

**Speech by Secretary of State for Culture,
Media and Sport, Tessa Jowell**
***BUILDING TOMORROW: CULTURE IN
REGENERATION***
25 February 2003

Thank you Neil for agreeing to chair today's conference, and to everyone who has attended today. A particular thank you to Michael Wilford, the architect who produced this beautiful building, and which, just by itself, is almost a definition of the power of culture in regeneration.

Three Ministers are here today. Why? Because we know you're onto something. The power of cultural clustering, culture in regeneration, the Bilbao effect, call it what you will – has been given a higher profile in the last couple of years than ever before.

But Government is, I must admit, not the first at the scene. The profile may be new, but the work is not.

Under our noses, the fabric of, and quality of life in, this country has been changing at an incredible pace.

Fuelled often by the lottery, and always by determination and creativity, the pace and depth of this change are a match for any of the great periods of civic renewal of the past. I do not exaggerate when I say this.

The great building programmes of the 19th century which gave us town halls, libraries and every kind of amenity were works of vision.

Of genuine local pride. They were a reaction to social and economic change. And they were driven by the likes of Joe Chamberlain to make that vision a reality.

I am absolutely sure that in hundred years time, the movement so many of you have helped to create will still be admired for the way it shaped our cities and

rural areas. How it boosted local economies. And, most importantly, how it helped to give Britain the most vibrant cultural scene in Europe.

I say *most* important, because I never want us to lose sight the power of culture itself.

What you are producing is cultural institutions, artists, who don't simply inspire civic pride or help their local communities. They produce art. They produce beauty and they innovate.

Most of this day will be spent discussing how regeneration using culture can change areas and peoples' lives for the better. How it can help cut crime. And of course that is a vital topic. But the personal capital that people develop from access to culture in all its forms has the power to transform lives too.

At the risk of mangling Ruskin or William Morris, I want to make clear that beauty is not a way to achieve utility. It is not a means to an end. It is an end in itself.

Take, as an example, our host city for today. The phenomenon often described in shorthand as the Bilbao effect could equally be called the Greater Manchester effect. This city alone has the Lowry itself, Daniel Libeskind's incredible Imperial War Museum North, all the sports facilities that were the result of the Commonwealth Games last year,

the Manchester Art Gallery, People's History Museum, Museum of Science and Industry,

the Bridgewater Hall, the Hallé, the Opera House,

the Royal Exchange, the Royal Northern College of Music.

And apparently football is popular here too.

So Mancunians have a wealth of places to go and be inspired, to learn and to create.

And what we see in Greater Manchester, we can see in cities across the country.

In London, the London Eye or Tate Modern has become as potent a symbol of the capital as St Paul's has been for hundreds of years. But I wouldn't want to give the impression that only urban centres had changed in this way.

It's hard now to think of Cornwall without thinking of the Eden Project. Its impact on the county was almost instantaneous. Within nine months of opening, 1.6 million people had visited it and it was responsible for bringing in an additional £111m of new business to the region.

But regeneration is also not just about flagship projects.

The Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, for example, was one of the earliest Lottery-funded projects, and proof that not all projects have to be new build.

It turned a Victorian red brick school into a superb contemporary art gallery at the heart of the Brindley Place Regeneration Scheme. What was once a largely forgotten run-down inner city area, which I remember well from my work in Birmingham in the 1970s, now sees new residents coming in, new jobs created, and new life returning.

So we know that cultural investment provides dividends in terms of physical and economic renewal, but we also know that this route can renew

communities. There can be real improvements in the quality of life for people.

Just look at the huge success of the Splash schemes which DCMS and the Youth Justice Board ran this summer that community-based work on the themes of sport and the arts deliver real benefits to the community as a whole.

So across all the Summer Splash areas this year, there was an overall reduction in the crime rate of 5.2%, while the schemes were running, against a backdrop of rising crime elsewhere.

And the Creative Partnerships programme will not just excite the minds of a whole generation of young people, it will help to embed cultural institutions and artists even more firmly in their local communities.

So we all know this can work. But we need to be able to prove it. Because the battle to mainstream this kind of work in Government funding is hotting up.

The last 8 years has seen a flowering of art and architecture as a result of the lottery. There is simply no doubt about that. The impetus it gave to capital programmes was huge.

