The Network Newsletter: tackling social exclusion in libraries, museums, archives and galleries

Number 57, May 2006

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The Network's Website is at www.seapn.org.uk and includes information on courses, good practice, specific socially excluded groups, as well as the newsletter archive.

Did you see …?

Race and Community Cohesion News

The Home Office has just published issue 1 of this new newsletter[1]. It includes a lot of useful and interesting information, including:

- News, including an update on the Commission on Integration, which was announced last August – this is now to focus on faith and the contribution of faith communities (p5)
- A short piece on the new Statutory Code for Practice on Racial Equality in Employment, which is intended to help employers embrace their legal requirements under the Race Relations Act (p6) [see below]
- An introduction to "Fair Cities" which is an employer-led initiative to increase employment opportunities for people from disadvantaged ethnic minority communities in urban areas (pilots have been established in Birmingham, Bradford and Brent) (p7)
- Features on "Connecting Communities Plus" funding (p8); the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (p10); and Engaging with Faith Communities (p11)
- An update on the Home Office's role in obtaining race equality advice: they are "moving away from standing advisory committees to a largely project-based approach, in which groups with relevant perspectives, community links and expertise are brought together for a limited period of time to offer advice on particular issue. This new process involves, practitioners, business leaders, professionals, opinion formers (including those with community links), and leading academics. Six

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[1] *Race and Community Cohesion News*. No.1, Spring 2006. Available to download as a pdf (856 Kb) from: http://communities.homeoffice.gov.uk/raceandfaith/reports_pubs/publications/race_faith/news-spring-2006.pdf?view=Binary.

new project groups are now being set up. Each will run for a year initially, and each has ministerial engagement." (p12)

- Four groups are already up and running:
  - increasing the trust and confidence between BME communities and the services;
  - reaching out to young people who are disengaged and disadvantaged (REACH group);
  - how to increase the number of BME staff at senior levels in public services – in particular police chief constables;
  - racist incidents.
- Two more are being established to look at:
  - race and homelessness (in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister); and
  - encouraging, supporting and growing BME businesses (in partnership with the Department of Trade and Industry).

Tackling social exclusion – Libraries, Museums and Archives

"Books on the Edge"

You may have seen that Blackburn with Darwen's project, "Books on the Edge", was a runner-up in the "Libraries Change Lives" Awards.

Geraldine Wilson (Literacy Development Manager, geraldine.wilson@blackburn.gov.uk) wrote a response to an enquiry on lis-pub-libs, and she kindly agreed that it could be reproduced here:

> "At Blackburn with Darwen, we work in partnership with Nightsafe, a charity that operates a drop-in centre and night shelters for homeless young people to deliver a project called "Books on the Edge". Another partner in the project is Blackburn with Darwen Foyer which provides housing for 16-25 year old young people, on-site training suites, options for childcare, access to a wide range of training and a job-match service to help residents to find work and succeed in a job.
>
> As part of the project, groups of young people from Nightsafe visit the library on a weekly basis for IT sessions and book exchange. Both organisations have book collections on site chosen by young people, and the Foyer has a weekly reading group. When joining the project young people are given an amnesty for any outstanding fines and charges and the project worker spends time with them on a one-to-one basis explaining how these can be avoided in the future.
>
> Good relationships have been developed with staff at both centres, who are highly supportive of the library, but it has been a long process. It is several years since we first made contact and funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation has made it possible to invest the required time and resources into the project. Without our partners it would be very difficult for us to access this group of young people. In the Foyer,

the support of their workers has been crucial in getting groups of young people together at once as, being a place of residence, the young people come and go freely.

The project worker has also been crucial as she has been able to build relationships with individual young people and follow through with any problems that arise. Library staff have also gained confidence through watching her interactions with young people.

There have been occasional behavioural problems with the young people, both in the library and the centres, particularly the drop in centre, where young people call in off the street and can be drunk or 'high' on drugs. At the centres, the staff are well used to dealing with this type of behaviour, but on the few occasions when it has been repeated in the library, staff have found it difficult to handle. We are looking at training and other strategies to manage this.

I think the main lessons we have learned so far is that to make progress you need to be prepared to commit to the work for the long term as it is quite slow and time consuming, but it is also well worth it when you see the change in attitudes of the young people and the confidence with which they now use the library.

