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## Foreword by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

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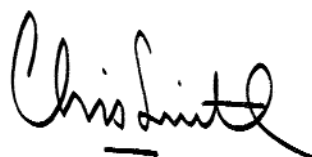
In my foreword to the draft Guidance last year I began by summarising why culture in its widest sense is so important. It is about improving the quality of life for all, allowing people both to derive pleasure and to fulfil their own potential and broaden their horizons. Equally cultural services play a crucial role tackling social exclusion, contributing to regeneration, to promoting safer communities, encouraging healthier lifestyles, providing opportunities for voluntary and community activity, and stimulating lifelong learning. I make no apology for reiterating this. Cultural services have so much to offer and communities so much to gain, through a constructive, strategic approach to their provision.

This is why Local Cultural Strategies are so important. Much good work has been done by many authorities in recent years in seeking to draw together at least some of their cultural services, and the pool of knowledge thus created has been of help in developing this guidance. A coherent set of guidelines, with considerable flexibility built in to allow for varying local circumstances, can help cultural activities - in their widest sense - achieve the recognition they deserve, and become central to the lives of communities and to the work and corporate objectives of each authority.

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This final guidance is the result of extensive discussions and practical assessment of the 1999 draft. It contains a number of amendments, clarifications, updates and changes in emphasis as it should following more than a year in which fourteen authorities - who I wish to thank for their hard work - have piloted the draft guidance to draw out its practical implications, difficulties, rewards and benefits. It is also a year in which we have received many helpful and useful comments and observations. At the end of the process, it is good to know that the pilot's experience has been a beneficial one. I know too that other local authorities other than the pilots have recognised the benefits and have been actively developing their own strategies with the help of the draft guidance.

One of the key benefits identified by the pilot authorities has been that of partnership working. It is fitting then that this Guidance itself has been prepared in partnership with the Local Government Association and the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers' Association and a steering group of professional associations and non-government agencies all bringing their expertise to bear. I offer my thanks to all those who have contributed, and I look forward to all local authorities having a Local Cultural Strategy as soon as possible and certainly by the end of 2002.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "C" and a long, sweeping tail.

## 1: Introduction

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- 1.1 Draft Guidance on Local Cultural Strategies was published in Summer 1999. It was developed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), in partnership with the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Chief Culture and Leisure Officers' Association (CCLOA), and with the involvement of a wider steering group, consisting of professional associations, non-government sponsored agencies and other key players. Much of the research, drafting and piloting of the Draft Guidance was done by Leisure Futures Ltd.
- 1.2 Since the Draft, 14 local authorities have been selected as Pilots and have been developing their Local Cultural Strategies. The experience of the Pilots has shown that few major changes to the Draft Guidance are required. Inevitably, though, there is a need for some clarifications, updates, amendments and changes in emphasis.
- 1.3 In this Final Guidance, Section A sets out government guidance to be followed when undertaking a Local Cultural Strategy. This includes the scope, benefits, principles and policy context underpinning Local Cultural Strategies.
- 1.4 Section B should be considered as general management advice and is intended as practical help to authorities developing their Local Cultural Strategies rather than as government guidance as such. It is based on current good management practice. The government expects local authorities to give due consideration to the process of strategy development, to develop a strategy which addresses the local cultural issues and which, through its Action Plan, can be monitored and reviewed. But - with the exception of a few matters specified in Section A - how the local authority goes about this, the detailed *form* and *content* of the strategy document produced, and the *means of monitoring and review* is for the local authority to decide.

