

Cultural Planning Toolkit – Web Resource

Integrating Community and Cultural Planning

Cultural planning is concerned with how people live in places and communities (as citizens), and with the ways in which they use the arts and other forms of creative endeavour to enhance, consolidate and express these attachments. It is also about the way in which local government plans and manages these processes for a range of political ends, including social control and place management.¹

In general, cultural planning has a lot in common with other planning processes based on sound data, comprehensive consultation and thorough analysis. They all build:

- **Common knowledge** (what do we know together?) – consolidating, mapping and sharing information
- **Common ground** (where are there information gaps and agreement) – identifying information gaps and shared opportunities
- **Community capacity** (where do you want to be and how do you get there) – mapping the cultural context and developing a strategic action plan

Cultural and community planning have:

- **A common vision** in seeking to improve the quality of life of local people
- **Common objectives** focused on inclusiveness, responsiveness to local needs and actively seeking to broaden opportunities for all sections of the community
- **Opportunities for integrated programs and projects** centered on building social cohesion, developing a positive sense of place and strong bonds and respect between communities
- **Opportunities for widening partnership resources** through bringing in all sectors, public, private and not-for-profit, as well as identifying linkages which secure value for money benefits²

The overall aims of integrating cultural and community planning include:

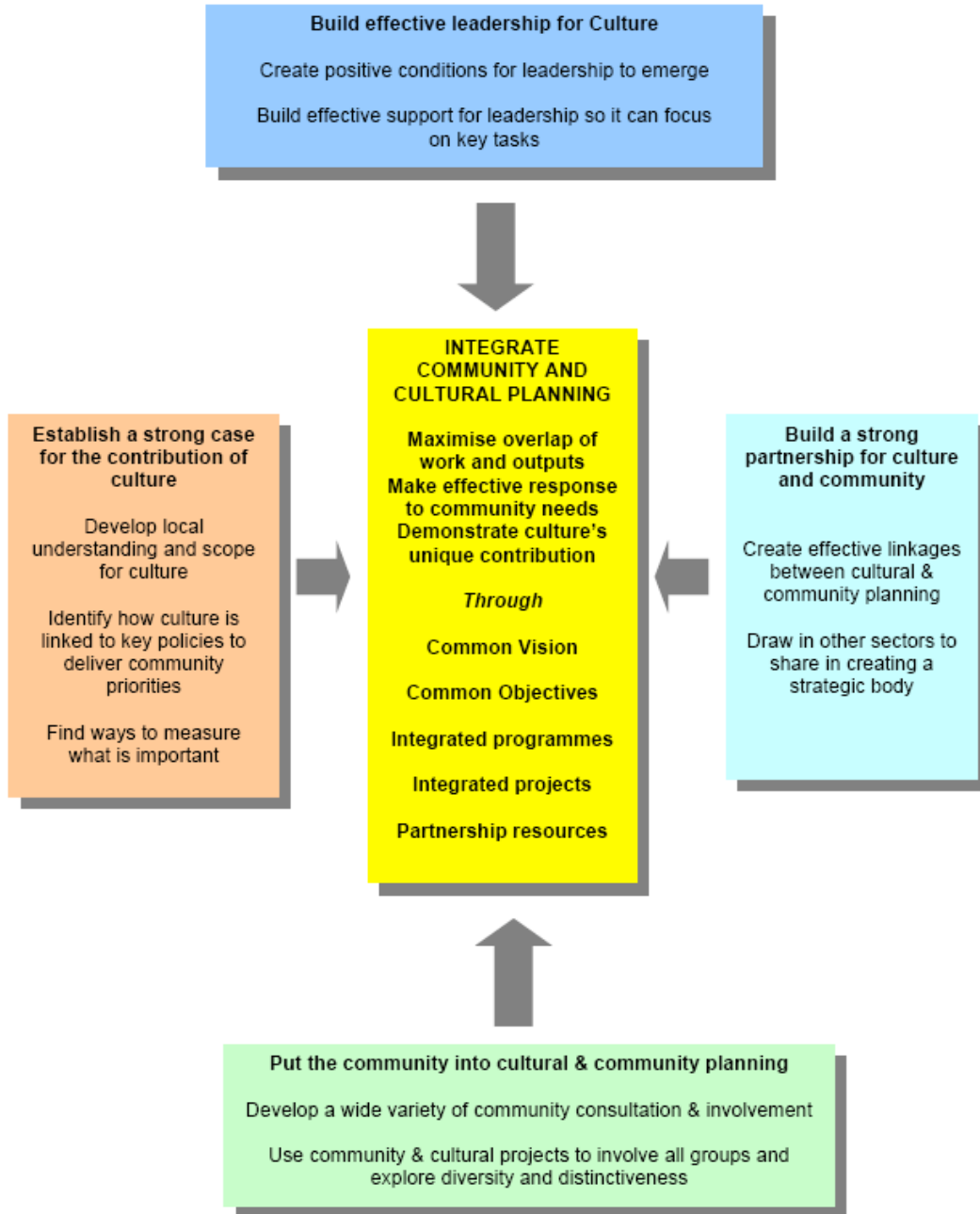
- **Finding effective ways in which culture can respond to community needs and priorities**, helping to bring together corporate and community agendas
- **Raising the profile and application of cultural activity** in community planning and development and demonstrating the value of its unique contribution and approach
- **Maximizing the overlap** between the work and outputs of community and cultural planning³