We are also members of our local Asylum Seeker Multi-Agency Forum and have links with housing providers through this. Although they can't share personal details with us they have been happy to include library information in their welcome packs and to circulate further information about our events and services to their tenants."

"Time Together"

"Time Together" is the programme[2] which arranges one-to-one mentoring for refugees, and which has been established in 16 cities across the UK.

One of the latest to be set up is in Leeds, where it is being delivered in partnership with the Library & Information Service[3] – a first!

The other cities are: Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leicester, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Peterborough, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Sheffield and Southampton.

Manchester Libraries Active Vision

Manchester Library & Information Service are delivering two projects – Active Advice and Visions for the Future – aimed at opening up lifelong learning and job opportunities to specific hard to reach groups.

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[2] See: http://www.timetogether.org.uk/.
[3] See: http://www.timetogether.org.uk/city_28.html.

The externally funded projects are helping us build on our traditional information providing role. Our two Project Managers, both of whom are qualified Information Advice & Guidance (IAG) workers, not only deliver their service to clients in any of our 23 libraries, they also promote the services of the library. In particular, they highlight the paper and electronic resources which may aid project participants in their search for career, training and job skill information. They ensure that these resources are provided in accessible formats, depending on individual needs. Whilst they primarily meet clients in libraries they have a flexible approach and will meet elsewhere e.g. jobcentres and local blind societies, if required.

Active Advice
The Active Advice project is aimed at two very different client groups – disabled people, and ex-offenders. This offers a challenge to Patty Doran, our Project Manager. Patty offers one-on-one advice and guidance sessions; discusses current situations and future goals; makes supported referrals to programs and agencies that can help people to achieve their goals; helps with job applications and interview preparation; offers ongoing support with regular review appointments.

The service is funded for two years, until June 2007, through the EQUAL strand of the European Social Fund. The funding encourages innovation and is not rigidly outcome focused. This gives us the freedom to explore an innovative approach to Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services and to trial services to the two client groups.

We hope to reach disabled and unemployed people by offering an alternative to traditional venues for this sort of service (such as Jobcentre Plus). Many disabled and unemployed people frequent libraries as a place where they can go that is free and offers a safe environment to spend their time. Through an Active Advice session the clients become motivated and more confident that they can achieve their goals.

After an Active Advice interview clients have commented: "I feel more motivated already!" after discussing training options, and "I never would have applied for this without you" after looking at job adverts together and downloading information about the job on the library computers.

Comments made by a recent client at initial contact stage: "I have been out of work for 9 years. I know that I will have to go the job center at some point but to tell you the truth I'm a bit intimidated by that. I thought that the library would be a good place to take the first step"

In the second strand of the project, which is just getting underway, Patty will be offering the service to ex-offenders. She is building networks with relevant agencies and projects and she is also working closely with colleagues in the prison library at HMP Manchester to advertise the service.

In the early stages of the project it is already showing that people are responding well to the Active Advice service within the library environment. In

the first quarter of the Active Advice Project (January to March 2006) 35 one on one IAG sessions were held with 20 different clients. All these clients had identified as being disabled and the majority of them (70%) came in contact with the project by responding to publicity in local libraries or on the library internet site. (The ex-offender stem of the project started at the end of April 2006)

Visions for the Future
The Visions for the Future project works specifically with visually impaired people. Brian Shepherd, the Project Manager, offers advice and guidance sessions on employment and training but also offers advice and support on issues relating to visual impairment in general.

This Big Lottery funded project is run in partnership with Toucan Europe, a not for profit organisation working towards social and economic integration. Funding is secured until June 2007.

Brian has developed a network with several agencies and organisations including jobcentre plus, Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES), Henshaws Society for Blind People (HSBP), National Library for the Blind (NLB) and Breakthrough UK. They meet together as a steering group for the project, along with a visually impaired ex-client. Feedback from all clients is actively encouraged to help us ensure the project is delivering to their needs.

The project itself has three strands as follows. Clients can choose one or all of these strands depending on their needs.

One to one advice sessions: these are tailored around the individual and are all undertaken in an holistic manner.