## Section A: Guidance

### 2: Scope, Aims, Benefits and Principles

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#### Introduction

- 2.1** Local authorities are strongly encouraged to develop and implement Local Cultural Strategies for their areas in order to promote the cultural well-being of the area. Such a strategy will integrate, implement and monitor the major cultural goals, policies and actions of the authority and its partners. Although the development of a Local Cultural Strategy is not a statutory duty, the Department expects that all local authorities in England, whether individually, or as part of joint or consortium arrangements, will prepare a Local Cultural Strategy for their area by the end of 2002. This expectation does not extend to parish and town councils, who should choose whether it is appropriate to their particular situation.
- 2.2** Local authorities are best placed to take the 'leadership' role for this work because they are democratic and accountable; provide and fund a range of cultural services; and have regulatory and development powers. In taking the lead, the local authority will need to forge partnerships with other public, voluntary and private agencies, and actively engage the community. This will help to create a sustainable strategy and enduring partnerships.
- 2.3** Some local authorities have already begun the process of strategy development or have a number of service strategies in place. These authorities should follow this Guidance building on the work they have already undertaken and their experience to date.
- 2.4** The Department recognises that some local authorities and individuals are uncomfortable with the term 'culture'. We believe 'culture' emphasises both the inclusiveness of the Strategy and the need to think and act beyond traditional boundaries, departments and delivery mechanisms. However, we do not wish to be prescriptive about the final terminology that individual local authorities use. What matters is that local authorities follow the scope and principles set out below, that there is sufficient evidence that these have been followed to conform with the Best Value National Performance Indicator BV114, and that the overarching aim of promoting the cultural well-being of the area is achieved.

## Scope

- 2.5** Local Cultural Strategies need to be inclusive and reflect the local community's overall ways of life, its experiences, activities, choices, values and uniqueness.
- 2.6** In terms of scope, 'culture' should be taken to include such activities as arts, sports, libraries, museums, heritage, archaeology, archives, architecture, crafts, children's play, reading, parks, tourism, countryside recreation, etc. Other activities such as, entertainments, design, fashion, food, media, visiting attractions and other informal leisure pursuits will also be part of at least some local cultural strategies.
- 2.7** The geographical identity, local history and the character of an area also help shape its particular culture. Cultural activities, interests and places generate a vitality and increase the quality of life for both individuals and communities. They have an intrinsic value in their own right. They can also provide positive links between the present, past and future; bring communities together; and can help to provide a focus for the needs of particular communities, e.g. youth, black and ethnic minority populations, the elderly, people with disabilities. All these will inform the Local Cultural Strategy which should value and encourage the imaginative cultural activities of all communities - it should not straight jacket them. Exhibit One illustrates the potential scope for culture.

## Exhibit One: Scope of Culture

### Culture has a material dimension

- the performing and visual arts, craft, and fashion
- media, film, television, video, and language
- museums, artifacts, archives and design
- libraries, literature, writing and publishing
- the built heritage, architecture, landscape and archaeology
- sports events, facilities and development
- parks, open spaces, wildlife habitats, water environment and countryside recreation
- children's play, playgrounds and play activities
- tourism, festivals and attractions
- informal leisure pursuits

### Culture has a value dimension

- relationships
- shared memories, experiences and identity
- diverse cultural, religious and historic backgrounds
- standards
- what we consider valuable to pass on to future generations

Adapted from "A Cultural Strategy for Rotherham Metropolitan Borough"

## **Aims**

- 2.8** The main aim of a Local Cultural Strategy is to promote the cultural well-being of the area. As such, it gives a clear rationale why the local authority funds, manages, supports, encourages or regulates certain services and activities; it provides the basis from which an authority can best determine its own contribution to the cultural well-being of the community.

## **Benefits**

- 2.9** The benefits of a Local Cultural Strategy are set out in Exhibit Two. These are the benefits that each Strategy should seek to achieve. In addition to the internal benefits to the local authority, the Strategy will have a particular importance for the Lottery Distributing Bodies in their prioritising and decision-making processes - though, of course, the presence of a strategy only assists in securing Lottery funding and is not an automatic guarantee. Further detailed work may be required.

