The strategic objective of the *Percent for Art* scheme was not merely to raise funding, but to insert the artist into a re-building project at the design stage (ACGB, 1990).

The *Percent for Art* scheme was significant, if only by implication, and gained a measure of strategic value in the context of the DOE's *Action for Cities* campaign in the mid 1980s, where over 300 cultural projects were supported. In 1995 Selwood calculated that only 28% of local authorities had adopted Percent for Art policies (Selwood, 1995: 46); this however was later boosted by the establishment of the National Lottery in 1993 and its project-funding for urban-based community activities (ACE, 2002). *Percent for Art* as a principle played a role in Birmingham's regeneration from 1989—1993 and Coventry's Phoenix Initiative from 1996—2003 (Birmingham City Council, 2003; McGuigan, 2004), and maintains an enduring influence, if now dated, in terms of the evident 'limit' it imposes by claiming merely percentile shares of any large development scheme.

The project management skills needed for artists to work within a contractually rigid construction context, and for local authorities to successfully commission such artists, were just two factors motivating the establishment of public art agencies and other general arts consultancies throughout the 1990s. The Public Art Commissions Agency (PACA), for example, was established by West Midlands Arts (one of the many regional arts associations (RAA) largely funded by the Arts Council) in 1987 (Lovell, et.al., 1998). As neo-liberal economics embedded themselves within British society under protracted Conservative Party governance, art consultancies like PACA slowly detached themselves from their public sector patrons and developed a unique genre of entrepreneurialism and sophisticated business skills (Everitt, D., 2007).

After the 1992 UK general election and the Conservative Party's fourth succession to government, urban policy was overhauled; in 1993 the Urban Regeneration Agency was established, coordinating national policy and strategy; the Government Offices for the Regions (GORs) were charged with regional regeneration oversight; and the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) became the central funding mechanism for a wide breadth in urban reconstruction. In 1999

much of the SRB was transferred to the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs; established by New Labour in 1998) who have since maintained strategic involvement in regional regeneration policy. In 1999 the Urban Regeneration Agency merged with the Commission for the New Towns to form *English Partnerships*, which to date form the central national policy mediators on urban regeneration, with specific planning and compulsory purchase powers. They are also partly responsible for commissioning urban regeneration companies (URCs) who, with the decline of Thatcher's urban redevelopment corporations in the latter half of the 1990s, are now instrumental in research, policy and delivery on a local and regional level.

In urban regeneration policy the incoming New Labour Government in 1997 retained the central planks of the previous Conservative regime in terms of funding and delivery through the SRB and private-public partnerships mechanism (Hall et. al. 1999). In their studies of the transition between the outgoing Conservative government and incoming New Labour, Hall *et al.* point out the nature of the Conservative 'paradox' and New Labour duplicity (Hall, et al., 1998; Hall, 1999). With the Conservative regime there was a massive over-accountability to central Government: despite City Challenge's community based programmes, urban regeneration was defined in primarily economic terms and thus the presentation of measurable outcomes was intrinsic to accountability mechanisms. However, there were no mechanisms by which urban regeneration projects or expenditure were 'accountable' to the public or public bodies. The incoming New Labour government, while retaining the central mechanisms of regeneration did decisively re-orient urban regeneration from an economic to a social framework (in some ways returning it to Harold Wilson's urban programme of the 1960s, with its emphasis on rebuilding 'communities'). However, excessive central accountability mechanisms still remained. For example, the RDAs are burdened with enormous accountability, but have no regional or local accountability; as non-departmental bodies they are accountable only to ministers, who of course make the decisions on expenditure; furthermore, RDA



governing boards also do not reflect their constituency in their membership, or even the stakeholder base of regeneration in city centres. Despite the rhetoric of the incoming New Labour in 1997 – for example, for ‘devolution’ in local governance, and ‘joined-up’ thinking on a national policy level – regeneration in the early years of the Labour government was as centralized, instrumental, and, with its plethora of initiatives and activities, as fragmented as the regeneration effort was with the previous Conservative regimes.

In the new Labour Government’s early discussion paper, *Regeneration Programmes – The Way Forward* (DETR, 1997a), the previous Conservative regime’s conception of urban regeneration as the reconstruction of degraded local economies and amelioration of social deprivation is not questioned. Regeneration here centrally involves the creation of jobs, skills and opportunities for new local business; that regeneration projects only function with private capital is taken as unquestionable. Regeneration as a mechanism for redistribution of capital from the public purse was decisively finished. In this early New Labour document, the ascendancy of English Partnerships (English Partnerships, 1999a, 1999b) as a strategic body is indicated, as well as the phasing out of the City Challenge project and the UDCs (support phased out in 1998). Whatever the contradictions in practice identified by Hall (Hall, 1999), this early document did articulate an informed and considered call for a ‘holistic’ approach to regeneration, and for ‘implementing the “bottom-up” approach’ to regeneration; and to ‘help promote “ownership” of regeneration activity in a local community’; (DETR, 1997a: 5:21). However, at this early stage the conception of ‘urban regeneration’ remains a politically pragmatic problem-solving project for inner cities with its list of social and economic indicators of failure – from unemployment to drug addiction.

If Labour could not provide an immediate conceptual framework within which to imagine a ‘holistic’ approach to national regeneration, they did (famously perhaps) allow certain Conservative ideas to develop. Developments in town

planning was one such area. During the 1990s, the DOE 'Quality in Town and Country Initiative' promoted design as part of urban redevelopment (largely conceived as building or property restoration), and with the *Sustainable Development: The UK Strategy* of 1994 (following the 1990 White Paper, *This Common Inheritance*) a new concern for integrating basic ecological and cultural elements into the regeneration policy equation emerged, however limited in their impact. These concerns were in part influenced by initiatives in the European Union. Despite acute Conservative ambivalence on the broader political ramifications of 'European union', developments in EU policy were not insignificant. The term 'Urban Renaissance', used by the Arts Council of Great Britain for their advocacy of involvement of the arts in urban reconstruction of the 1980s, first emerged in the Council of Europe with their *European Campaign for Urban Renaissance* in 1982 (lasting until 1986).

The Council of Europe 'renaissance' initiative was inspired in part by the way historic European towns in Italy and the Netherlands had reconstructed their own urban economies using both historic resources (such as culture and heritage) as well as 'new' economics – engaging with emerging markets. The emphasis on the cultural identity of a place, environmental sustainability and respect for heritage emerged within UK Town Planning policy directives during this period. The statutory PPG1s – the national General Policy and Principles of urban planning policy (issued at the time by the DOE) – opened with the claim that 'sustainable development' is a guiding objective of the planning system; urban regeneration and design emerge early in the document as key concepts (DOE, 1997). The following quotation from Note 15 of the PPG1 introduces what became the four New Labour key concepts of 'holistic' regeneration policy: 'Good design can help promote sustainable development; improve the quality of the existing environment; attract business and investment; and reinforce civic pride and a sense of place'. These concepts were design, sustainability, quality, identity. The following statement from this quoted Note is interesting: 'It [good design] can help secure continued public acceptance of necessary new

development'. Cultural content within 'necessary' new development did indeed come to function as a means of manufacturing consent.

There were two other DOE reports published in 1997 which demonstrate continuity between Conservative and New Labour policy of regeneration, but also the now notorious intellectual limitations of Conservative policy. *Managing Urban Spaces in Town Centres: Good Practice Guide* (DOE/ATCM, 1997a) and *Town Centre Partnership: A Survey of Good Practice and a Report of an Action Research Project* (DOE/ATCM, 1997b) were written in collaboration with the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM). The intellectual limitation expressed by these documents is indicated by its total lack of a unified and coherent conception of the urban environment – the urban environment is simply characterized in terms of a series of detached problems and issues to be rectified. Its methodology is the 'tick box' mechanism of 'best practice' approach, which is formulaic, instrumental in its conception of urban success (measurable outcomes like CCTV camera coverage and number of car park repairs are highlighted), and authoritarian in its understanding of urban management simply in terms of controlling urban problems. In *Managing Urban Spaces in Town Centres* the evaluation mechanisms for a successfully managed city are trading performance, property investment, property values, safety and security, and 'social benefits' (which include all other services, from quality of the environment to public art). The social and the cultural dimensions to civic centre life shrank in this framework.

The title of the first New Labour White Paper relevant to our discussion, *Building Partnerships for Prosperity: Sustainable Growth, Competitiveness and Employment in the English Regions* (DETR, 1997b), again does not indicate any strategic discontinuity with the previous government. However, there is a difference in tone, perspective and attitude: all the central mechanisms of regeneration are retained, but regional devolution and the 'cultural sector' appear (albeit cast in the role of 'economic catalyst'). It must be said, however, that New

Labour began with an admirable demand for research-grounded policy, and that consequently a significant policy framework on regeneration did not emerge for a few years, after major research exercises like the Urban Task Force report of 1999, headed by UK architect Richard (Lord) Rogers, and the immediate research undertaken by the new Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE, established in 1999). In the meantime however, the debate on town planning guidance was being pushed in a 'holistic' direction: the major report of the newly formed Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, *Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards a Better Practice* (DETR, 1998a) stated that future planning policies are to give 'due weight' to social and environmental as well as economic considerations, and that 'quality' of urban design is to become a key policy concern.

There are two elements of this statement which are of importance. First, *Planning for Sustainable Development* insists that an important component of the planning process is a 'vision' of the urban area – as it will ideally look in 25 years. The implications of this were considerable: it demanded an act of imagination that referred to the role of 'visualisation' in planning, as well as an obligation to consider the more speculative realm of what an 'ideal city' would demand. If the bait were taken, this point alone would have had a significant impact in reconnected planning practice with architectural history and its philosophical traditions. Second, planning must conceive a broad understanding of lifestyle and spatial mobility. This latter point is undeveloped, but points to a more complex understanding of social space. Town planning in the UK was never a region of professional life where acts of imagination were commonplace. One genuine achievement of New Labour was to infuse planning policy with an integrationist and more 'sociological' understanding of space (where identities are formed, lifestyles develop, communities are forged, and so on). In effect, UK planning was divested of some of its disciplinary independence and made responsive to stronger political imperatives involving the everyday experience of constituents: this developed into a concern with 'sustainability' – a 'holistic' conception of the

material and natural environment as one – and ‘liveability’ – the experience of a ‘quality’ urban environment in terms of all activities carried out whether leisure or industry (ODPM, 2006: 155—157).

In 1997 a Construction Task Force was commissioned by the Deputy Prime Minister, and in 1998 appeared *Rethinking Construction: Construction Task Force Report* (DTI/Construction Task Force, 1998). This report again re-framed the hard economics of industry in a ‘quality driven agenda’, where a new emphasis on HR, client-dialogue and community consultation emerges. Notably, the report insists that ‘design’ should be re-integrated into the construction project process at all levels. In the DETR White Paper of the following year – *A Better Quality of Life* – Prime Minister Tony Blair confirmed this shifting mind-set: ‘Success has been measured by economic growth – GDP – alone. We have failed to see how our economy, our environment and our society are all one. And that delivering the best quality of life for us all means more than concentrating solely on economic growth [...] we must ensure that economic growth contributes to our quality of life, rather than degrading it’ (DETR, 1999b: 3). However, this last sentence indicated the political conundrum of Thatcherism that was to continually perplex New Labour: certain forms of economic success can seriously damage a nation’s social health.