And two successive near doublings of arts funding from central Government since 1997 are making a difference in revenue funding of arts organisations across the country.

But the lottery has shifted - rightly – from a focus on capital to revenue in the last few years.

The review of the lottery I announced last July has been looking long and hard at the lottery and its

future. We have been consulting the public, and the results are instructive:

People don't feel they know enough about how lottery money is spent, or that there is enough transparency in funding decisions. Many want wider consultation with the public before the distributors decide their priorities.

There is also clear support for a more streamlined way for funding applicants to make their case. That was especially true for smaller organisations.

These results chime with our own thinking, which is why I am so keen to go ahead with the mooted proposal to merge the Community Fund with NOF. The result would be a single community distributor.

A single brand. A single front door for would be applicants.

And I am thinking hard about whether to extend the single brand principle right across the distributors.

The business case for a merger is strong. There is significant overlap between the Community Fund and New Opportunities Fund. And a single body would allow better co-ordination of funding to the voluntary and community sector.

But I want a new community Lottery distributor to be much more than the sum of its parts, setting the pace for modernising delivery of Lottery funding by:

- providing a responsive and streamlined source of funding and support for communities;
- focusing on improving the quality of life in communities by tackling disadvantage and by promoting social inclusion;

- and by taking a lead role in implementing improvements in distribution arising from the Lottery Review,

I recognise there are genuine concerns about a merger. But let me assure those with concerns that we not want to lose the distinctive identities of NOF and the Community Fund.

And let me state quite clearly that under the new body the proportion of charitable funding would not diminish. Nor would Government exercise higher control over this strand of funding than it does at present.

The voluntary and community sector will want much more than words from me. And that is why I will involve them and other partners at every stage as we consider what role the new body will play.

I am spending so long on this point because the lottery is so central to the success of cultural renewal.

Because the post review lottery should continue to fund innovation, and to be a form of venture capital for communities and for culture.

And because I want the lottery to keep its focus on the kind of transformational investment which is always beyond the reach of Government.

One example of that kind of investment is staging an Olympics. Those of you who read the sports pages regularly will know that there has been a lively debate going on for several months now in the national media about whether London should bid, with the help of Government, for the Olympics in 2012.

I think one of the great advantages of a successful bid would be the legacy it would leave Stratford and Lea Valley in East London. And the three-year cultural festival that would precede it would be another huge shot in the arm to the arts.

But there is another equally important decision, which the Government needs to take shortly.

Which of the six bidding cities will win the chance to be European Capital of Culture in 2008.

The six shortlisted cities have all already put in a huge amount of effort into regenerating their city centres and civic pride in those centres. And they all have ambitious plans to take this work forward if they win.

Whether they do or not, all the areas which have bid will have learned a lot from the process of thinking

about cultural capital and regeneration in a structured way.

And that structure is something I hope the conference will draw out: even more evidence to help us plan ahead.

Most major projects in recent times have been monitored and have produced evaluative studies already. Professor Peter Stark, who is with us today, is looking in detail at the regenerative outputs arising from the Baltic Quays project for example. But what we are missing is commonality – a standard of set agreed targets and indicators by which we can measure the social and the economic impact of our projects.

Because cultural regeneration projects can go down as well as up.

If they are not thought through, truly embedded in their community and given a revenue funding stream, they will wither. Just look at the different histories of the Baltic in Gateshead and the Ark in Stockton on Tees and you see that point vividly.

I can see that Tony McNulty is raring to go, and we have a lot to discuss in the next few hours, so I'll end with just a couple of final points.

The Bilbao effect, or rather the Greater Manchester effect, exists, and it works. It's been around in one form or another since Herodotus described the cultural tourism he saw in Egypt.

So don't be shy about your success so far. The country is already immeasurably richer for the links you have helped forge between culture and regeneration.

Tell your local Government about it. Tell developers.

Tell Gordon.

And don't give up. The amazing reception that new cultural centres receive is proof that we've gone through the pain barrier. Anthony Gormley and Gateshead Council had to endure a torrent of criticism about the Angel of the North when it was first mooted.

One council member said: " it will ruin a nice piece of countryside. "

A spectacular missing of the point. And who now condemns the Angel? No-one.

Because the public for whom these new facilities are meant really get it. They want better communities, and better public buildings, and richer lives and a more secure local economy.

And they want, and deserve, beauty.