## Exhibit Two: Benefits of Developing a Local Cultural Strategy

- Focuses on the cultural needs, demands and aspirations of the communities covered and encapsulates the vision of the local authority
- Brings cultural activities centre stage in the business of the local authority
- Demonstrates that the cultural needs of the area are being met in an efficient, equitable and effective way
- Helps to ensure equity and access for everyone to cultural activities
- Sets out both the intrinsic value of cultural activities as well as their instrumental benefits - the positive contribution cultural activities make towards the economic, social and environmental well-being of the local population
- Inspires local people and communities and promotes volunteering in cultural activities
- Creates pathways for people to participate in different cultural activities throughout their lives, and encourages lifelong learning
- Defines priorities within and between services and reconciles competing demands
- Informs the individual detailed service plans and the work of individual officers, departments and other agencies
- Acts as a framework for performance review
- Encourages innovation and partnership solutions to providing cultural services and identifies opportunities designed to meet local needs
- Sets a direction and priorities for the local authority and other agencies and organisations
- Provides links with other plans and strategies of the authority and its partners and promotes partnerships
- Helps create a clear vision shared by other funding agencies
- Acts as a lever and rationale for gaining funding from external agencies, including:
  - Regional funding
  - Funding from sponsored agencies
  - Lottery funding
  - European Union funding
  - Private sponsorship
- Links with Central Government agendas (including those of the DCMS, DETR and DfEE) and with the strategies of national and regional agencies thus bringing synergy to the work of all the agencies involved and informs and influences the Regional Cultural Strategies to be produced by the Regional Cultural Consortia

## Principles

2.10 The following principles should underpin local authorities' Local Cultural Strategies.

They should:

- promote the **cultural well-being of the area;**
- be based on the **needs, demands and aspirations** of the communities which the local authority serves;
- be **guided by a vision** for the culture of their area;
- ensure **fair access** for all;
- seek to **address the broad range of cultural needs** of the communities served;
- be for the **area served by the local authority;**
- be developed through a **cross-departmental and inter-agency approach**. The local authority should lead the process but work in partnership with other agencies from all sectors. This shares resources and expertise, ensures different views are heard, and helps to develop synergy between agencies;
- take a **holistic**, rather than a service or department, viewpoint, and not be bounded by the responsibilities of a specific department or committee;
- make **clear links with these other strategies and plans of the local authority**, setting out the roles of the different plans, and clarifying where the Local Cultural Strategy informs those other plans and where those other plans inform and influence the Local Cultural Strategy;
- ensure that **meaningful active consultation** with a wide range of organisations and local people - both users and non-users of services - is central to the strategy. This ensures common ownership. Many cultural activities are managed by community organisations, others by the private sector or by other public agencies including parish and town councils. The activities of these organisations, particularly voluntary groups, are often of great importance. Local authorities should consider at the outset how these organisations could be involved in the development and implementation of the Local Cultural Strategy;

- 
- take account of the **wider central and regional government context**. This includes the objectives of:
    - central government
    - Regional Development Agencies
    - Regional Cultural Consortiums
    - sponsored agencies and their regional offices including Regional Arts Boards, Regional Offices of Sport England, Regional Tourist Boards, Area Museum Services, English Heritage, Countryside Agency, English Nature, Environment Agency and others
  - consider how they can **contribute to central government's key objectives**- increasing sustainable growth and employment, promoting fairness and opportunity, and modernising public services. These include the cross-cutting agendas of: public health, community safety, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, regeneration, the 'Active Community' initiative and lifelong learning;
  - be viewed as **overarching documents** covering all the individual cultural services provided or supported by the local authority. In turn these will have their own action plans and performance reviews, and where they are of sufficient importance, their own strategies.
  - be **focused** on:
    - strategic choices
    - priorities for resources and action
    - defined outcomes
    - forward planning
    - mechanisms for implementation
    - mechanisms for monitoring and review
  - ensure that the strategy document contains an **Action Plan** or other implementation mechanism and that there are means for monitoring and review, including performance indicators (PIs) and other means of assessment. Where possible, PIs should be output and outcome indicators in order to establish the effectiveness of the Strategy and its impact in terms of the cultural well-being of the area.

- 2.11** Careful thought and planning should be given to the process of strategy development - including the need to thoroughly embed these principles; consider the local, regional and national contexts; involve partners and elected members; and ensure active consultation. Authorities will need to consider how consultation is integrated into their statutory obligation to consult under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999. The demands of consultation with many different organisations, groups and communities should not be underestimated, and a realistic assessment should be made about the resources which can be put to the process. But authorities should aim for quality both in terms of the strategy development process and in terms of the outcome of the Strategy.
- 2.12** The main function of the strategy document will be as a working document for the local authority and its partners. Local authorities should also make a summary widely available for the general public.
- 2.13** The geographical extent of a Local Cultural Strategy need not be bounded by the administrative boundary of the local authority. This may bear little relation to the actual patterns of life of the community, while many cultural facilities and services, e.g. tourist attractions, have a wider significance. Local authorities should consider both the impact of outside regional / sub-regional cultural facilities on their locality and the wider impact of such facilities situated within their boundary.