The Urban Task Force, again commissioned by the Deputy Prime Minister (shortly a new Office of the Deputy Prime Minister [ODPM] was to be responsible for coordinating most regeneration policy initiatives) was a singularly innovative undertaking. Lord Rogers, co-architect of the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, was a senior advocate of innovation in public architecture, and signaled the high if not positively ‘avant-garde’ reconstructive aspirations of the early years of New Labour. The commission was to undertake a detailed study of the urban environment in all its forms, and then make recommendations upon which policy would be built. This policy emerged in part in the form of the urban policy White Paper *Our Towns and Cities: The Future – Delivering an Urban Renaissance*

(DETR, 2000d). The White Paper reiterated the Task Force's report point by point (its 105 recommendations), indicating how and when delivery was or is to be made. To date the Government still quotes the UTF report and is still constructing policy on its basis, as the urban renaissance update report of 2005 – *State of the English Cities* (ODPM, 2006) – does indicate.

The Urban Task Force's report – *Towards an Urban Renaissance* – had a concealed polemical thrust. Up to this point all attempts to define urban regeneration still revolved around socio-economic degradation: the recent Cabinet Office national strategy statement *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighborhood Renewal* (CO, 1998) reaffirmed that regeneration is defined primarily in terms of the most immediately destructive problems facing inner cities: unemployment, crime, educational underachievement and poor health. *Towards an Urban Renaissance* however presented in detail a 'design-led' urban regeneration, where aesthetics and 'social well-being' were intrinsic components of a rigorous study of social and economic functionality of a given urban area. The quality of architecture and open spaces is defined in terms of basic human values and motivations as they are played out within those spaces, and values and motivations form the basis of a genuine socio-economic renewal. Roger's 'new vision' attempted to construct an integrated and holistic national urban design framework, and his heavily illustrated and well researched text was convincing even within a policy context of economic instrumentality. In part it also provided the impetus for a major policy re-assessment of the welfare of 'spatial strategy' across the board, including parks and open spaces: in 2001 an Urban Green Spaces Task Force was set up by the ODPM (ODPM, 2002b); in 2002 the ODPM produced a major cross-departmental report, *Living Spaces: Cleaner, Safer, Greener* (ODPM, 2002a), initiating CAFE Space, a public space research unit (CAFE, 2004), and setting out a strategic plan projecting to 2007.

*Towards an Urban Renaissance* contained an enormous range of data from patterns of housing to car use, from the dynamics of pedestrian movement in space to architecture to local governance and urban policy implementation; of its 105 recommendations most concern regional and local administration of government initiated regeneration projects, aiming for direct local governance and a national policy integration; only four directly involved a cultural element, and this was urban or architectural design. These can be summarized as follows: (i) a spatial masterplan is needed for all public projects; (ii) all area regeneration projects (and public buildings) must be subject to a public design competition; (iii) a national urban design framework must be instituted, with key design principles integrated into planning guidelines; (iv) 12 local architecture centres must be established nationally, to promote local regeneration projects and disseminate information, engaging the public. All of these recommendations have, by varying degrees, been implemented. However, in 2005 the Urban Task Force conducted a progress review of their national 'urban renaissance'. The resultant report, *Towards a Strong Urban Renaissance*, expressed acute frustration (Urban Task Force, 2005). Despite notable achievements, the management and delivery of urban change on the level of government policy implementation had not integrated design or cultural imperatives to anywhere near the extent stipulated (if at all in many cases).

As stated above, the Urban White Paper *Our Towns and Cities* (2000) took the Urban Task Force seriously enough to reproduce the recommendations one by one as an annex to the report (DETR, 2000d: 139—154). As the sub-title suggests – *delivering an urban renaissance* – its emphasis was on methods and techniques of delivery, not its legislative function as a 'command paper'. The rhetorical style and presentation of the public versions of most New Labour urban white papers after 2000 became very colourful: they were written as public relations documents, persuading and implying a demand for allegiance. John Prescott's *Foreword to Our Towns and Cities* was very much in the spirit of Lord Roger's report: he began with the statement 'How we live our lives is shaped by

where we live our lives'; something of a sociological truism perhaps, but as a policy statement this marked an enlightened shift in mentality (DETR, 2000d: 5). He echoed Rogers in stating that the urban regeneration policy of past governments was premised on property reconstruction, ignoring the more fundamental issues of 'quality of life' (DETR, 2000d: 5). This was not entirely true, as Conservative policy turned from property-based regeneration to inner city employment, skills and training during the City Challenge era. If the spirit of Rogers was in evidence here, his attention to language and his integrationist objectives were not. The 'design' content of the Paper is substantial, if consistently chained to 'planning'; however, an inability to define the function of design (with statements like '[...] getting the design and quality of the urban fabric right', or 'using space well' or referring to a 'more attractive environment') betrayed more than simply linguistic inadequacy. It seemed that on the level of policy, Lord Roger's articulate report could not be *absorbed*, but simply responded to, as a mechanism for providing individual recommendations for individual departments and their separate policies frameworks. The UTF offered much more than recommendations, but a new conceptual framework and system of values (that were commensurate with New Labour's politics on its most basic philosophical level). However, the machine of Government could not change so easily, even inspired by its own philosophical *raison d'être*. The Urban task Force knew that unless some mechanism of integration was found, Conservative era fragmentation, with its plethora of disconnected projects (what the Audit Commission had called a 'patchwork quilt of complexity and idiosyncrasy'), would continue (Audit Commission, 1989; Hill, 1994: Ch. 7).

The departmentalization of public and cultural policy is an issue we will encounter in other policy contexts. There appeared, however, a parallel report, published alongside the White Paper, which did seem to be fully aware of this caveat. *The State of English Cities* report was both critical and analytical, and advocated 'a connected rather than reductionist view of the world' (DETR, 2000c: 5). It broadly expressed the need for integrationism in urban development across the board; it



stated that the SRB had been dispersed too widely, preventing a single and coherent policy framework from developing (DETR, 2000c:30). The bulk of the report is statistical, with general empirical data on demographics, social trends and comparative data on other countries, but useful as a policy evaluation tool – comparing data with policy objectives. From 2000, the Office of Deputy Prime Minister (dissolved early 2007 with its duties turned over to the Department for Communities and Local Government) was prodigious in its publication of statements on urban regeneration related matters, largely due to its Urban Policy Unit.

A year long sponsored research project *Partners in Urban Renaissance* followed the 2000 White paper *Our Towns and Cities*. It was run by a joint team supported by the ODPM including members from the Urban Policy Unit and consultants, Urban Economic Development Group (URBED), and its cross-disciplinary methodology was a genuine attempt to engage a diversity of participants directly, and in their own social context. The resulting report, *Towns and Cities: Partners in Urban Renaissance* (ODPM, 2002), was particularly interesting, as it registered on the level of policy research some local and ground-level responses to urban regeneration. The project involved 54 case studies among 24 partner towns and cities in England, with ‘citizen’s for workshops’ and stakeholder responses. It was launched following the White Paper, and reveals an order of priorities among the general public somewhat at variance with those assumed by the previous White Paper. As the report admits, the general ‘quality of life’ indicators of crime, health and employment are always at the forefront of citizen’s concerns. During the citizen’s workshops, however, priorities expressed concerned the uses of social space, forms of social engagement available to individuals in a given locale, the lack of social accountability of government decision-making, the exclusion of the public from the planning process, and the bureaucracy (including EU generated bureaucracy). It was recognized by the report that urban regeneration was more often than not a process that by-passed the areas in which people lived.

The ODPM *State of English Cities* reports are an ongoing project, the last of which is a huge two volume study (ODPM, 2006). Underpinned by a new State of the Cities Database (the SOCD) the project attempts to integrate qualitative and quantitative data on the urban environment, economics and social trends. For all the integrationist aspirations of the report, 'culture' and the arts are side-stepped almost entirely in characterizing 'the state' of English cities. What is evident with every comprehensive report is the lack of cross-departmental collaboration, and the degree to which governmental department research does not systematically absorb external research outputs. With regard to research in urban regeneration: it became subject to increasing specialist research attention, with no one mechanism for coordination. Relevant policy-directed research sources include: on urban design (CABE; English Partnerships); on open spaces (by Urban Green Spaces Task Force – DCLG; and CABE Space); social inclusion (Social Exclusion Unit of the ODPM, now DGLC); land reconstruction and regeneration (English Partnerships; Eco Regen); social life and communities (Neighborhood Renewal Unit – DCLG); cultural activity (DCMS/Arts Council of England). Further, there is a quantity of university-based research – both contracted research reports, and scholarly academic studies – the multiple categories of which I have noted earlier.

The *State of English Cities* project does factor in spatial/aesthetic, design and cultural factors, but only as one of six 'drivers of urban success' – defined as 'quality of life'. Quality of life, of course, spans a multitude of economic, social and cultural indicators, so much so that that the term 'liveability' was introduced as a sub-set that attempts to narrow the criteria: 'Liveability is at the forefront of government policy [...] In the absence of a generally-agreed definition, we follow the line set by the ODPM, seeing liveability as concentrating on the public realm and the built environment, in terms of both observed outcomes and citizens' perceptions of their local urban environment. Liveability is concerned with the quality of space and the built environment. It is about how easy a place is to use and how safe it feels. It is about creating a sense of place by creating an

environment that is both inviting and enjoyable' (ODPM, 2006:156). Such generic formulations of 'lived experience' of the environment were in part responsible, as the 2005 Urban Task Force review indicated, for national policy not being effectively translated into local contexts (Urban Task Force, 2005: 6—8). As with most of the policy documents we have considered, the concept of culture is avoided in a policy context, and where it stands as a marker for 'lived experience' itself, it is subsumed in social categories of security, functionality and facilities, sanitation, and citizen 'satisfaction', conceived as broadly as possible. The term 'liveability' was used in the latest sustainability plan, *Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity* (ODPM, 2005a), but not developed as a concept, only mentioned as an assessment 'factor'.

The concept of sustainability has recently become central to the discourse of urban regeneration, as registered in the successive 'sustainable communities' plans of 2003 and 2005. It has become imperative within public policy to frame regeneration within broader sustainability concerns; even the national PPG's (Planning Policy Guidelines) have been supplanted by (as from 2005) by Policy Planning Statements (PPSs) subheaded 'Delivering Sustainable Development', and re-framing the rationale for planning in a social ethic of renewable quality development (ODPM, 2005b). The ODPM and DCLG are in the process of framing many of their social and urban policy initiatives in a 'sustainability' context. In one sense sustainability policy has become the integration mechanism for the complex of regeneration activities that has been called for since the Urban Task Force report. Largely divested of its radical ecological origins, the concept now functions as one of the most powerful concepts in public policy.

So far in this study we have considered the development of 'urban regeneration' policy (where the many policies intrinsic to the development of the concept and practice of urban regeneration have not used the term 'regeneration'), the transition between Conservative and New Labour governments (their continuities

and differences), and the way in which with New Labour the concept of urban regeneration was consolidated, particularly with the work of the Urban Task Force. During the first four years of New Labour's governance some conceptual innovations emerged – the use of the term 'quality of life' as a policy concept; the integration of social and environmental matters: regeneration was no longer fragmentary in its focus on social behavioural problems and employment related economics. At the level of policy a conceptual synthesis was attempted, where the urban environment was understood as multi-functional, interconnected realms of social life, and done so in part animated by a critique of Conservative-policy economic instrumentalism. However, social and urban policy frameworks did not connect with cultural matters, and was only able to register 'social experience' in an uninformative generic way. The second Urban Task Force report of 2005, *Towards a Strong Urban Renaissance*, indicated by its amendment of the original report's title that so far we have experienced only a *weak* urban renaissance (Urban Task Force, 2005). While recognizing the genuine progress in the integration of social, urban and environmental concerns, a true integrated approach was not in evidence. What was missing was a central cultural component – design. We will now consider the specific contribution of urban design-based policy to the concept of culture-led regeneration.