Pre-employment group workshops: these aim to give participants an understanding of the job market and how to approach it successfully, including CV creation, how to identify skills etc. These workshops are run with the support of MAES who provide the course materials and a tutor. The course materials are produced in alternative formats as required.

Job Club: where people who feel that they are ready to job search can come and use the facilities at Central Library with support from Brian and other staff who are not only from libraries but other agencies including jobcentre Plus.

So far the project has provided support to 36 individuals through all the project strands. One of the individuals from the first workshop went on to gain employment with B&Q as a customer service representative. This individual had left his previous roles because of his visual impairment as he did not know what services were out there to support him until he attended the workshop.

Comments made by an individual attending one of the workshops "I didn¹t know that there was anything like Visions for the Future out there. The course was tailor-made for me, with lots of help from Brian and Estelle – even with

transport and child care. Without that help I may not have been able to attend. There was a nice atmosphere and the group was a good mix with a different range of disabilities they made me feel relaxed and helped me build up my confidence and to think positively.

Details of Visions for the Future and Active Advice are on Manchester Libraries website www.manchester.gov.uk/libraries.
Patty Doran can be contacted on 0161 2341946, or email: p.doran1@manchester.gov.uk.
Brian Shepherd can be contacted on 0161 234 1989, or email: b.shepherd@manchester.gov.uk.

<div align="right">Linda Dawes
May 2006</div>

SCOLMA Annual Conference 2006: "Africa in Libraries … Libraries in Africa"

Wednesday 7 June 2006, 9.30 a.m. – 4 p.m. Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 28 Russell Square

This year's SCOLMA [Standing Conference on Library Materials on Africa] conference will focus on two topics: the public promotion of research and writing on Africa in UK libraries; and the role of libraries and information services in supporting research and communication amongst research communities in Africa.

The conference will be of interest to: people working or interested in public libraries in the UK; librarians and researchers on African studies; and those interested in publishing in or about Africa.

For further information on the Conference, please contact Terry Barringer, SCOLMA Secretary, email: TABarringe@aol.com

Paul Hamlyn Foundation – new "Free with Words" and "Libraries Connect" projects

Ten new grants have been awarded to projects working with 'at risk' groups through libraries[4].

"Libraries Connect" supports projects that help libraries provide for communities that are not currently well-served. These include refugees, asylum-seekers and young people at risk. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation has made four awards in this area to:

- Bookstart in Burngreaves – Sheffield Libraries, Archives and Information

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[4] Taken from: *PHF Reading and Libraries Challenge Fund Newsletter*, May 2006 (see: http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/newsletter.html).

- Get Connected – Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust
- Sense of Belonging (extension) – Leeds Library and Information Service
- Libraries Connect project – Kingston upon Hull City Council

For more information about these projects visit:
www.literacytrust.org.uk/phffund/lcnew.html.

"Free with Words" aims to improve access to books and reading for prisoners and young offenders. Six awards were made:

- Reader in Residence at HMP and YOI Corton Vale Women's Prison - Stirling Council
- Read Me a Story – HMP Wealstun
- Reader Development for HMP Pentonville – London Borough of Islington
- York Big Girls Book Share – Read Write Work/HMPYOI Askham Grange
- Talk the Tale, Read the Tale – Lincolnshire County Council
- Reader Development Support – Leicestershire County Council

For more information about these projects visit:
www.literacytrust.org.uk/phffund/fwwnew.html.

Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Statutory Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Employment

This Code[5] – which was published in November 2005 – came into force on 6 April. It is an important and useful guide to good practice, for example in recruitment and selection of staff.

The public sector and equality for disabled people

Also on 6 April, the DWP published a report[6], the aim of which was to establish a baseline against which to measure progress by public authorities in complying with their duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled

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[5] *Statutory Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Employment.* CRE, 2005 £15.00 (ISBN: 1-85442-562-5). Available to download as a pdf (245 Kb) from: http://www.cre.gov.uk/downloads/employmentcode.pdf. The Welsh version, *Cd Ymarfer Statudol Ar Gydraddoldeb Hiliol Mewn Cyflogaeth* (ISBN: 1-85442-576-5), is available to download as a pdf (261 Kb) from: http://www.cre.gov.uk/downloads/employmentcode_welsh.pdf.
[6] Simon Roberts, Antonia Ivaldi, Monica Magadi, Viet-Hai Phung and Bruce Stafford. *The public sector and equality for disabled people.* DWP (Research Report no. 343), 2006 (ISBN: 1-84712-000-8). Available to download as a pdf (858 Kb) from: http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2005-2006/rrep343.pdf.