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- 2.14** While most local authorities will wish to produce their own Local Cultural Strategies, others may wish to produce their strategy either in association with neighbouring authorities, or as part of a consortium of local authorities. For instance, it may be appropriate for a Local Cultural Strategy to be produced by District, County and Unitary Authorities working together. Such joint working ensures that links are made between, for example, culture and education, helps avoid duplication and enables resources and expertise to be shared. This may particularly help small rural District authorities whose resources are limited. But this is a matter for individual authorities to consider locally. What is important is that, whether Counties and Districts produce a single joint strategy or a number of separate strategies, local communities are clear about the aims and desired outcomes of the strategies and that, where the County and the Districts are developing different Local Cultural Strategies, all authorities should ensure that their Strategies are complementary.
- 2.15** The development and implementation of a Local Cultural Strategy has been incorporated into the Best Value performance management framework as BV114 – ‘Does the local authority have a local cultural strategy?’ To attain this performance indicator, authorities will need to follow this guidance and have the evidence that they have done so. The indicator will be reviewed annually with a view to refining it in future years to have regard to the implementation and monitoring of the strategy.

## Exhibit Three:

### Aim

To improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, and to champion the creative and leisure industries. The Department will:

- work to bring quality and excellence in the fields of culture, media and sport;
- make these available to the many, not just the few;
- raise standards of cultural education and training; and
- help to develop the jobs of the future in the creative industries.

### Objectives

The Department, in partnership with others, works to:

- Sustain and develop quality, innovation and good design; create an efficient and competitive
  - market, including by removing unnecessary regulation and other obstacles to growth so as to
  - develop the tourism and creative industries; and promote Britain's success in the fields of
  - culture, media and sport at home and abroad;
- Broaden access for all to a rich and varied cultural and sporting life and to our distinctive built
  - environment; and encourage conservation of the best of the past;
- Develop the educational potential of the nation's cultural and sporting resources; raise
  - standards of cultural education and training; ensure an adequate skills supply for the creative
  - industries and tourism;
- Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to develop talent and to achieve excellence in the
  - areas of culture, media and sport;
- Maintain public support for the National Lottery and ensure that the money raised for good
  - causes supports DCMS' and other national priorities; and
- Promote the role of the Department's sectors in urban and rural regeneration, in pursuing
  - sustainability and in combating social exclusion.

In carrying out these objectives the Department will seek maximum value for money in using its human and financial resources, through applying the principles of efficiency among and effectiveness in its sectors and in encouraging partnership with others.

## 3: Context

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- 3.1 Local Cultural Strategies should take account of, and consider how they can contribute to, the national and regional context, including the objectives of the DCMS and other relevant Government Departments, particularly, the DETR. This Section summarises this context as it relates to Local Cultural Strategies.

### Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

- 3.2 The Aim and Objectives of the DCMS are set out in Exhibit Three. Perhaps of most direct relevance to local authorities are the themes of quality, raising standards, cultural sector jobs and - particularly - access. Note should also be made that the Lottery Distributors now have strategic plans matching lottery funds to needs, and that the focus has shifted away from buildings towards people, towards reducing economic and social deprivation and towards a fairer distribution across the country. A Local Cultural Strategy will be a powerful tool in leveraging funds from the National Lottery to those projects which have a strategic value to the area.

### Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)

- 3.3 DETR has policy responsibility for some important elements of cultural strategies, notably parks, open spaces and countryside recreation, waterways, landscape and wildlife conservation. The Aim and Objectives of DETR for this area are set out in Exhibit Four.