### Section 3: Regeneration: an urban design framework

In 1999, and in part a response to the first Urban Task Force report, the government established the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), who maintain the policy discourse of design-led regeneration. The problem facing Lord Rogers's aspirations, was that urban regeneration was almost wholly managed at regional or local level, but local authorities did not have the necessary knowledge of design or design management required. Extensive practical design guidance was offered by CABE with their consultancy facility, and with their publication *By Design. Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards a Better Practice* (jointly published by DETR and CABE in May 2000; DETR, 2000a and intended as a 'companion guide to the PPG1). *By Design* defined urban design as 'the art of making places for people'. Defining urban spaces as 'places' – signifiers of identity and a loci of cultural habitation – was part of a more complex critique of the way urban environments in policy contexts were continually defined primarily in terms of physical property (as real estate) and property development. In part as a result of CABE's advocacy, government policies and guidance on regeneration quickly absorbed and made integral a design component. Design and attention to the aesthetics of public space later became an intrinsic part of the ethic of sustainability (thus social responsibility) in the 2005 national *Planning Policy Statement 1* (ODPM, 2005). English Partnerships had also been leading their own quest for design-led regeneration with their *Time for Design* series (English Partnerships, 1996, 1998) and their competitive volume to CABE's *By Design*, the *Urban Design Compendium* (English Partnerships, 2000; in association with the Housing Corporation), which constitutes a highly impressive text book on urban spatial analysis.

CABE's *By Design* became an official government statement on design matters, and proposed a mandatory template of aesthetic values in urban organization taken up by most local authorities: Coventry City Council's *Coventry Urban*

*Design Guidance* (Coventry City Council, 2004) is an example of the way CABE's statement has been transposed quite literally. Their principles of urban design were as follows: first, was the conception of environmental *character*: urban space is also a 'place', and a place expresses an identity through signifiers of memory, historicity, tradition; it only does this effectively mediated by innovative design, in extending and not simply returning to local, regional or national design traditions. Second: *continuity and enclosure*. Here, the public and private places are to be distinguished, and neither at the expense of the particularity and integrity of the other. There is an emphatic concern with the *quality of the public realm* within this guidance context, and the conception of 'quality' is grounded in design aesthetics – a credible public realm is a visually stimulating, stylistically enhanced area, with attention paid to the relation between space, building, street and landscape. The various elements of the design economy of an urban or city centre, such as the utilities (like signs, conveniences), the commerce (kiosks, advertising) and culture (public art, landscaping) have their own visual integrity and must not impede each other's specific signifying functions. The list of design imperatives in *By Design* continues with the need for spatial flow, a concern with the *legibility* of the environment – coherent interconnections between mass and space, from skyline to streetscape, transition points, edges, seams and barriers – and diverse social functionality, accessibility and usability of all urban space (DETR, 2000a: 15—16). It is useful to summarise the demands of 'design-led regeneration' as they were being absorbed at local authority level by 2003 (from the Urban Task Force's report to CABE's *By Design*):

- culture and participation can be a major driving force in urban renewal; the urban and town planning process itself must 'factor in' art and cultural resources and activities.
- national 'design codes' will maintain an emphasis on quality and visual interest; the use of spatial masterplans and design competitions, and a commitment to greater public participation through local 'architecture

centres', will be where the public is invited to learn and think about their space of habitation.

- architects, designers and artists will become leaders in urban regeneration planning.
- Urban re-design must be 'mixed' development, allowing for the organic re-emergence of various facilities that meet changing community needs, as well as changing living formations and family structures.
- regional resource centres for urban development will ensure politicians, professionals and public gain the skills needed to lead and manage an urban renaissance.
- local authorities, in preparing a single strategy for their public realm and open space, will specify their design, provision, management, maintenance and funding arrangements in advance.
- fully integrated 'spatial strategies' will help understand and align services within an urban environment with their communities of use: from health to transport, shopping and leisure.

*Towards an Urban Renaissance* was also emphatic in its demand for cultural democracy in the form of local governance of urban change, public involvement and consultation in that change, and social and cultural sectarianism dissolved by more socially-aware urban planning. The government's White Paper *Modernising Local Government* (1999), following the earlier DETR policy statement *Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People* (DETR, 1998b), strongly committed itself to devolved decision-making on a whole range of urban matters.

Established in the Local Government Act of 2000, it was now incumbent on local authorities to become actively concerned with the general 'well being' of the community: it was here that the term 'quality of life' emerged as a major policy concept, in 2002 enshrined in the Audit Commissions 'Quality of Life Indicators' for public sector managers, which were then updated within the new framework of sustainability in 2005 (Audit Commission, 2002, 2005).

The definition of 'design-led regeneration' did not emerge as simply a series of ideas extracted from the realms of design aesthetics; it did embody a genuine critical aspiration (animating the early years of the New Labour regime) to 'Europeanise' British city life through dismantling old city social structures. It was a thorough critique of the traditional English 'bourgeois' or Victorian city – a social class system in architectural form, with its social, religious and cultural institutions claiming prime civic sites and demanding deference. This new policy framework also attacked the town/city and city/country dichotomies, and the antagonistic social value-systems that have emerged within that dichotomy; it sought to accommodate alternative arrangements of the family structure with new housing types and 'mixed development'. A re-population of city centres began, pedestrianisation reclaimed public space occupied by traffic and businesses, and pedestrian urban culture was extended into night-time usage. Youth and children became major social factors in the development of new urban spaces, and the European-style plaza seemed to be the urban signifier that confirmed the presence of real change. Using new design principles, with European apartments as a model, a new attempt at high density inner city residential housing was attempted.

CABE has of late produced a number of substantial urban design statements, offering local authorities guidance, as well as point-by-point evaluation guidance on design quality. The new Design Quality Indicator models (DQIs), launched by the Construction Industry Council (CIC) in 2003, were in part sponsored by CABE. The insertion of a section on design in the new national *Planning Policy Statement 1* (ODPM, 2005b: notes 33-39) and component 4 of the revised sustainability plan *Sustainable Communities* (ODPM, 2005a: 58) were also significant steps in CABE's own vigorous public advocacy for design-driven thinking. As a statutory body they are consulted on large urban planning schemes; one of their more recent documents, *Better Public Building* (following an earlier DCMS report in 2000 of a similar title; DCMS, 2000b; CABE, 2006a) was one of a number of notable publications that offered a substantial rationale



for a fundamental reconsideration of LA procurement of public buildings and facilities. The Better Public Buildings Group represents a trajectory of urban regeneration discourse that emerged around the Prime Minister's Better Public Buildings Award in 2001 (the first award going to Tate Modern). It was largely geared towards the public sector, and in some ways paralleled the Design Council's attempt to convince industry and the private sector that design-driven economics is profitable as well as innovative. The DCMS statement, *Better Public Buildings*, featured a foreword by Tony Blair: it was a brief statement, emphasising the way design enables sociability, economic functionality and developing usage. Aesthetic values do not appear, except by way of reference to design making buildings 'attractive', exhibiting 'quality', 'civilises places' (DCMS, 2000b: 1-3). The purpose of the document was, in line with the Urban Task Force report, both advocacy and the provision of systematic criteria for public sector capital commissioning and project management: specifically, it advocated the disassociation of 'best value' from 'lowest cost', and introduced the concept of 'whole-life cost', where initial capital cost accounts for the functionality and quality of a project over the medium term (since adopted in the Common Minimum Standards for public sector procurement, enforced by HM Treasury).

CABE's *Better Public Building* (2006a) was heavily illustrated by public building projects since completed, such as the Luton NHS Walk-In Centre, or the Welsh Assembly Building in Cardiff. The framework, however, was tacitly changing, from an 'urban design-led' framework to 'environmental sustainability', in which design was no longer the dominant regulating concept. In the discourse of urban regeneration this was subtle but significant. With the first Urban Task Force report, it seemed that urban regeneration had become a distinct discipline, with a capacity for synthesis that gave it the unifying power that national policy makers desired. By 2005, urban regeneration was being subsumed in the discourse of environmental sustainability.

What was notable about the UTF was that they presented central government

with the integrationist vision for urban life they has aspired to create – uniting social, cultural and environmental, optimizing economic development by social egalitarianism and quality of life. What transpired, as the second UTF report of 2005, *Towards a Strong Urban Renaissance*, revealed, was that ‘integrationist’ policy demanded both an intellectual and administrative coordination that had exceeded current structures of regeneration management at regional and local levels (Urban Task Force, 2005), and exceeded the ability to coordinate ‘joined up policy’ at national government level. Despite their excellent critique of the current progress, policy implementation and management of urban regeneration, the continued appeal for an ‘urban renaissance’ seemed dated, as the once ubiquitous term ‘renaissance’, to be found on most major urban policy documents between 2000-2005, had been decisively supplanted by ‘sustainability’.

## Section 4: Regeneration, the arts and culture

The Urban Task Force, in promoting a design-driven rationale for urban regeneration, were in some ways part of a broader set of cultural and economic phenomena that had already gained some momentum. With *The Creative Industries Mapping Document* of 1998, then again in 2001, the DCMS consolidated the identity of the 'creative industries' (a term it had itself coined). The research was managed by the Creative Industries Task Force, established by DCMS in 1998, largely as a policy research unit informing policy development on IP, exports, skills, training, new media and general public subsidy (DCMS, 1998a, 2001a). On an ideological level, rejoicing in the achievements of an exciting new sector of industry mitigated against political opposition to the dissolution of the (substantially larger) British manufacturing sector. However, the creative industries were indeed a 'new' region of industry which had to a considerable extent consolidated its market command. As part of the creative industries phenomena, first emerging in strength in the early 1990s, there also emerged a tide of popular 'design consciousness' in the form of consumer trends in domestic house renovation and foreign furniture, electronic goods like Apple, and global brands like Nike.

The hitherto absence of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in our narrative of urban regeneration policy development, and the minor role played by the now Arts Council of England and the recently established Regional Cultural Consortia (established 1999), is in part the result of a lack of cross-referencing and cross-departmental consultation in mainstream policy documents and initiatives. This lack of cross-reference between regions of social policy and cultural policy is a structural feature of British national governance and symptomatic of the territorialisation of policy areas by government departments (the very concepts of 'culture' and 'the arts' are strategically avoided in social and urban policy generally). This is in part, however, the result of the way their advocacy for a central role for culture in the public realm did not gain momentum until relatively recently. (The previous Department of Heritage up until 1997 did

not involve themselves in urban regeneration initiatives much at all, except in areas of their remit such as historic buildings). DCMS's major policy statement on regeneration, *Culture at the Heart of Regeneration*, was not made until 2004 (DCMS, 2004a).

In 1988, the newly established DCMS issued a consultation document, *A New Approach to Investment in Culture*, after which followed the policy statement *A New Cultural Framework* (DCMS, 1998b). From this early policy consolidation emerged a reconstitution of its sponsored bodies (or non-departmental public bodies: NDPBs) as well as a new drive for ideological centralization. This included a new Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, English Heritage, Regional Cultural Consortia (some of which now have their own brand names, like *West Midlands Life*), and QUEST, the monitoring 'watchdog' (DCMS, 1998b). The result of this consolidation was a deeper investment in national strategy-making, which resulted in an imposed policy framing mechanism for these bodies, but also placing on them a greater obligation for demonstrating their social value, and thus invariably involving some contribution to urban regeneration. From 2000 the new National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) has also funded some major public and urban cultural projects within broader regeneration contexts.