people as required by the DDA 2005 (that requirement comes into force in December 2006).[7] Key findings include:

- "The vast majority of participating organisations had adapted their work environment, implemented flexible working time and flexible work organisation to help disabled employees. Many had conducted Disability Equality Impact Assessments and of those that had most had changed their employment and service policies and practices, as a result. Nearly all public bodies also had an Action Plan to meet the needs of disabled employees and service users.
- Although a large number of organisations in the survey had a Disability Equality Scheme in place, a minority had involved disabled employees or service users in drafting it. Also the vast majority of organisations had acted to improve access to premises for disabled people, but few had engaged with disability organisations to review the extent to which the services met the needs of disabled people.
- Participating organisations were unlikely to provide information in specialist formats for disabled employees and service users as part of their standard procedures, although they were much more likely to provide it on request.
- Almost all the organisations felt they were committed to improving the experience of their disabled employees, and most also felt they were currently meeting the needs of their disabled employees. In contrast though slightly fewer organisations felt they were meeting the needs of their disabled service-users. "[8]

Clearly, whilst there have been some major developments, the issues in the last two bullet points need to be addressed urgently.

The Disability Equality Duty …

The DRC have just published guidance[9] on gathering and analysing evidence.

> "This guidance considers the practical issues involved in gathering and analysing evidence about disabled people as part of the public sector Disability Equality Duty. Along with a range of further Guidance documents this guidance will support you in the effective implementation of the duty and help you meet your organisation's overall strategic objectives.
>
> It is aimed at those responsible for assessing how well services are delivered, and employment opportunities are offered, to disabled

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[7] Thanks to David Owen (Share the Vision) for alerting me to this.
[8] Taken from DWP press release at:
http://www.dwp.gov.uk/mediacentre/pressreleases/2006/apr/060406b.asp.
[9] *The Disability Equality Duty: guidance on gathering and analysing evidence to inform action.* DRC, 2006. Available to download as a pdf (195 Kb) from:
http://www.drc.org.uk/businessandservices/docs/Evidence_Gathering_Guidance.pdf.

people. It provides help on deciding what evidence to gather and the best way to go about this. It also provides help on how to analyse the evidence gathered.

The guidance places evidence gathering in the broader context of public authorities' duties to promote disability equality. Gathering and using evidence on disability is at the heart of the new duty. It is essential for public authorities to have as clear as possible a picture of how they are currently performing on disability equality to provide the basis for their Disability Equality Scheme and to chart future progress." [p6]

The Equalities Review

In March, an interim report[10] was published for consultation.

It identified eleven current challenges causing inequality, which are:

- "Poor children, particularly boys, and certain ethnic groups are more likely to experience less stimulating home learning environments
- Ethnic minority children are less likely to attend pre-school education
- Raising the attainment of under-performing ethnic minority pupils, particularly in the primary years
- Reducing exclusions among boys and certain ethnic minorities
- The educational attainment of lesbian, gay and bisexual teenagers who have suffered homophobic bullying
- The employment prospects of Pakistani and Bangladeshi young people not in employment education or training
- Older women with low levels of literacy
- The job prospects of lone and partnered women after having children
- The job prospects of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women
- The job prospects of some disabled people
- The job prospects and quality of life of older people after a bereavement of a partner or a parent."[11]

Families getting on …

The Learning and Skills Council has just published their final report[12] on the "Skills for Families" – a national development project funded by the LSC and the Skills for Life Strategy Unit, which identified strategies for extending and

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[10] *The Equalities Review: interim report for consultation*. Equalities Review, 2006. Available to download as a pdf (471 Kb) from: http://www.theequalitiesreview.org.uk/documents/pdf/interim_report.pdf.
[11] Taken from: http://www.wired-gov.net/WGArticle.aspx?WCI=htmArticleView&WCU=ARTCL_PKEY=37957.
[12] *Families getting on: a final report on Skills for Families and recommendations for the future development of family literacy, language and numeracy*. LSC/DfES, 2006. Available to download from: www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/PolicyandDevelopment/SkillsForFamilies.

embedding the provision of family literacy, language and numeracy in local authorities and local education authorities.