## **Exhibit Four: Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)**

### **Aim**

The DETR aims to improve everyone's quality of life, now and for the future, through:

- thriving, prosperous, regions and communities
- better transport
- better housing
- a better environment
- safer, healthier surroundings; and
- prudent use of natural resources

Objectives include:

- to protect and improve the environment and to integrate the environment with other policies across Government and internationally;
- to enhance opportunity in rural areas, improve enjoyment of the countryside and conserve and manage wildlife resources;
- to promote a sustainable pattern of physical development and land and property use in cities, towns and the countryside
- to promote a system of elected government in England which responds to the needs of
- communities;
- to enhance sustainable economic development and social cohesion throughout England through effective regional action and integrated local regeneration programmes.

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## Modernising Local Government

### Best Value

**3.4** DETR also leads on the most important of the Government's plans for local authorities - as set out in 'Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People' (DETR, 1998) and the Local Government Acts 1999 and 2000. The 1999 Act sets a new general duty to achieve Best Value for local authorities which took effect from 1st April 2000:

“The general duty. 3. - (1) A best value authority must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.”

Local Government Act 1999.

**3.5** Best Value authorities are accountable to local people. Authorities must set standards - covering both cost and quality - for all services for which they are responsible. They need to deliver the outcomes people want.

**3.6** Local authorities must also establish priorities. These priorities will flow from an engagement with the community, and from the local authority's performance as an organisation and as a provider of services. Local authorities will have to work within a performance management framework which requires them to review their functions fundamentally over a five year cycle. The purpose of these Best Value Reviews will be to ensure arrangements are in place to deliver continuous improvement.

**3.7** The development of a local cultural strategy is closely linked to the delivery of a local authority's cultural and leisure services in a way which ensures that they provide best value. A local cultural strategy provides the basis from which an authority can best determine its own contribution to the cultural well-being of the community. The key local priorities of the strategy will help determine objectives and targets of a range of local authority services including, but not limited to, its cultural and leisure services.

- 3.8** In turn, best value is key to ensuring that the aspirations identified in the local cultural strategy are turned into effective action. Without a clear understanding of local needs and the contributions that can be made by other local agencies, the authority is unlikely to achieve best value in the provision of its own services. Best value service reviews will need to analyse the extent to which existing services are meeting community needs and priorities, and identify ways in which services can be improved or reconfigured to do so.
- 3.9** The development and implementation of a Local Cultural Strategy has been integrated into the Best Value performance management framework. The Best Value National Performance Indicator, BV114 “Does the local authority have a local cultural strategy?” is the key Strategic Objective PI for Cultural and Related Services. This PI is defined as being in accordance with this DCMS Guidance. This means that local authorities will need to follow this DCMS guidance, and that they will need to have evidence that they have followed it.
- 3.10** Consultation is also integral to both processes. The consultation processes of both should be combined as far as possible. This will be less burdensome to local authorities and will lessen the danger of ‘consultation fatigue’ among the local authority’s partners, the business and voluntary sectors and the local public.

### Community Strategies

- 3.11** The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to prepare a ‘community strategy’ for promoting the economic, environmental and social well-being of their areas and so contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK. It also gives authorities broad new powers to improve and promote local well-being as a means for helping them to implement those strategies. Culture is important to the well-being of the community.
- 3.12** The principles, components and developmental process proposed for community strategies are broadly similar to those set out in this guidance for Local Cultural Strategies.

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- 3.13** Local Cultural Strategies will need to link with, and be informed by the community strategy. They will need to advocate the value and importance of culture to the community, and demonstrate the ways that it can deliver the main local agendas. Where the community and other stakeholders do not see culture as a central feature of their vision the Local Cultural Strategy will need to reflect and challenge this. However, work on the local cultural strategy should not be delayed until after a community strategy has been finalised.
- 3.14** The Community Strategy may be prepared by a local strategic partnership (LSP). An LSP is intended to improve local public services by bringing together those who deliver different services to decide where their common priorities lie. The presumption is that LSPs should form the basis of a new partnership working arrangement as well as providing an opportunity to rationalise existing partnerships. Above all the linkages and communications between partnerships should be clear and straightforward. Local authorities will need to consider partnership arrangements for developing and implementing the local cultural strategy.