Despite the enormous government policy investment in urban regeneration between 1998 and 2002, the DCMS only issued a major statement on the subject in 2004 – *Culture at the Heart of Regeneration* – following a national conference on the subject chaired by DCMS and hosted at The Lowry Centre in Salford. The policy statement was a colourful and optimistic document, but exhibited none of the systematic understanding of either its policy context or its social-economic context, as compared with many of the social and urban policy statements we have already considered. To be fair, its function was in part a consultation document, with the prospective attempt to construct 'a common way to measure the social, economic and environmental impact of [urban cultural]

transformational projects' (DCMS, 2004a: 3]. That objective – to construct a systematic evaluation mechanism for diverse cultural activities within an even more diverse field of urban regeneration – was an object of study for a report presented to the DCMS five months previous, in the form of Evans and Shaw's, *The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in the UK: A Review of Evidence* (Evans and Shaw, 2004). With admirable clarity, Evans and Shaw set out the methods and categories of evidence available, with extensive recommendations on developing a qualitative dimension to quantitative evidence gathering. However, the resulting consultation arguably did not substantially improve on these recommendations. What the consultation did provide (published as *Culture at the Heart of Regeneration: A Summary of Responses*: DCMS, 2005c) was a tacit dimension of critique, where voices from the margins, so to speak, could be heard. For example, attention was drawn to DCMS's celebration of architecture-centred *grand projects* as exemplary culture-led regeneration – such as Tate St Ives or the Baltic Quays – as an expensive alternative to developing local or community based culture. The responses indicated the degree of neglect of actual 'cultural regeneration' that was produced with an agenda driven by high visibility and easily quantifiable outputs.

The three main sections of *Culture at the Heart of Regeneration* – covering cultural icons and landmarks, place-making and urban identity, and community consolidation respectively – offered a simple descriptive outline of these three functions of culture in an urban context (somewhat limited in their conceptual reach, almost as if the research by the Urban Task Force, CABE and English Partnerships has not taken place), and the obvious economic benefits these brought (employment, visitor numbers and revenue). The aspiration expressed by the document was indeed progressive inasmuch as it responded to the new integrationist vision promoted by the UTF report – attempting to demonstrate how culture is intrinsically implicated in urban regeneration; that the urban sphere cannot be 'regenerated' unless that regeneration is cultural in some fundamental way, as well as social and economic. However, unlike the 'analytical' attention to

detail that characterised the UTFs approach to its own field of inquiry, there was no such acute presence of mind expressed by DCMS; there was no attempt to articulate the nature of 'culture' – the intra-communal development of cultural production, with its new ideas, new modes of communication, and innovative forms of social engagement. The strategic dimension to this policy project concerned a 'fitting in' with the broader spectrum of urban regeneration policy while rhetorically trumpeting culture's triumphant leadership of regeneration.

DCMS had played a major policy role previous to 2004 in providing a cultural dimension to the government's social inclusion policies. Their 2001 policy statement, *Culture and Creativity: The Next Ten Years*, was substantial and set out a strategy of integration whereby 'creativity' could be supported in society as widely as possible – with a new framework of support for children, schools, artists, associations and other public bodies (DCMS, 2001b). The statement became famous for Prime Minister Blair's foreword, in which he lauded culture and creativity among humanity's highest aspirations, praised artists and derided arts bureaucracy; he concluded 'It is in that liberating spirit that the arts are part of the core script of this Government' (DCMS, 2001b:3). Almost exactly a year later, QUEST, the new DCMS watchdog on performance and quality, issued an analysis of the department's contribution to government social inclusion efforts. Entitled, *Making it Count: The Contribution of Culture and Sport to Social Inclusion*, its basic premise was that 'to count' the arts had to make a demonstrable contribution to Government social policy (DCMS, 2002). That contribution was DCMS's work in cultural and community strategy, the region where consequently the Arts Council was to invest most of its regeneration-directed efforts.

One of the initial documents of DCMS's attempt to engage the social inclusion agenda was the Policy Action Team 10 [i.e. no 10 of 18 teams] research report *Arts and Neighborhood Renewal* of 1999 (DCMS, 1999b). The report was almost wholly about defining terms, terminology and mechanisms of evaluation, but did relay a number of critical comments on government's preference for short term

and generic statistical approach to evaluation (DCMS, 1999b: 9, 27). The *Local Cultural Strategies: Draft Guidance for Local Authorities in England* of the same year was a mechanism by which DCMS attempted to ensure local authorities utilised their cultural resources in the strategic context of Government policy priorities (headed by 'social inclusion' imperatives) (DCMS, 1999a). These strategies were not a statutory duty, but were impressed strongly upon LAs, placing local cultural policy under the obligation to harmonise with regional policy frameworks, drawn up by the central-Government directed RDAs and RCCs. While the strategy guidance attempted to promote local particularity, the network of politically-charged reference points within which policy was constructed resulted in a certain national homogeneity (the cultural strategy of the City of Reading, for example, is perhaps typical, where the actual 'cultural' content of the cultural strategy is tightly squeezed between the imperatives of social access, learning initiatives, health, diversity, economic development and environmental sustainability: Reading Borough Council, 2006).

The DCMS policy statement that followed the initial period set nationally for drafting the local cultural strategies was *Creating Opportunities: Guidance for Local Authorities in England on Local Cultural Strategies* (DCMS, 2000a). The statement reiterated the previous guidance document in stating that strategy did not merely concern the use and provision of local cultural facilities and services: it was an 'area' strategy, and embodied an integrated understanding on how the whole area (e.g. of a city centre) could develop culturally.

This integrationist mandate, claiming to promote culture with the 'holistic' broad objective of the 'cultural well-being' of the area, involving all sectors of society, was indeed enlightened, but somewhat janus-faced (DCMS, 2000a: 5). The reconceptualisation of culture in a framework of socio-urban development indeed promoted the role of culture in potentially fruitful projects like urban regeneration; however, the local cultural strategy was contingent upon so many non-cultural policy reference points and under a heavy obligation of coordination.

Regional and local cultural strategies have much in common. Both will be drawn up in the context of Government objectives. Both are a key mechanism for achieving the crosscutting approach. Both will set cultural priorities and themes and reconcile competing demands and policies. Their aims are to improve the economic and social well-being of the community and tackle social exclusion by harnessing the benefits of cross-sectoral co-operation. (DCMS, 2000a: 21).

Bound up in national objectives, cultural strategy was not centrally about extending culture, or even with the more instrumentalist 'cultural inclusion' or its cognate 'cultural impact'. The local cultural strategy was not a serious attempt at cultural planning but a reorientation of what was already there within stronger social policy initiatives.

A conceptual paradox opened up that still remains within cultural strategy at both national and local levels: culture is defined as so fundamental to human life as to be directly relevant to every aspect of social life. This 'anthropological' concept of culture has been continually used in policy documents to underline its importance – it forms the deep infrastructure of human life: motivations, beliefs, individual expression and ingenuity, imagination and the powers of transformation. And yet no emphatic concept of culture could ever be strong enough to operate outside of the specialist and institutionally hermetic world of the arts, or if it did it could only ever be supplementary to policies of social necessity. When in 2002 QUEST assessed the achievements of DCMS in this area (highlighted in the Executive Summary of their report *Making it Count*) one of the 'real issues' was 'the objectives of social inclusion work for the cultural and sporting sectors are not clear, partly because they have not yet been translated into cultural or sporting terms;..' (DCMS/QUEST, 2002: 2) This ostensible failure to 'translate' the social into the cultural was symptomatic of a failure to thoroughly conceptualise culture per se, and come up with some theoretically-informed understanding of the relation between culture and society. The QUEST also indicated the different concepts of culture in circulation between the DCMS and its sponsored non-



departmental public bodies (NDPBs). It also reproduced DCMS's 2001 *Social Inclusion Action Plan* which features culture in regeneration as the second of its four social objectives.

Culture minister Chris Smith in both cultural strategy guidance statements had expressed the intention that the local strategy drafting process would be over by 2002. In that year, however the Government's Local Government Act ruled that local authorities were no longer required to construct cultural strategies as independent documents, but were to conceive of them as integral to the required Community Plan (which was being developed, parallel to the cultural strategy process). The DCMS published report, *Leading the Good Life: Guidance on Integrating Cultural and Community Strategies* (2004), was a slightly belated response to this situation, after some consultation. This did not necessarily upset the DCMS guidance, as this was intrinsic to strategy preparation in any case; what changed was that culture's social policy context became more emphatic and was intent on explicitly 'maximising the overlap between the work and outputs of community and cultural planning' (DCMS/Creative Cultures, 2004:12). With some irony, the document explicitly stated that its intention was *not* to 'subsume cultural planning and activity within a wider community development agenda', and yet the very rationale of this major policy enterprise was only intelligible in terms of this subsumption (DCMS/Creative Cultures, 2004: 12). The document set out a procedure of integration with the premise of the ubiquity of culture – the broad anthropological concept of culture, 'an inclusive concept that embraces a wide variety of activities, places, values and beliefs that contribute to a sense of identity and well-being for everyone in our communities' (DCMS/Creative Cultures, 2004: 6). The integrated strategy aimed for a 'common vision', 'common objectives', integrated programmes and projects and shared resources.

The integrationist agenda sat well with New Labour political philosophy, but where once economic instrumentalism subsumed the relative autonomy of culture there emerged a *social instrumentalism*, where culture became a kind of

fuel to drive the vehicle of social improvement. Culture and creativity were means to generate an already existing process of social reconstruction, in which culture was conceived unquestioningly as wholly positive, not itself ridden by structural contradictions and conflicts, but which could create unproblematic modes of engagement with leisure, training, job creation and industry. Not all local authorities followed the integration of cultural and community strategies, with some retaining stand-alone cultural policies. It soon became clear, however, that Government and NDPB funding conditions for a range of social and cultural initiatives were predicated on an LA functioning within this strategy framework; moreover, the National Lottery funding regime soon began to prioritise LA schemes with updated strategic frameworks.

Whether the DCMS statement *Better Places to Live* (2005), and its predecessor statement, *Government and the Value of Culture* (2004), were tacit responses to this subsumption of cultural strategy within a broader community context is possible, as both essays are resolute arguments for the autonomy of culture (DCMS, 2004e; 2005a). Both documents are essays by culture minister Tessa Jowell, identified as 'personal' statements, and yet published as policy documents. The first argued that central to a country's socio-economic success is the motive of 'aspiration' – the drive to develop one's human faculties and extend one's individual measure of achievement. Artistic culture, she argued, is distinct from entertainment in its complexity and facility for the kind of intellectual and emotional engagement that offers such developmental opportunity. The argument's trajectory was towards a form of neo-humanism that has permeated the history of aesthetic theory since the philosopher Kant. What was interesting was Jowell's statement half way through her argument, admitting that '[w]e lack convincing language and political arguments' for culture and its integral role in society; 'What is culture as *an end in itself*?' (DCMS, 2004e: 8).