The report headlines the major findings and makes recommendations for promoting family work more strongly.

Common ground …

The CRE have just published the report[13] of an inquiry into local authority provision for Gypsies and Irish Travellers. Whilst the report is primarily concerned with housing, sites and planning, it also contains some valuable background information (and is strong on the need for services to be mainstreamed).

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

"Changing status, changing lives?"

This is a research project funded by the JRF and the ESRC, which looked at "the socio-economic impact of EU enlargement on low wage migrant labour in the UK".[14]

The three papers that have been produced so far are:

- A study[15] of Central and East European migrants in low-wage employment (and a related JRF "Findings" document[16]). This looks particularly at what changes there have been in the UK employment of Polish, Czech, Slovak and Lithuanian people ('Accession 8' nationals) since EU enlargement on 1 May 2004.
- A paper[17] on "compliance", which argues for a redefinition of the status issues surrounding migrant workers, moving away from the 'legal' or 'illegal' status towards a new definition ("*Compliant* migrants are legally resident and working in full compliance with the conditions attached to

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[13] *Common ground: equality, good race relations and sites for Gypsies and Irish Travellers – report of a CRE inquiry in England and Wales.* CRE, 2006. Available to download as a pdf (2Mb) from:
http://www.cre.gov.uk/downloads/commonground_report.pdf.

[14] For further information, see: http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/changingstatus/.

[15] Bridget Anderson, Martin Ruhs, Ben Rogaly and Sarah Spencer. *Fair enough? Central and East European migrants in low-wage employment in the UK.* JRF, 2006. Available to download as a pdf from:
http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/changingstatus/Downloads/Fair%20enough%20paper%20-%201%20May%202006.pdf.

[16] See: http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/0226.asp.

[17] Martin Ruhs and Bridget Anderson. *Semi-compliance in the migrant labour market.* ESRC Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), University of Oxford, 2006. Available to download as a pdf from:
http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/changingstatus/Downloads/Semi-compliance%20-%20Ruhs%20and%20Anderson%201%20May%202006.pdf.

their immigration status. *Non-compliant* migrants are those without the rights to reside in the host country. *Semi-compliance* indicates a situation where a migrant is legally resident but working in violation of some or all of the conditions attached to the migrant's immigration status."[18])

- A paper on methods, participants and lessons learned[19].

Understanding ethnic group differences in Britain …

The ippr have just published a paper[20] which looks at "how social origins contribute to patterns of occupational success among contemporary young adults aged 24 to 45 from different ethnic groups who were brought up in England and Wales." [p3]

The paper's main conclusions, which have some importance for us, include:

"… the children of parents from higher social classes are more likely to end up in higher social classes themselves. This is the case even when taking account of individual educational achievement. However, class background is less important for minority ethnic groups than it is for the majority. For the majority, class background operates separately from individuals' own educational success, but minorities achieve upward mobility through the education system." [p3]

"First, background potentially plays an important role in determining social class outcomes. However, the difference in the role of social class background across ethnic groups would suggest that members of minority ethnic groups are not competing on a level playing field with members of the majority.

Second, for those ethnic groups that are most disadvantaged, this disadvantage cannot be attributed either to their background or their levels of educational qualifications.

Third, class success at the family level is influenced by gendered occupational patterns. Individualised accounts of the relationship

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[18] Taken from: http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/changingstatus/Downloads/Semi-compliance%20-%20Ruhs%20and%20Anderson%201%20May%202006.pdf.

[19] Martin Ruhs, Bridget Anderson, Ben Rogaly <u>and</u> Sarah Spencer. *"Changing status, changing lives?" Methods, participants and lessons learnt*. ESRC Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), University of Oxford, 2006. Available to download as a pdf from:
http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/changingstatus/Downloads/Methodology%20paper%20-%201%20May%202006.pdf.