The strongest case for integrating cultural and community planning is that it is already “joined up”:

It is joined up with our personal, community, regional and national identities. It is joined up with our diverse lifestyles and social environments. It is joined up with the way we live, work and play. It is increasingly joined up with our capacity for sustainable economic development, and attracting inward investment in a knowledge-based and creative economy. It is joined up with the ways in which we can make communities and places physically attractive, socially and economically dynamic and diverse. It is joined-up, ultimately, to our whole quality of life.⁴

Figure 1

**INTEGRATING COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL PLANNING
OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION**



The Benefits

Cultural planning provides a new lens or a different lens for looking at the community. It can provide a fresh perspective. It can also:

- Contribute to combating social exclusion in the community
- Combat the “geography of nowhere” by providing design opportunities to develop “pride of place”
- Support community empowerment through community involvement and ownership of local community initiatives
- Support democratic cultural policy by better understanding of what people are doing and want to do
- Support the development of working in partnership
- Commit to policy-making based on a solid research foundation
- Result in more and improved programs and services in response to identified community needs
- Improve communications and cooperation among arts and other groups
- Integrate the arts/culture into the larger community better, increasing awareness of the potential of arts and culture to contribute to community and economic development
- Improve visibility of a community’s artists and arts organizations
- Improve access to the arts and development of large audiences
- Improve cultural facilities
- Sustain or increase levels of public and private funding for culture

Considerations

Despite the similarities in the objectives, characteristics and processes used in community and cultural planning, there are several challenges in integrating them successfully. These include:

- Defining culture too narrowly – limited by traditional discipline-based policies and frameworks (i.e., distinct policies for museums, performing arts, libraries, cultural industries, etc.) inherited from senior levels of government, or the continued hold that established interests and cultural institutions/facilities have on cultural planning agendas.
- Defining culture and cultural resources too broadly, leading to policy complexity and difficulties for implementation.
- Lack of community and stakeholder understanding or awareness of culture’s connectivity and significance, which can result in discomfort and uncertainty about linking broader concepts of well-being with culture, or not seeing culture as central to people’s lives but as a luxury or afterthought.
- Lack of consensus (or division) within the local cultural sector and lack of access to tools, information and expertise.
- Municipal government structures/processes:
- A lack of understanding and support on the part of elected officials and senior municipal staff.
- Organizational fragmentation – competing interests and values such as departmental and political rivalries; entrenched silos (the use of old planning and decision-making structures that do not cut across and link other areas of municipal planning and decision making); no convening body or agency to draw community stakeholders together; a weakness in setting out clear roles and responsibilities for shared policy areas and few mechanisms for ensuring accountability after a policy has been developed.

- Resource scarcity – most public funding has been designated towards existing facilities and institutions, with little available resources to invest in new creative activity, insufficient dedicated resources to support municipal cultural planning.
- A lack of a clearly articulated policy framework or legislative foundation for local governments as a lever for change – “When “push comes to shove” at budget time it is the “must do” items (legislated requirements) that take precedence over the “nice to do” (non-legislated activity).
- Little understanding that culture is at “the heart of the major challenges facing cities”⁵ and that implementation requires strategic actions that get beyond motherhood statements about how good culture is for a community.
- The resilience of European values and cultural norms where factors such as gender, race, income, ethnicity have lacked attention.
- The scope and scale of government activity and the overload of senior policy makers.
- The difficulty of forecasting and projecting future needs and uncertainty and change, the constant emergence of new technologies requiring the acquisition of new technologically related skills, and a lack of skills for the effective management of planning processes (e.g. negotiation and conflict resolution).
- The nature of local decision-making – often more complex than for senior governments – “local decisions often have a direct, visible and immediate impact... they leave no one indifferent” as they can become politically charged and can generate intense conflicts.⁶
- A focus on the city centre, leaving the periphery marginalized.
- An emphasis on land use planning and the efficient delivery of services.