A statement in *Government and the Value of Culture* was the premise of *Better Places to Live*: 'Culture defines who we are, it defines us as a nation. And *only*

culture can do this (DCMS, 2004e:17). *Better Places to Live* was a specific defense of the historic built environment, with only tangential references to the CABE and 'Public Buildings' debate, again defending on the humanist ground of the intrinsic human value of culture, specifically *cultural identity*. If the first essay was 'cod' Kant (after Kant, art as realising essential human powers) then the second was cod Heidegger (a quasi-phenomenology of culture). Against the backdrop of forces of cultural homogenization, such as globalisation, Jowell argues for the need for the retention of national identity as a route to maintaining and developing cultural particularity (which, it must be pointed out, has little to do with a defense of 'cultural difference'). Most of the essay is publicity for various government supported heritage programmes as well as moral support for English Heritage, the National Trust and the Historic Houses Association. The logic of the argument was as follows: the built environment is a physical expression of our individual and communal identities, embodying our need for knowledge of origins; the built environment unlike most other forms of culture is wholly 'accessible' (unlike, one infers, the art world); and it express the potential of the historic past providing resources for confronting the challenges of the future. For want of a phenomenology, the conclusion is that the historic built environment constitutes a living part of our lives in the form of a lived experience of our evolving identities and sense of humanity.

However, as Jowell stated in *Government and the Value of Culture*, 'As a Culture Department we still have to deliver the utilitarian agenda, and the measures of instrumentality that this implies, but we must acknowledge that in supporting culture we are doing more than that, and in doing more than that must find ways of expressing it' (DCMS, 2004e: 9). During the two years that spanned the reception of Jowell's essays, the 'utilitarian agenda' was growing exponentially, and resulted in substantive and detailed reassessments of the role of museums (DCMS/DfES, 2004, 2006b), the relationship with local authorities (DCMS, 2004b) and sustainability strategies (DCMS, 2004c, 2006a). Jowell's two essay series ends with the perplexing scenario that despite the intrinsic value of

culture now being defined, and as lived experience it is acknowledged that it cannot be quantified with standardised performance indicators, nonetheless instrumentality remains a political imperative. The policy documents 'The White Book' – the comprehensive guide on evaluation and appraisal – and *Extending your Reach* – on strategic relationships with LAs and their communities, were admirable in their analytical perspicacity and the degree of research out of which they evidently emerged, and yet were so evidently oriented in a direction contrary to Jowell's essays (DCMS, 2004d, 2004b). With some measure of disingenuousness, the rationale for this necessary instrumentalism Jowell indicates is public accountability, where politicians are 'forced' into accounting for cultural expenditure in instrumental terms for the public's 'right to know' (DCMS, 2004e: 8; 2005a: 4). Moreover, these statements express a staggering disregard of the quantity of research on aesthetic value, cultural identity and the public sphere in the university sector of the last forty years (Ross, 1994; Kelly, 1998; Schaeffer, 2000).

The significant moment of Jowell's statements, in part as they were published as *de facto* DCMS policy statements, is the appeal to a critique of instrumentalism in policy-making. Mainstream public policy documents, such as *Our Towns and Cities: The Future: Delivering an Urban Renaissance* (DETR, 2000d), were structured in such a way as to state quite clearly that culture can only be admitted to mainstream urban policy to the extent that its contribution can be rationalized in terms of public policy delivery mechanisms, and quantified as either social or economic benefit. Even in DCMS's colourful annual review statements the instrumental imperative is so deeply embedded in policy discourse that the only possible alternative to culture as social and economic benefits is an outdated philosophical appeal to the phenomenon of 'superior taste' in the fine arts, which is inherently class-elitist. The content structure of the recent DCMS annual review, *Culture and Creativity in 2007*, assessed as a conceptual statement of the value of culture in a contemporary society, is typical of this, and bears no relation to Jowell's statements above (DCMS, 2007). It features no reference to

advances in research, in ideas, in the technologies of creative production, the professional learning, communication methods, international critical reception of British culture, or the growing core competencies of historic cultural institutions. Culture's defense lies in popularity (access, attendance and dissemination), tourism, creative industries profitability, visitor education programmes, and national cultural events. While the value of these industries and social programmes are not here contested, the reticence to even quote the forms of value culture generates for itself is again indicative of an inability to conceptualise culture sociologically at the most basic level, as a social activity with its own order of productivity and value, more than a supplement to mechanisms of social change.

With reference to Jowell's statements above, the Arts Council of Great Britain had already made these same arguments during the 1990s. In 1991 they undertook the largest survey on artistic culture to date, producing the new strategy document, *Towards a National Arts and Media Strategy*, and a substantial volume *A Creative Future: The Way Forward for the Arts, Crafts and Media in England*, a descriptive analysis of the condition, productivity and finance of all state subsidized activity in the UK (ACGB, 1991; 1993). The strategy document and *A Creative Future* (the former supplied most of the text for the latter) prefaced their policy outline with a substantial outline of the value and social function of art and culture. Towards the rear of the publications a small section headed 'The Arts in Urban Areas' served as a passing acknowledgement of the alliance of art and architecture, the rise in public art within urban design, and the new cultural strategies of the major cities such as Birmingham and Glasgow.

We find in a broad survey of Arts Council policy throughout the 1990s a lack of substantive engagement with the discourse of urban regeneration, excepting a number of public art schemes. In a broader study we could pursue the key contributory factors of this perceived reticence; by way of observation, some

possible factors could be identified as follows: (i) throughout the 1970s and 1980s the very concept of 'art' had changed radically – by 1980 a philosophical consensus had been reached by artists, critics, funding bodies and academic scholars, in which art was no longer defined in terms of objects with unique artistic qualities offering a correspondingly unique aesthetic experience; rather, art was a process of communication, a creative activity always engaged in some social-cultural context, and its modes of experience and forms of meaning emerged from that engagement. The so-called 'postmodern condition', and the many variants of French structuralist and post-structuralist theory, such as semiotics, made a decisive impact on British contemporary art and art school education; (ii) there remained a prejudice within the world of contemporary art against 'public art', which was derided for its perceived uses of outmoded traditional techniques, its adaptation to the lowest level of public understanding; it was placed on par with 'community arts' as a form of social therapy; (iii) urban contexts were instrumental contexts – in the context of architecture and civil engineering, fine art's own powers of expression were limited or quashed entirely; lastly, on a more positive note perhaps, (vi) it was impossible not to recognize the rising power of patronage of both local authorities and private contractors, that is, emerging funding streams for the arts that were certainly not to be discouraged.

Since 2000, however, Arts Council England and its regional satellites have been enormously active in sponsoring and monitoring creative participation in regeneration in terms of social or community renewal through social participation in creative projects. Various programmes and project strands of programmes have engendered a multitude of social or community based projects, such as the New Audiences programme, or the Creative Partnerships initiative; *Art in the Centre* and *Artists in the City* were programmes with a direct relevance to urban life and regeneration. The Arts Council subsequently sponsored varieties of arts organisations, theatre and dance companies developing education work (Hogarth et al, 1997), programmes aimed at young people at risk of committing crime

(ACE, 2003), artists working in prisons and with young people, and the list could continue. Many more recent projects are documented in Arts Council England's major three part report, *The Power of Art: visual arts: evidence of impact*, (ACE, 2006). In this report 'regeneration' is one of the three major 'social policy' areas they engage with (health and education being the other two).

The Social Exclusion Unit's National Strategy Action Plan, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal* (Cabinet Office, 2001) was a major element of the policy backdrop the Arts Council was working against. The Plan, curiously, did not mention 'regeneration', and did not even mention the arts or culture in its ostensibly exhaustive listing of the 24 types of stakeholders for neighbourhood renewal projects (from HE institutions to local business to RDAs). It seemed that the task of 'reviving economies' and 'reviving communities' was being extracted from the discourse of regeneration, and that 'urban regeneration' as a policy term was being returned to the more easily quantifiable tasks of property development. However, the Neighbourhood Renewal project assumed a strong voice in public policy. The National Strategy Action Plan is still a foundational document as the Neighbourhood Renewal project was envisaged to last a decade, with £1.8 billion to expend in the first five years. The New Deal for Communities (NDC) has emerged as one of its central programmes, and within local authorities this is viewed in terms of 'regeneration', sponsoring to a limited degree public art and other community based cultural projects. Under the NDC arts and culture only find a rationale if they are locked into health, education or economic development.

In direct response to the Government's Neighbourhood Renewal strategy there have emerged interesting projects, such as London Arts' Creative Neighbourhoods scheme, specifically tackling social inclusion in the forms of young people at risk and racism issues in disadvantaged London residential areas (ACE, 2003b). All over the country artists have been involved in Arts Council sponsored schemes, many of which simply continue 'community arts'

work developed by local artists or arts community organisations, but now find themselves with a political mandate (McManus, C., 2002; Moriarty, G and McManus, C., 2003). A new research field has opened up for arts researchers in the form of 'social inclusion', and the concern with 'social impact' or social results of arts and cultural contributions along with specific project evaluation – co-extensive with the demands of 'evidence-based policy' for public services demanded in the Cabinet Office's *modernizing government* initiative of 1999 – has become ubiquitous (Jermyn, H., 2001; Reeves, M., 2002).

This expanded field of activity, both in terms of the development of local cultural/community strategies and the developing Arts Council social engagement agenda, has had a number of visible results. There has been a genuine extension and re-evaluation of what used to be 'community arts' and an attempt to integrate the arts into central developmental mechanisms of an urban locale. For example, the 2005 ACE publication *Arts and Regeneration: case studies from the West Midlands* outlines some genuinely innovative forms of artistic and social engagement in a regeneration context (albeit only one of which was actually internal to an urban regeneration project process (ACE, 2005). ACE has also provided a template for charitable organisations like the Joseph Rountree Foundation contributing to urban regeneration with less mainstream cultural activities (Dwelly, T., 2001). Moreover, new forms of advocacy have transpired, such as the positive evaluation of the Local Government Association (LGA) of the contribution of cultural services to local government, emphasising community and social impact (ACE/LGA, 2003a). A strategic alliance between the Arts Council and Local Government Association subsequently emerged to capitalise on the ostensible impacts the arts can have on local communities: 'Our four priorities – the creative economy, healthy communities, vital neighbourhoods and engaging young people – are underpinned by two shared values: social inclusion and cultural diversity' (ACE/LGA, 2003a: 11).



However, as exemplified by the quote above, the rhetoric of the new socially-engaged art and culture is what one might term Social Inclusion Unit policy rhetoric. *The Power of Art: visual arts: evidence of impact*, states: 'For 2006 to 2008, we have six priorities: taking part in the arts; children and young people; the creative economy; vibrant communities; internationalism; celebrating diversity' (ACE, 2006f). This was the corporate agenda outlined colourfully in the ACE's *Agenda for the Arts 2006—8* and its series of individual policy statements (ACE, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d, 2006e). The policy rhetoric of these publications, some of its vacuous (what does it mean to 'celebrate diversity'?), is indicative of the way in which the language and identity of culture dissolve in the face of broader social policy. None of the corporate 'priorities' of this national funding body concern art as such; they concern art's socio-political function. In one sense, Arts Council England has been subject to a process of institutional isomorphism. This process, identified by Paul DiMaggio within the context of his long term study of cultural organisations, identifies the ways in which a sponsored organisation begins to replicate its sponsor in terms of its organisational rationality (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). 'Arm's length', as a general public policy principle, is meaningless if the body concerned structurally replicates its patron organization (in this case central government). Social-policy derived evaluation mechanisms, monitoring and pre-planning frameworks, are the cognitive enclosures within which all sponsored cultural projects are conceived and evaluated at application stage. Arts Council advocacy activity, policy claims and research endeavours became less about the specificity and particularity of arts and culture's regenerative capacities – their ability to create their own social formations, values and communities in the obvious absence of substantive social and community cohesion in the broader realms – and more about direct delivery on public policy demands.