[20] Lucinda Platt. *Understanding ethnic group differences in Britain: the role of family background and education in shaping social class outcomes*. ippr, 2006. Available to download as a pdf from: http://www.ippr.org.uk/ecomm/files/platt_paper.pdf. This paper was first published in the ippr book, Simone Delorenzi (editor) *Going places: neighbourhood, ethnicity and social mobility*. ippr, 2006 (ISBN: 1860302920).

between characteristics and labour-market performance fail to recognise that class is experienced at the level of the couple or family. Further, aspects of family structure that may be important to consider (for example, the number of siblings) have been proposed as relevant explanatory factors, but await further investigation to understand whether they have an effect.

Fourth, there is extensive variation within each group, and treating ethnic groups as homogenous entities is neither justifiable nor likely to lead to effective interventions." [p10]

The persistence of poverty …

The JRF have just produced a report[21] which looks at persistent poverty using members of two British cohorts, one group in their teens in the 1970s and the other in their teens in the 1980s.

The report concludes with a stark message:

"Despite the lack of specific policy prescriptions that can be drawn out of our work, it is completely clear that children in poverty are more likely to grow up to be poor, and that, as far as we can tell, this link has strengthened over the last decades of the 20th century." [p35]

Super-Diversity

This new paper[22] from the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society [COMPAS] at the University of Oxford argues that, for the past 30 years or so:

"government policies, social service practices and public perceptions have been framed by a particular understanding of immigration and multicultural diversity. That is, Britain's immigrant and ethnic minority population has conventionally been characterised by large, well-organized African-Caribbean and South Asian communities of citizens originally from Commonwealth countries or formerly colonial territories. Policy frameworks and public understanding – and, indeed, many areas of social science – have not caught up with recently emergent demographic and social patterns. Britain can now be characterised by 'super-diversity,' a notion intended to underline a level and kind of complexity surpassing anything the country has previously experienced."[23, 24]

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[21] Jo Blanden and Steve Gibbons. *The persistence of poverty across generations: a view from two British cohorts*. JRF, 2006 (ISBN: 1-86134-853-3). Available to download as a pdf from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/9781861348531.pdf.
[22] Steven Vertovec. *The emergence of super-diversity in Britain*. COMPAS (Working Paper no.25), 2006. Available to download as a pdf from: http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/publications/papers/Steven%20Vertovec%20WP0625.pdf.
[23] Taken from: http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/publications/wp-06-25.shtml.

Broader issues – Libraries, Museums and Archives

Creating Cultural Opportunity in Sustainable Communities

It's just been announced[25] that c£500,000 has been awarded from the Treasury's "Invest to Save" initiative to eight strategic organisations – including MLA South East – for the creation and pilot of a cultural and spatial planning toolkit.

The eight strategic partners are:

- Culture East Midlands (lead)
- Culture West Midlands
- Culture South East
- Living East
- MLA South East
- Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership
- Black Country Consortium
- Arts Council England.

The aims of the toolkit are:

- to reduce duplication and waste by providing planners and the cultural sectors with robust, nationally-recognised methodologies, guidance and other resources;
- to inform, influence and articulate spatial planning policy at national, regional, sub-regional and local level;
- to inform, influence the preparation of sustainable community strategies;
- to equip planners and developers to negotiate S106 agreements;
- to guide and influence investment decisions by agencies and by the private and commercial sectors, local authorities, RDAs etc;
- to provide a single source for information, good practice and other resources to support cultural planning, awareness raising, improving access to culture, assembling evidence and reporting progress;
- to test the potential for public and private sectors to work together to deliver necessary cultural infrastructure;
- to enhance quality of life and quality of place for communities by enabling the planning system to ensure that facilities necessary to support a culturally vibrant community are provided and fit for purpose

The press release also quotes Tessa Jowell as saying:

> "These innovative projects will test and develop new ways of delivering cultural services and new opportunities for more people to take part in cultural activities. They will show how organisations in the cultural

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[24] Thanks to Helen Carpenter for alerting me to this.
[25] See:
http://www.mlasoutheast.org.uk/newsandevents/news/index.asp?id=1928,955,2,959.

> sectors can work with each other and with others in the public, private and voluntary sectors to improve people's access to culture and demonstrate how cultural activity can make an important contribution to education, health, economic development and social cohesion."