How to integrate

There are a number of existing guidelines for integrating cultural planning and community planning and strategies. See, in particular:

- Creative Cultures. (2004). *Leading the good life: Guidance on integrating cultural and community strategies*. Produced for Department of Culture, Media, and Sport, Local Government Team. Aberdeen, UK: Creative Cultures.
www.culture.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/4C880A7D-B3C5-4C28-8279-C0191A3DC552/0/leadingthegoodlife.pdf
- Government of New South Wales (Australia). (2006). *Cultural planning guidelines for local government*. Sydney/Nowra, New South Wales, Australia: NSW Ministry for the Arts and Department of Local Government.
www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/Files/Information/CPG-final.pdf

Monitoring and evaluating integration

Alongside the many initiatives and programs that provide fertile ground for culture’s role in community development, comes a requirement to set and meet targets and to monitor and evaluate outputs and outcomes. You need to know what you have achieved and what really matters to your community – “if it can’t be counted, it won’t be focussed on,” with cultural planning losing out to other endeavours.⁷

A number of checklists for monitoring and evaluating the integration of cultural planning into local government policies and operations have been developed.⁸ The following checklists are a composite of these. Factors identified at each stage of the planning process are considered critical to overall success.

Identifying Definitions and Information Needs	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you discussing and agreeing on the scope and meaning of culture for your community?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is a wide range of people involved in this discussion, including those representing non-cultural services?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you carrying out an audit of key policies to identify actual and potential links to culture?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you identifying key local objectives, priorities and issues and considering how culture can contribute to these?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you reviewing existing data on quality of life issues for your local community?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you developing informative and practical performance indicators for culture?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you identifying gaps in this information and developing ways of filling these gaps?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you discussing and agreeing any other ways in which you can establish the case for culture?	

Consultation	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you drawing on a wide range of existing and specially arranged consultation activities to identify community needs and aspirations?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are consultation activities providing information on quality of life issues for your community?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you involving ethnic groups or activities as part of your effort to reach all sections of your community?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you addressing issues of cultural diversity, local characteristics, and regional identity as part of your consultation process?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you involving the local community in decision-making processes concerning cultural development issues?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is the community properly informed of council's decisions?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are there ways in which your community can continue to be involved in the planning and implementation of local cultural activities?	

Partnerships	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Are representatives of the wider cultural sector able to link with the local strategic plan and local authority work on cultural and community development?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you able to identify tangible projects and outcomes from your partnership which demonstrate an effective partnership between cultural and community planning?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are there other actions you are taking (or could be) to establish and maintain a strong partnership?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Would there be value in establishing a joint council-community committee on cultural development?	

Leadership	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you undertaking an audit of current leadership and networks to identify strengths, weaknesses and gaps?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you taking steps to raise the profile and prestige of cultural leadership to encourage champions for culture in all sectors?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Do you have an effective body to work with and support your cultural leadership?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is this body able to focus on overarching and strategic tasks?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you considering activities to develop, strengthen and expand leadership for culture?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are there other actions you are (or could be) taking to provide effective leadership?	

Integration	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the plan use a broad approach to culture and tap into the wide range of council and community concerns and activities?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is a broader cultural development perspective being brought to issues, concerns and ideas which are already on the council's agenda – for example, townscape improvements, heritage conservation, major development projects, traffic management, economic and tourism development?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is cultural development under the plan linked to other established local area planning processes – social/community, land use, health or environment planning?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the plan envisage broader, more diverse or more imaginative uses of major facilities such as libraries, galleries and performing arts centres?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the plan reflect strong, wide ranging networks between council and the community ?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are the necessary skills for a broad approach to cultural development and cultural planning available within the council's existing staff structures?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are training opportunities available for staff who are already involved in cultural development and planning to some extent, but require extra skills?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are staff resources sufficient for a more concerted and integrated approach?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Could available skills and resources be used more effectively?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is there scope for the deployment of multi-disciplinary and cross-departmental teams on cultural development projects?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Where no specialist cultural worker is employed, has an appropriate member of staff been allocated responsibility for cultural development issues?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Where is the community arts officer (or equivalent) located in the organization?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Does this arrangement facilitate or hamper linkages between cultural development and other closely related fields particularly community services, environmental planning and design and economic tourism development?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is there clear responsibility at senior management level for cultural development and or ensuring an integrated approach?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the framework for implementation specify appropriate agencies responsible for implementing strategic cultural provision?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Is the council a member of a regional district with an expressed interest in cultural development and planning?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you involving representatives of regional bodies in key stages of your planning and implementation?	
<input type="checkbox"/> If not, has the council considered the scope for, and potential benefits of, addressing cultural development issues with its neighbour councils at a regional level?	