There are two other general observations that can be made before we end this section: first, within the political field of public policy and the government departments that generate it, there are competing forces at work, political capital

to win or lose, policy territory to be seized, and a hierarchy of political objectives; and this is in part due to the departmentalized and internally competitive structure of central civil governance in the UK. A key element in this competitive field of policy initiatives is a driving concept: for example, 'neighbourhood renewal', or in the context of urban policy and planning, as Loretta Lees points out, we find 'reconstruction' in the postwar period, 'renewal' in the 1960s and 1970s, then 'regeneration' in the 1980s, the 'renaissance' in the 1990s (Lees, 2003: 66); to this we can now add 'environmental sustainability'. The function of these key concepts are not merely descriptive: they brand but also drive policy initiatives in their power to synthesise a diverse (and often conflicting) range of current demands; as concepts they are theoretically informed, and carefully constructed in how they spearhead a new policy mapping process. A successful and strategic concept increases the political capital and seizure of policy territory by its sponsoring body. However, there is dearth of such strategic conceptual activity in the realms of culture and the arts. Arts Council England, perhaps over-aware of the diversity of culture and avoiding deeply unfashionable reductionism, essentialism or universalism in traditional concepts of culture, have nonetheless failed to come up with an emphatic coherent concept of culture (and a theorized understanding of the relation between culture and society) and drive a policy mapping process of the kind that takes place in social policy. This lack of a driving concept will ensure arts and cultural policy within the competitive internal policy discourse of government will be continually outperformed, but also allied to strong driving concepts of other policy fields (of late, 'social inclusion').

In *A Creative Future* it is stated that, 'The United Kingdom is made up not of a single culture, but a multiplicity of cultures [...] it is a kaleidoscope, constantly shifting and richly diverse' (ACGB, 1993). On a sociological register this is a credible statement, and this document was in part responding to emerging notions of 'multiculturalism' within social and urban policy debates at the time. However, in the context of government policy fields, the concept of culture or art remains weak and undefined. There is no central synthesizing concept driving a

clear conceptual case on how culture or the arts is a structural feature of the social economy and thus open to systematic application *on its own terms* within the context of substantive physical reconstruction of the urban environment. As *Culture at the Heart of Regeneration* asserted, culture is not an ‘add on’ in the process of reconstructing our physical environment (DCMS, 2004a: 5). There is an empirical case to be made for culture in the way it can attract more visitors and make a place look more interesting, but there’s no conceptual ‘driver’ in the field of public policy asserting a strong argument for culture *per se*.

In 2004, with Evans and Shaw’s incisive report *The Contribution of Culture to Regeneration in the UK*, with its fertile perspectives on the role of culture in urban regeneration, DCMS had an intellectual opportunity to develop such an emphatic concept of culture (Evans and Shaw, 2004). What was *not* at stake was the claim that culture could play some role, even a major role, in urban regeneration, as by this time DETR and the major LAs had already made up their mind that investment in culture was now a social and economic obligation. DCMS’s Performance Service Agreement with the Treasury (PSA 2002) stated that its departmental obligation under current funding models was to involve its sectors in urban regeneration. What was at stake was whether DCMS could construct a strategically convincing concept of culture in which culture was not an optional addition to urban development, yielding broadly defined ‘benefits’ and subjective experiences of affirmation, but was a structural feature of ‘society’ in the deepest sense (at the level to which New Labour’s political philosophy had attempted to engage – the level of commonality and community, human interests, and environmental harmony); and further, this ‘deep’ concept of culture could be cashed out in terms of socially functional mechanisms – reconstruct the case for culture within the discourse of regeneration, also addressing the entire shift of priorities within that discourse from the notional ‘urban renaissance’ to ‘creating sustainable communities’.

In a limited way, this is indeed what DCMS did: the first in the form of Jowell's policy statements previously considered (DCMS, 2004e; 2005a); and second, the policy development in the area of the new cultural and community strategies, which were in a loose sense increasingly framed by environmental sustainability thinking. However, unlike the progress made in constructing a policy framework for the creative industries, the broad case for culture is still flaccid. Culture remains, on the level of policy application, 'creativity' and the arts: creativity is defined as the general and ubiquitous human capacity for imagination and development, converted into innovation for economically instrumental ends and therapy for socially instrumental ends; as for the arts, they can either facilitate parallel processes, or provide institutions that themselves form industries, or further, contribute to the economic development, branding and marketing of their own civic location.

What is not in evidence is a concise driving assertion of the way culture can (or is prevented from) running both below and above these registers – as involving the evolving and conflicting networks of belief and value systems that provide life with meaning and purpose, to the imaginative projections that conceive of models of a good and just society through which public policy itself is regulated. Another conception of culture – more convincing than the 'creativity' and 'arts' duality – could have been constructed, if time were taken to turn away from the social inclusion policy schema and consult the less regulated realms of socially engaged art production. One does not have to look far to find artists and art organizations grappling with precisely the socio-cultural phenomena government policy attempts to address, albeit in a direct and critical fashion -- investigating the powers of empathy and ethics that give our communities cohesion, interrogating the meaning-making processes that create identity within the social order; examining narrative-construction and narrative-endorsing mechanisms that make up our competing histories; mediating the dialogue between science, philosophy, religion and politics, and their attempted dominance as arbiters of

truth and knowledge acquisition; and so on. The intellectual limitations of policy making can radically reduce the possibility of its achieving its own objectives.

National policy making bodies, like DCMS and Arts Council England, would no doubt point out that these above suggestions extend beyond their institutional parameters – that they provide the ‘form’ of enablement and facilitation, and it is for cultural actors to provide the content, and thus the nuanced complexity of cultural life indicated above. The issue that remains is precisely this form-content dichotomy, whereby the ‘form’ of policy determines the conceptual framework, the rationale, and products in a politically determined system of cultural production, whereby culture is never defined and always servile to other policy regimes.

## Conclusion

We have attempted to construct a summary narrative of the central policy documents and policy contexts which has determined and informed the concept 'culture-led regeneration'. We have observed by default that the term 'culture-led regeneration' is not a major policy term, and to understand its aspirations requires a consultation of interrelated areas of urban policy, social policy, cultural policy and arts policy. As we have noted, however, these policy areas can be interrelated but are not sufficiently connected, and a strong concept of 'culture' has not emerged as a policy concept. My general argument has been that New Labour's social and urban policy supplied some essential reference points for a developing notion of 'culture-led' regeneration – emerging from an important, if vague, concern with 'quality of life' and then 'well being' (latterly, 'liveability'), structurally integrated communities, and an urban environment that exhibits design intelligence. Social and urban policy largely avoided the 'cultural' within its policy mechanisms, and probably symptomatic of this was the inability to absorb the research and recommendations of the Urban Task Force, despite the integrationist vision of the UTF harmonizing with New Labour's broader political aspirations for British urban life (DETR, 1999c). We then observed that the DCMS and Arts Council, whatever their virtues, have not presented a credible policy challenge to the hegemony of social policy in the 'discourse' of urban regeneration, and that is in part due to a weak concept of culture and an untheorised understanding of the relation between culture and society. Consequently, cultural policy is either marginal, outside the mainstream of heavyweight urban and social policy areas, or is appended to these areas as a supplement.

As Bob Catterall points out in his paper 'Culture as a Critical Focus for Effective Urban Regeneration', social and urban policy cannot themselves contain 'cohesion, direction, purpose and hope', and these are central to any urban and social development (Catterall, 1998: 1). They are cultural phenomena: they are

the connecting mechanism of the diverse segments of urban life. What I have suggested, but can in no way unfold here, is that an emphatic concept of culture is yet to be constructed, a concept that could go some way to challenge the current policy hierarchy and territorialism of social, urban and cultural policy.

To return to our point of departure – defining culture-led regeneration -- we can from our study identify four distinct categories of culture-led regeneration:

- (i) *Urban design-led reconfiguration of an urban centre*: this creates physical change with some degree of permanence in the form of landmark buildings, facilities and new public spaces. This can have a direct and measurable economic impact, with a stimulated market for new retail space, new visitor constituency, and perhaps a ‘hub’ around which creative industries or arts and media ‘quarters’ develop. The cultural content of this regeneration is primarily visual (good design), which in turn facilitates socio-cultural development (the development of new retail cultures, business or organizational cultures around new urban spatial formations).
- (ii) *Creativity-led social renewal*: this is community based activity with various social groupings, minorities, with the intent of integrating ‘creativity’ into various public sector education, training, health and other services; creativity is conceived as a means of developing social interaction, social identities, communications skills and the skills of individual expression (does not necessarily take the form of fine art practice).
- (iii) *Arts-led community development*: this involves the activity of professional or semi-professional artists, and can take the form of artist participation in a leadership role in a regeneration scheme, or whose work plays a generative and symbolic role motivating further

regeneration initiatives (famously Antony Gormley's *Angel of the North*); artists can of course play a role in *creativity-led social renewal*, but would not retain their own professional self-interests in generating their own art; *arts-led community development* could also take the form of artist's renovating or reinvigorating an urban area (such as artist's studios or galleries, and their impact on Hoxton in East London)

- (iv) *Arts-led civic development*: this involves the cultural infrastructure (both services and facilities) of a civic centre, and largely the 'arts' constituency (arts stakeholders), although also stimulates the expansion of that constituency, as well as encouraging visitors; arts organizations or institutions maintain a central role in this process, whether symbolic (a highly visible and notable institution, the Sage in Gateshead), or simply in terms of facilities provided, increasing performance or arts production capacity of the area; regeneration is often the policy context for arts-led civic development, but for the organizations concerned the motive an extended cultural infrastructure and institutional profile within the art-world network.

As just noted: throughout our consideration of the diverse spectrum of command papers and policy statements from DETR, ODPM, DCLG, DCMS, ACE and so on, we encountered a number of key policy concepts such as 'quality of life', 'well being', 'liveability', 'renaissance' and 'environmental sustainability'. These were large regulating concepts, functioning as policy 'objectives' or aspirations – through the urban regeneration process (broadly conceived) we will achieve the reconstruction of a socio-cultural environment that will promote a holistic form of development in the communities in which we live, and provide the necessary conditions of a life that is creative, extends individual abilities, produces satisfaction in the individual, and will continue (is sustainable). This is the visionary goal of the national policy framework we have considered: New Labour's vision of socio-cultural transformation. The objective is achieved of



course by implementing the detailed programmes and initiatives outlined by the policy. I wish here to engage in a protracted conclusion, considering five central presuppositions that are embedded within this spectrum of programmes and initiatives – they involve the central areas of public policy: government and authority, citizenry and society, and community. They are the following:

- A successful country is comprised of key metropolitan centres, each possessing a strong individual civic identity.
- A major factor in achieving ‘quality of life’ is an environment constructed according to design principles.
- Regeneration projects are not simply an opportunity to change the environment for the better, but for local government to enact and demonstrate the democratic process.
- Regeneration projects are most successful when they involve the community or citizens.
- Culture within a regeneration project optimizes the social benefit of the regeneration process.

These claims are a general articulation of truisms that have emerged from the policy frameworks we have discussed. As stated, I will conclude by making a number of critical comments on each of these, the motivation for which is to point towards further research – on the relation between policy and implementation.

**(i) *Constructing civic identities:*** Urban regeneration projects often attempt to engage in a process of civic identity-reconstruction through city-branding, where slogans are constructed on what it is a place ‘stands for’ and thus what needs to be articulated. Traditionally, civic identity was historical, substantial, enduring and cumulative, and collectively achieved; there is a sense in which branding is culturally symptomatic of an historical loss of identity. It is assumed within policy-making contexts that civic identity can be created out of a fractured social order

and culturally heterogeneous public. The signifying work of buildings and public artworks is in many ways a substitution for living communities who have vacated city centres.