Broader issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Beacon Scheme for Wales

The Welsh Local Government Association has announced the launch of the Welsh equivalent of the Beacon Scheme, and the first Learning Exchange has just taken place[26].

Broader issues – Other Agencies

From access to participation ...

The Institute for Public Policy Research [ippr] has just published an important new book[27], looking at "cultural policy and civil renewal".

The book begins with a foreword by Ben Rogers (Associate Director, ippr), which gives a brief overview illustrating why civic life and civil renewal have become such important themes, and beginning to look at some of the issues surrounding 'culture'.

The book then has five chapters:

1. Social capital and civil renewal
2. Trends in social capital and volunteering
3. The role of cultural activity in social capital and civil renewal
4. The inequality of cultural participation
5. Conclusions and recommendations.

I am going to concentrate most on chapter 1 which gives some key insights into Government thinking and policy development. Emily Keaney starts by defining social capital (based on the definition developed by Robert Putnam[28] – "the networks of trust, solidarity and reciprocity that exist in a well functioning community") and civil renewal:

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[26] See: http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?wax=quik_mn_0_0&pageId=71697.

[27] Emily Keaney. *From access to participation: cultural policy and civil renewal*. ippr, 2006. £7.95 (ISBN: 1-86030-281-5).

[28] From: Robert Putnam. *Bowling alone: the collapse and revival of American community*. Simon & Schuster, 2000.

"… the development of strong, active, and empowered communities, in which people are able to do things for themselves, define the problems they face, and tackle them in partnership with public bodies." [p6]

She then goes on to look at why social capital and civil renewal are so important at the moment, as part of the response to the need for "engaged and active citizens, and of safe and vibrant communities" [p7], and to begin to break the cycle of deprivation (which many traditional regeneration projects have failed to tackle).

The Home Office has defined a community that has successfully achieved civil renewal as having:

- "active citizens who contribute to the common good
- strengthened communities in which people work together to find solutions to problems
- effective partnerships for meeting public needs …" [p9]

Emily Keaney then goes on to say that, although it is not explicitly stated, Government policy sees the route to achieving civil renewal as taking three steps:

- Encouraging volunteering
- Building capacity through creating skills, structures and support
- Opening up government to provide opportunities for participation in decision-making.

Chapter 2 indicates that "the UK does not appear to be suffering from an across-the-board decline in either participation or trust." [p20] However, levels of participation and trust are still low, compared to Scandinavian countries for example; and participation and trust do "tend to be concentrated among the more affluent and educated sectors of society" [p20].

Chapter 3 provides evidence that participation in cultural activities can increase trust – "regardless of the person's privilege and education …" [p27]

Chapter 4 brings evidence to show that "cultural participation is still dominated by the better educated and more affluent …" and that "There is still work to be done to redress this disparity and ensure that diversity of cultural participation is increased at all levels …" [p33]

Chapter 5 includes conclusions and recommendations. It identifies two main goals:

- "embedding the thinking about social capital and civil renewal into the heart of cultural policymaking
- translating that thinking into practical steps on the ground – in particular, making sure that people from all walks of life participate at all levels in the cultural sector." [p35]

The second goal would include involvement as a:

- Cultural doer (taking part)
- Cultural volunteer (helping to run/organise cultural activities)
- Cultural leader.

There then follow a series of recommendations – for Government and all organisations – to enable the two goals (embedding and translating) to happen. Libraries get particular mention, eg:

- The PSA targets need to recognise a wider range of activities, "such as visiting libraries" [p37]
- "Libraries are also a valuable resource, not just for advertising cultural opportunities, but also as a safe and familiar space within which to host new types of cultural activities." [p37]

Abbreviations and acronyms

BME = Black and minority ethnic communities
CRE = Commission for Racial Equality
DDA = Disability Discrimination Act
DfES = Department for Education & Skills
DRC = Disability Rights Commission
DWP = Department for Work & Pensions
ESRC = Economic & Social Research Council
EU = European Union
JRF = Joseph Rowntree Foundation
lis-pub-libs = JISCMAIL list for public libraries (see:
    http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/lis-pub-libs.html)
LSC = Learning and Skills Council
MLA South East = Museums, Libraries, Archives South East
PSA = Public Service Agreement
RDA = Regional Development Agency

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