Monitoring and Evaluation	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Will the monitoring of outcomes in the area of culture reliably assess relevant indicators?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the framework establish clear, effective indicators for measuring success and how they would be measured?	

Indicators of progress towards integration

The changes necessary to achieve full integration of cultural development into local government thinking, planning and decision-making will only take place gradually. The goal of integration should, however, remain in place and be used to measure progress and to assess the value of alternative courses of action. The Government of New South Wales developed a useful set of indicators to monitor and evaluate progress towards integration (see References), which has been adapted as follows:

Indicators of progress towards integration

Low awareness:

- Council unaware of full extent of its involvement in cultural activities
- Council unaware of full extent of community involvement in cultural activities
- Short term, ad hoc community arts projects
- Cultural assets, resources and services not fully integrated into council's overall strategic plan

Raising awareness and extending engagement:

- Broader concept of cultural development emerging
- Greater awareness and recognition of the extent of council's involvement in cultural development
- Greater awareness and recognition of the extent of the community's involvement in cultural activities
- Greater awareness of First Nations cultural development activities and initiatives
- Development and adoption of Indigenous consultation protocols
- Initiation of some longer term cultural development projects which engage different sections of council
- Developing understanding of the role of museums, galleries and historical societies in supporting local distinctiveness and identity
- Continuing strong dependence on energies/leadership of one or two key individuals

Emerging vision and relationships:

- Widespread awareness/acceptance of broad cultural development approach
- Beginnings of a long-term vision
- Development of extensive council–community networks
- Development of strong council–First Nations community networks
- Wider engagement by council staff in cultural development activities
- Solid basis of support within council among elected members, senior managers, various professional groups

Vision, commitment and development:

- Commitment to routine consideration/incorporation of cultural development factors in council activities and decision-making processes
- First Nations consultative protocols routinely and widely applied throughout council. Advice from First Nations community routinely sought
- Well articulated long term vision
- Establishment of multi-disciplinary teams
- Cultural development skills identified, acknowledged and developed in council staff
- Council's cultural assets, resources and services aligned to the overall strategic direction of council
- Responsibility for cultural development shared across a range of disciplines and at senior, middle management and operational levels throughout the council

Integration:

- Formal integration of cultural development into council's strategic planning, corporate planning and budgetary processes
- Powerful 'quality of life' ethos pervades all council activities

References

Baeker, Greg. (2002). *Beyond garrets and silos: Concepts, trends and developments in cultural planning*. Ottawa: Department of Canadian Heritage.

www.creativecity.ca/resources/culturalplanning.pdf

Creative Cultures. (2004). *Leading the good life: Guidance on integrating cultural and community strategies*. Produced for Department of Culture, Media, and Sport, Local Government Team. Aberdeen, UK: Creative Cultures.

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Laperriere, Helen. (1995). *Thinking about culture: The role of research at the local level*. Paper delivered at conference on "Culture in the Neighbourhood: The Role of Research and Planning," Estonia.

Stevenson, Deborah. (2004). Civic gold rush: Cultural planning and the politics of the third way. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 10(1).

Source: Creative Cultures (2004). *Leading the Good Life: Guidance on Integrating Cultural and Community Strategies* was a response to changes to the planning framework in the 2002 *Local Government Act* in the United Kingdom whereby local councils were no longer required to produce free-standing Local Cultural Strategies, but should subsume these within Community Plans.

¹ Stevenson (2004)

² Adapted from Creative Cultures (2004). *Leading the good life: Guidance on integrating cultural and community strategies*.

³ Creative Cultures (2004)

⁴ Creative Cultures (2004)

⁵ Baeker (2002)

⁶ Laperriere (1995), cited in Baeker (2002)

⁷ Creative Cultures (2004)

⁸ These include: *Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government* (Government of New South Wales, 2006); *Leading the Good Life: Guidance on Integrating Cultural and Community Strategies* (Creative Cultures, 2004).