Civic centres were traditionally articulated by acts of memorializing or paying homage to its own history, pivotal moments in its own civic formation, or to a specific respected person/people/event. There is a decline in public 'ownership' of civic narratives, in part as monuments or historical inscriptions reinforce a sense of exclusion through their unintelligibility – unintelligible for a society without historical education, or without shared ancestry. Moreover, there is no single mode of public representation that can signify common beliefs, in a way a cathedral, town hall, or commemorative statues, plaques, obelisks, fountains and place markers could. A work of public art can be used to promote the idea of national/community union or strength, but only in abstract or generic form. In a diverse social population the iconography of civic or community leadership is almost always political, as it involves the endorsement of collective values. *What is civic identity in an age of cultural heterogeneity and the dissolution of historical civic virtues and authority of tradition? Is it even needed?*

**(ii) Reconstructing the 'aesthetics' of the urban environment according to 'design principles':** an actual reconstruction of an urban area, fully addressing the past abuses of public space, demands a politically prohibitive level of commitment, both social, economic and intellectual. As a substitute, strategically placed public art and a few new buildings can perform an effective aesthetic 're-orientation'. Single art works of moderate size can divert attention from factories or office blocks, and public art can 'particularise' and enliven an otherwise nondescript or grey urban community environment. Most regeneration projects scatter public art in order to re-structure the spatial flow of the public areas, but also as part of a strategic deployment of visual references, create narratives and micro-identities for each urban area or zone.

A systematic aesthetic analysis of regeneration schemes rarely take place, as aesthetics on the level of policy is still understood in terms of 'taste' or individual preferences, which is taken to be wholly subjective. The only assessment of aesthetics, therefore, is undertaken as an assessment of the design at the masterplanning stage (as assessment conducted through CADs, models and drawings); but a scrutiny of the design usually just involves attention to style and conceptual signification (how it looks and what it means in a purely empirical sense). Within both planning and architectural practice there is now a high degree of design intelligence, but this is not equivalent to an understanding of the aesthetics of urban experience. 'Aesthetics' here involves a synthesis of the semiotic (the urban landscape signifiers of meaning – from history to culture to retail) and the phenomenological (the movement, experience, location and identity of the physical self) with the social (motives for frequenting or inhabiting an urban space). There are few mechanisms for translating research into policy and creative practice, and regeneration masterplans so often exhibit a philosophically discredited empiricism or now outmoded positivistic understanding of the psychology of space. The dearth of understanding of 'sensorial' factors of experience are a case in point: the circulation of wind or air, the tactility of surfaces, the behaviour of light, the quality of nocturnal light, and the acoustics of urban space are not major factors in the design process but often motivate social habitation of areas of a city. *What mechanisms can interject the policy construction process with research and critique on aesthetics?*

**(iii) Visibly expressing the legitimacy of political authority:** A city or urban centre is not simply an agglomeration of different, if interconnected, buildings; it can always be 'read' as an articulation of urban policy, the operations of governing power. The city is a hierarchy of apportioned spaces, where the corridors of opened and closed access, continuity and discontinuity, sudden changes in quality of building materials, speaks of the structure of social interaction. The aesthetic character of the city can express a confused identity or a state of intellectual ineptitude. An urban centre may be banal or mediocre, but these

qualities speak in detail about the knowledge base, intellectual investment and socio-cultural priorities of the locale. Random neglect or dysfunctional architecture are the results of policy-level incoherence or loss of political will, itself a loss of faith in public integrity or a loss of direct concern. In relation to public art, attempts to express corporate identity are problematic, and usually result in a stylistic 'clothing' of insignias, symbols or a graphic interpretation of the region's organisational character or values.

An urban regeneration project is almost always coordinated with a local authority's public relations strategy, sometimes strategic within their corporate branding, but also will involve a demonstration of political 'legitimacy' (or lack of) in its reconfiguration of the public realm. However, successful culture-led regeneration programmes, such as Gateshead, created a precedent that exhibited the behaviour of venture capitalists: beginning with financial risks and public opposition, its adventurous strategy nonetheless succeeded and is now hailed as responsible for a growing regional economic renewal. This model of regeneration management side-steps the principle that political legitimacy must be demonstrated from the outset through mechanisms of consent and public support. Risk and the pursuit of an urban 'vision' and single-minded leadership is endorsed as a powerful dynamic in regeneration management, creating a political dichotomy between the older notion of public representation and a newer one of social entrepreneurialism; the latter, while often more productive, subverts the legitimacy process established (at least in principle) by the former. *How is political legitimacy exhibited or subverted by the various models of urban regeneration project management?*

**(iv) Collective participation in civic decision-making processes:** 'Audience' is a mobile population which can be convened and dispersed when culturally convenient. The ability to attract an audience creates cultural capital for a regeneration project; in a country where the border between populism and democracy are permeable, the 'audience' is a major factor in the process of

legitimation. The installation of the Gateshead Millennium Bridge -- the 850 tonne arch with a total span of 126 metres, shipped up river by an Asian Hercules in November 2000 – was engineered as a cultural event. Gathering audiences, with a sense of occasion and around the spectacle of spatial transformation, can feign a powerful sense of involvement. A work of Public art can become a surrogate for an audience or involvement in a decision-making process, in acting as a signifier of ‘the people’ or creating a symbolic site of public congregation.

Collective participation can perform an act of symbolic integration of a diverse social and political constituency, such as social minorities usually absent or excluded from social or cultural institutions. It can do this through style (visually reconstructing the city in terms of a ‘cosmopolitan’ design aesthetic), public art (with contributions from minority artists), community projects, or simply facilitating community responses in the consultation or discussion process. The latter, public consultation, (along with planning permission) is the legal preliminary to any major public project, but notoriously neglected. Consultation methodology is one neglected area of policy implementation; the other is a sociologically informed conception of the ‘general public’. After the collapse in credibility of the concept ‘multi-cultural’, which was a version of the segmentation theory of marketing, there is a confusion as to how social diversity can be cognized.

For regeneration projects the problem of ‘inclusion’ is chronic, as participation in an urban development process is complex and the involvement of a ‘general’ public is unwieldy. Inclusion, therefore, usually only operates at the level of representation, involving a network of key stakeholders. These stakeholders are an intrinsic part of the institutionalised structure of power and by their nature not identified with ‘the public’, always leaving the commissioning authorities with a legitimization issue. This issue opens out on broader public policy commitments of ‘inclusiveness’: where a rapidly expanding minority population can be indifferent to the political desire in mainstream cultural life for their inclusion. To some religious minorities (and religions such as Islam play a greater role in a

minority identity than a person's nationality or cultural background) the 'wider culture' is not a place that could comfortably facilitate them, and can contain or be promoting practices considered ethically abject. On a policy level there remains a confusion concerning the nature of 'integration' and the extent to which it unavoidably entails national cultural inculcation? *How does culture-led regeneration re-negotiate the ownership of public-cultural space and the decision-making mechanisms that govern it, or simply reinforce sectoral interests?*

**(v) Culture as a mechanism of social development.** 'Culture' in policy contexts is all too often defined with reference to institutions and organizations. Constructing a regeneration project around art or cultural institutions has the advantage for the authorities of dispersing responsibility for the furtherance of social-cultural integration. Cultural institutions, however, have their own social protocols and historically developed lexicon of key terms, and require specific forms of socialization for its spaces to be fully intelligible. Obligations to undertake educational projects are in part a politically symbolic act of facilitating unqualified entrance to cultural-institutional space. 'Public' projects that stand outside the walls of institutions can indeed function as an heuristic through which such institutions are understood, and culture-led regeneration projects have often been used as a PR mechanism, making the cultural infrastructure of the locale understandable. However, there are strong ideological divisions within that infrastructure, and the same spectrum of social divisions, political and ethical conflicts are as characteristic of cultural life or the art world as they are social life. The cooption of culture into social development is not unproblematic, and can mean the conversion of culture into a form of social therapy, reducing the resources allocated for the core competencies of a cultural institution.

The 'benefits' of cultural education are not immediately quantifiable or only evident over several budget cycles for a local authority, so in the context of a time-limited culture-led regeneration the provision of festivals, outdoor concerts,

shows, or children's events are more common. Traditional humanist assumptions still animate public policy on culture and social development, insisting that a cultural activity 'opens people's eyes' to a world beyond the cognitive horizons presented by their immediate social environment, and thus stimulate social motivation. It is true no doubt that experimental art and architectural forms sufficiently embedded in an urban environment can 'normalise' a sense of creative aspiration. However, the 'intrinsic values' of cultural activity – the way they can extend the cognitive, ethical or intellectual values and abilities of the subject – have been eschewed by the evaluation and endorsement mechanisms of state cultural project funders in favour of 'social' impacts. The relation between 'intrinsic values' and social impacts is not one yet comprehended in the sphere of social or cultural policy. *Why is public policy lacking a concept of culture that embodies both subject-specific values and socially-grounded action?*





## APPENDIX 1

**A TYPOLOGY OF POLICY DOCUMENTS CITED (note: some documents, such as cross-departmental documents, occupy more than one subject area).**

**(i) Cultural Planning, Arts and Cultural Policy**

*Cited:* ACBG, 1990; DCMS, 1998; DCMS, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c; Bristol City Council, 2000; DCMS, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c; DCMS/QUEST, 2002; ACE, 2002; ACE, 2003a, 2003b; DCMS, 2004a; DCMS/Creative Cultures, 2004c; DCMS/Jowell, 2004b, 2005; ACE, 2006;

**(ii) Planning, Architecture and Urban Design**

*Cited:* Birmingham City Council, 1994; DOE, 1997; DOE/ATCM, 1997; DETR, 1997b; DETR, 1998a; DETR, 1999a; DETR/UTF, 1999c; EP, 1996, 1998, 2000; DETE, 2000a; CABE, 2000; DETR, 2000b, 2000c, 2000d; ODPM, 2002; ODPM, 2005a, 2005b; DGLC, 2003; Coventry City Council, 2004; DCMS, 2004; CABE, 2006a; 2006b;

**(iii) Urban Governance and Civic Development**

*Cited:* ACE, 1991; DETR, 1997a, 1997b; DETR, 1998b; DETR, 1999b; DETR, 2000c, 2000d; ACE, 2002; ODPM, 2002; ODPM, 2005a; DGLC, 2003; DCMS/Creative Cultures, 2004c; Stoke-on-Trent City Council, 2006; ACE, 2006;

**(iv) Social Policy and Community Development**

*Cited:* DCMS, 1999a, 1999c; DCMS, 2000a; CO, 2001; DCMS/QUEST, 2002; ACE, 2003; DCMS/Jowell, 2004b, 2005; ACE, 2006; DCMS, 2007.



## APPENDIX 2

### A chronological table of key policy documents cited in this paper:

Policy document /report	Origin	Subject	Purpose	Date
<i>An Urban Renaissance: The Role of the Arts in Urban Regeneration</i>	The Arts Council of Great Britain	National funding for art in the context of Government economic regeneration schemes	Advocate the effective and broader use of the arts outside cultural institutions	1988
<i>Towards a National Arts and Media Strategy</i>	Arts Council of Great Britain	Consultation document – results on the largest national survey on the arts (funding, services and practice) in the UK to date	Providing a conceptual framework for understanding, assessing and evaluating the arts and their funding	1991
<i>A Creative Future: The way Forward for the Arts, Crafts and Media in England</i>	Arts Council of Great Britain	As above – same material	Final presentation – an agreed policy framework	1991
<i>Planning Policy Guidance Notes 1 [PPGs]</i>	Department of Environment	National planning policy; (supplanted by PPS's in 2005) the first, and most general, of the national guidelines	The national statutory General Policy and Principles of urban planning policy	1997
<i>Managing Urban Spaces in Town Centres: Good Practice Guide</i>	Department of Environment/ Association for Town Centre Management	Town centre management: Management policy handbook for local authorities, with guidelines for strategy	Increase strategic thinking in LAs; uniformity in civic organisation nationally	1997
<i>Town Centre Partnership: A Survey of Good Practice and a Report of an Action Research Project</i>	Department of Environment/ Association for Town Centre Management [ATCM]	Report on activity and expenditure by LAs on town and city centre services and facilities	Promote the 'partnership' mechanism for upgrading and diversifying urban facilities	1997
<i>Regeneration Programmes – The Way Forward</i>	Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions	An outline and preliminary assessment of national regeneration policy	A discussion document for cross-departmental policy development	1997

<i>Building Partnerships for Prosperity: Sustainable Growth, Competitiveness and Employment in the English Regions</i>	Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions	New Labour Government White Paper on the cross-departmental concerns of regional and local development	Introducing the RDAs as central coordinating mechanism for partnerships, along with RRB and Business Link services	1997
<i>Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards a Better Practice</i>	Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions	Town planning guide offering a strategy context for environmental sustainability in land and resource uses	Presenting definitions and principles of new building and settlement patterns for incorporation by LAs	1998
<i>Rethinking Construction: Construction Task Force Report</i>	DTI/Construction Task Force (CTF)	National building, design and construction methods and their development in the context of Gov't urban policy	Government commission for re-assessing the condition of national industry and strategy for improvement	1998
<i>A New Approach to Investment in Culture</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport	Repositioning of national cultural policy within New Labour's manifesto commitments	Consultation document prior to policy statement	1998
<i>A New Cultural Framework</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport	National policy statement on the funding of culture, and strategic cultural services	Integrating previous consultation; establish new bodies and funding structures	1998
<i>The Creative Industries Mapping Document</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport / Creative Industries Task Force	The sectors of services industry utilising 'creativity', communication, inventions or intellectual property	To define these diverse services as a distinct industry – and quantify their economic activity in the context of national GDP	1998
<i>Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighborhood Renewal</i>	Cabinet Office	National strategy statement 'command' paper on social deprivation and community breakdown in all its forms	Social Exclusion Unit's cross-departmental strategy with specific targets on crime, drugs, poverty, education etc	1998
<i>Modernising Local Government</i>	Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions	Government White Paper on the statutory powers of local government	Construct a new ethos and new enthusiasm for public services and LAs	1999
<i>A Better Quality of Life: A Strategy for Sustainable Development in the UK</i>	Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions	Government Command Paper presented as a national strategy document	First major conceptualisation of an integrated 'sustainable' social-urban environment	1999

<i>Arts and Neighborhood Renewal</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport /Policy Action Team 10	A research survey on best practice on projects using the arts in a local neighbourhood context	Assessment of the relation between national policy and local practice, with recommendations	1999
<i>Local Cultural Strategies: Draft Guidance for Local Authorities in England</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport	Draft guidance for LAs on constructing strategies for delivery of cultural services: responses requested	Collaboration with LGA; uniformity among LAs; make LA delivery in culture co-extensive with central Gov't priorities	1999
<i>Towards an Urban Renaissance</i>	Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions /The Urban Task Force's report	A complete reassessment of the physical condition of UK towns and cities	To establish urban design as a mechanism to deliver a new vision for socio-urban development	1999
<i>The State of English Cities</i>	Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions	Report on the actual welfare, and potential, of territorial management at regional, city and community levels	Renewed conception of spatial policy – space as 'place', involving civic identity and devolved governance	2000
<i>Creating Opportunities: Guidance for Local Authorities in England on Local Cultural Strategies</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport	Complete guidance document (from 1999 draft) defining the principles, policy, benefits and context of cultural strategy locally	Ensure systematic adoption of cultural strategies via strategy development process and then implementation, monitoring and review	2000
<i>Our Towns and Cities: The Future – Delivering an Urban Renaissance</i>	Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions	Urban White Paper: setting out rationale, plans and objectives for urban development	Comprehensive policy summary of all urban development – re-oriented to social, not physical-structural, priorities	2000
<i>Culture and Creativity: The Next Ten Years</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport	Strategy statement, endorsed by the PM, on developing uses of arts and culture	Setting out the systematic use of art and creativity in educational, commercial and industrial contexts	2001
<i>The Creative Industries Mapping Document</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport / Creative Industries Task Force	Systematic summary of the economic activity of the creative industries	Updated and more extensive version of the 1998 Mapping Document; now used as advocacy document	2001

<i>Social Inclusion Action Plan</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport	Summary of strategic aims and objectives for social inclusion for the arts and culture	Basic (and short) policy statement for reference.	2001
<i>A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal</i>	Cabinet Office	The Social Exclusion Unit's National Strategy Action Plan	Summary outline of cross-departmental activity involved in ameliorating social degradation and development plan	2001
<i>Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener</i>	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	Report on the conservation and development of the landscape, urban parks, green spaces and the natural environment	Articulating strategic 'vision' for coordinated work of six departments in developing use and welfare of open air spaces	2002
<i>Making it Count: The Contribution of Culture and Sport to Social Inclusion</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport/QUEST	Summary review of performance and quality assessment commitments of DCMS	Create a framework of evaluation in the context of <i>A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal</i>	2002
<i>Better Public Buildings</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport/CABE	Design and quality of public buildings, standards in new architecture	A report by the Better Public Buildings Group: a rationale for public commissions favouring good design	2003
<i>Leading the Good Life: Guidance on Integrating Cultural and Community Strategies</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport	Administrative implementation of the integration of previously distinct cultural and community plans or strategies	Outline key policy developments, guidelines, checklist and case studies for uniform LA adoption	2004
<i>Government and the Value of Culture</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport/Rt. Hon. Tessa Jowell	The non-instrumental argument for cultural value: a personal statement by Minister for Culture	An essay (a personal view) published as a policy statement; policy statement for intra-governmental advocacy	2004
<i>Culture at the Heart of Regeneration</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport	DCMS's major summary statement on urban regeneration and culture's contribution	A report document requesting responses on strategy within identified key areas	2004
<i>Inspiration, Identity, Learning: The Value of Museums</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport/Dept. for Education and Skills	Evaluation document of DCMS and DfES commissioning in 2003/4	Demonstrate strategic management of resources and systematic implementation of policy	2004

<i>Extending your Reach: Programme for Engagement with Local Authorities and Local Communities</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport	The relation between DCMS, LAs and cultural services in the locale	A report of a programme undertaken by a consultancy mapping the complex network of national—local relations	2004
<i>Sustainable Development Strategy</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport	Outline how DCMS work relates to broader 'quality of life' and sustainability issues	Strategy document offering definitions, case studies and action plan	2004
<i>'The White Book'</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport	Guidance on the appraisal and evaluation of projects, programmes and policies	The most exhaustive and technical guide to date on the main forms of assessment	2004
<i>Culture at the Heart of Regeneration: A Summary of Responses:</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport	Responses from individuals on urban regeneration representing private, public and voluntary sectors	Feed into 'delivery plan' emphasising increasing partnerships, best practice guidance and evaluation models	2005
<i>Planning Policy Statement 1: [PPSs] delivering Sustainable Development</i>	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	New national policy regulations and guidelines (first, and most general, guidelines)	Re-contextualise planning policy within 'environmental sustainability' policy	2005
<i>Better Places to Live</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport/Rt. Hon. Tessa Jowell	A 'cultural argument' for the value of the preservation of an historic environment	Second personal essay from Culture Minister; policy statement for intra-governmental advocacy	2005
<i>Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity</i>	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	Implementation of Sustainable Communities Plan of 2003, involving cross-departmental policy alignment	Five year strategy statement, outlining policy implementation and objectives	2005
<i>Living Life to the Full: DCMS Five Year Plan</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport	The current and future corporate activity and responsibilities of DCMS	A five year plan featuring a review of recent activities, priorities and targets	2005
<i>Arts and Regeneration: Case Studies from the West Midlands</i>	Arts Council England/ University of Birmingham	Nine case studies of ACE funded projects in a regeneration context	A report: disseminating ideas and concepts, rather than technical evaluation	2005

<i>Better Public Building</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport /CABE	Description, rationale and criteria for 'good design' in public buildings	A policy statement showcase successful public commissions	2006
<i>Life Worth Living: A Cultural Strategy for Reading</i>	Reading Borough Council	Vision, opportunities and objectives for cultural services in City of Reading and environs	Framework for Council actions plans in all social and civic areas relating to culture	2006
<i>Our Agenda for the Arts: 2006--8</i>	Arts council England	Identify key policy areas, indicate priorities and action to be taken	Articulation of updated priorities and organizational principles	2006
<i>Arts Policies: developing arts practice and engagement</i>	Arts council England	Role of the Arts Council in relation to artists and organisations	Very short policy statement on ACE guiding principles in supporting art activity	2006
<i>Visual Arts Policy</i>	Arts council England	The role of contemporary visual art in ACE policy frameworks	Short policy statement on the corporate 'vision' and specific priorities for ACE	2006
<i>Combined Arts Policy</i>	Arts council England	Participatory arts or arts with no traditional generic identity, such as 'street art'	Short policy statement on support for 'live' and event-based art; with priority list.	2006
<i>Interdisciplinary Arts Policy</i>	Arts council England	Art activity that engages with other areas, including non-art areas like science or health.	Short policy statement on 'vision' and priority list for facilitating interactivity in art.	2006
<i>The Power of Art: visual arts: evidence of impact</i>	Arts council England	A summary of the 'impact' of ACE funded projects in health, education and regeneration sectors	Major three part report on the full spectrum of arts Council projects outside traditional 'art world' confines	2006
<i>The State of English Cities</i>	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	Major two volume assessment report of the full spectrum of urban development and Government initiatives.	Summary of Government achievement; foundation of Data from new database programme for strategy discussion.	2006



<i>Sustainable Development Action Plan</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport	The centrality of Government sustainability policy to DCMS activities and responsibilities	Largely to set out sustainability targets for 2006.	2006
<i>Understanding the Future: Priorities for England's Museums</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport	The cultural function and institutional objectives of UK museums	Policy statement on DCMS priorities, to be taken up by MLA and funded museums	2006
<i>Culture and Creativity</i>	Department of Culture, Media and Sport	Review of publicly funded cultural and artistic activity in the UK	DCMS Annual Review; summary of policy outcomes.	2007
<i>Art Council England's work with Local Government</i>	Arts council England	The interconnections between ACE and regional and local government organisation	Policy statement that sets out the scope and means of ACE-regional-local engagement.	2007



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The Centre for Cultural Policy Studies provides a focus for teaching and research in the fields of arts management, cultural policy and the creative industries. Connecting with researchers, cultural managers and organisations in many parts of the world, the Centre forms part of an international network. The distinctive approach of the Centre is its engagement with both the practical realities of working in the cultural sector and with theoretical questions around the conditions of contemporary culture. As well as producing its own series of online publications, the Centre also engages in cultural sector consultancy work and Oliver Bennett, Director of the Centre, is the founding editor of the *International Journal of Cultural Policy*.

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