### Other Government Initiatives

- 3.15** Other central government policy initiatives will impact in various ways on local authorities preparing their Local Cultural Strategies. These include initiatives such as the Department of Health's Health Improvement Programmes and Quality Protects Management Plans, the Home Office's Community Safety Plans, the DETR's Local Transport Plans and the Department for Education and Employment's (DfEE) Education Development Plans. Given the many links between education and culture, both for statutory education and for lifelong learning, the DfEE's initiatives will, arguably, have more direct links with Local Cultural Strategies than other initiatives and will, in turn, be impacted directly by the aims and outcomes of Local Cultural Strategies.
- 3.16** These, and other policy initiatives such as the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, are evolving fast. Local authorities will need to keep abreast of these agendas as their Local Cultural Strategies are developed and implemented.

## **Regional Cultural Consortiums**

**3.17** The DCMS has established Regional Cultural Consortiums in each of the English regions outside London. The Consortiums:

- Provide the main focus and channel for debating, representing and developing the whole spectrum of cultural and creative interests in the regions;
- Encourage and promote a cross-cutting approach in order to develop a regional cultural strategy for achieving regional and national objectives;
- Champion the role of the cultural and creative interests.

**3.18** The Consortiums provide a vehicle for bringing together local government, other public authorities, and voluntary and private interests in the cultural and creative industries fields. The eight chairs were appointed by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport in October 1999. Consortium members represent all the cultural sectors, with nominations from local government, appropriate regional organisations and co-opted individuals. The local government representatives make up between one quarter and one third of the Consortium. This is in recognition of the key role to be played by local government in helping with the development and implementation of regional cultural strategies through their responsibility for cultural services and a better quality of life at the local level.

**3.19** The Regional Cultural Strategy is the focus for the Consortium's work in bringing cultural and creative interests together to consider how they can co-operate across sectors, look for opportunities for joint working and ensure that they are working towards the same broad outcomes. It will:

- Promote public appreciation of the contribution of culture to the region
- Set out commonly agreed cultural priorities and themes and an action plan

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It operates at a high level. Amongst other things the coherent framework of regional cultural priorities it sets will help inform the RDA's regional economic strategy and Lottery distributors' strategies, within which Lottery bids can be assessed. It is a vital part of the context in which local cultural strategies are developed.

- 3.20** 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 cross-cutting 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. The regional cultural strategy provides the wider framework, but rather than a strict hierarchical relationship between the two, both need to take account of the other, informing and influencing one another as they are implemented. There needs to be a shared understanding of issues, objectives and opportunities to ensure that the strategies develop in a complementary manner. There may also be opportunities to share work; cultural audit is an obvious example where the work of either party may directly benefit both.
- 3.21** In London the Mayor is responsible for cultural strategy and is advised by a Cultural Strategy Group for London. This group has been appointed by the Mayor and will be developing a draft strategy which will be subject to consultation and consideration by the Mayor.

### **Linkages with Other Plans & Strategies**

- 3.22** The local authority's Local Cultural Strategy must link with its other plans and strategies as well as with the strategies of partner agencies. An illustration of one way of showing the linkages between the Local Cultural Strategy and these other plans and strategies is shown in Exhibit Five. This is only one way of linking the different strategies. What is important is that the relationships between the strategies are clear and distinct. The general relationship is likely to be an iterative one where the local cultural strategy informs and impacts on other strategies which then, in turn, inform and impact on future reviews of the local cultural strategy. While there will be some variation between authorities, the most important linkages (as well as those noted in 3.15) are likely to be with:

- the local authority's **Corporate Strategy and Best Value Performance Plan** - the Local Cultural Strategy should be set in the context of the authority's corporate objectives, priorities, performance indicators and targets. It should help the authority achieve these corporate objectives and targets. The Best Value Performance Plan will be the driver of the performance of the local authority as an organisation. Local authorities should view the Local Cultural Strategy as an integral part of the Best Value process.
- the **Local Development Plans and Regional Development Agency Strategy** - these should support, and be supported by, the Local Cultural Strategy
- **individual service strategies and plans** for those services which come within the scope of the Local Cultural Strategy. The Local Cultural Strategy will help provide a framework for these services and help underpin their Best Value Reviews
- depending on the services of the local authority, it may also include the **Annual Library Plan**. While these are free-standing statutory strategies, they should dovetail with, but not duplicate, the Local Cultural Strategy.

### Local Development Plans

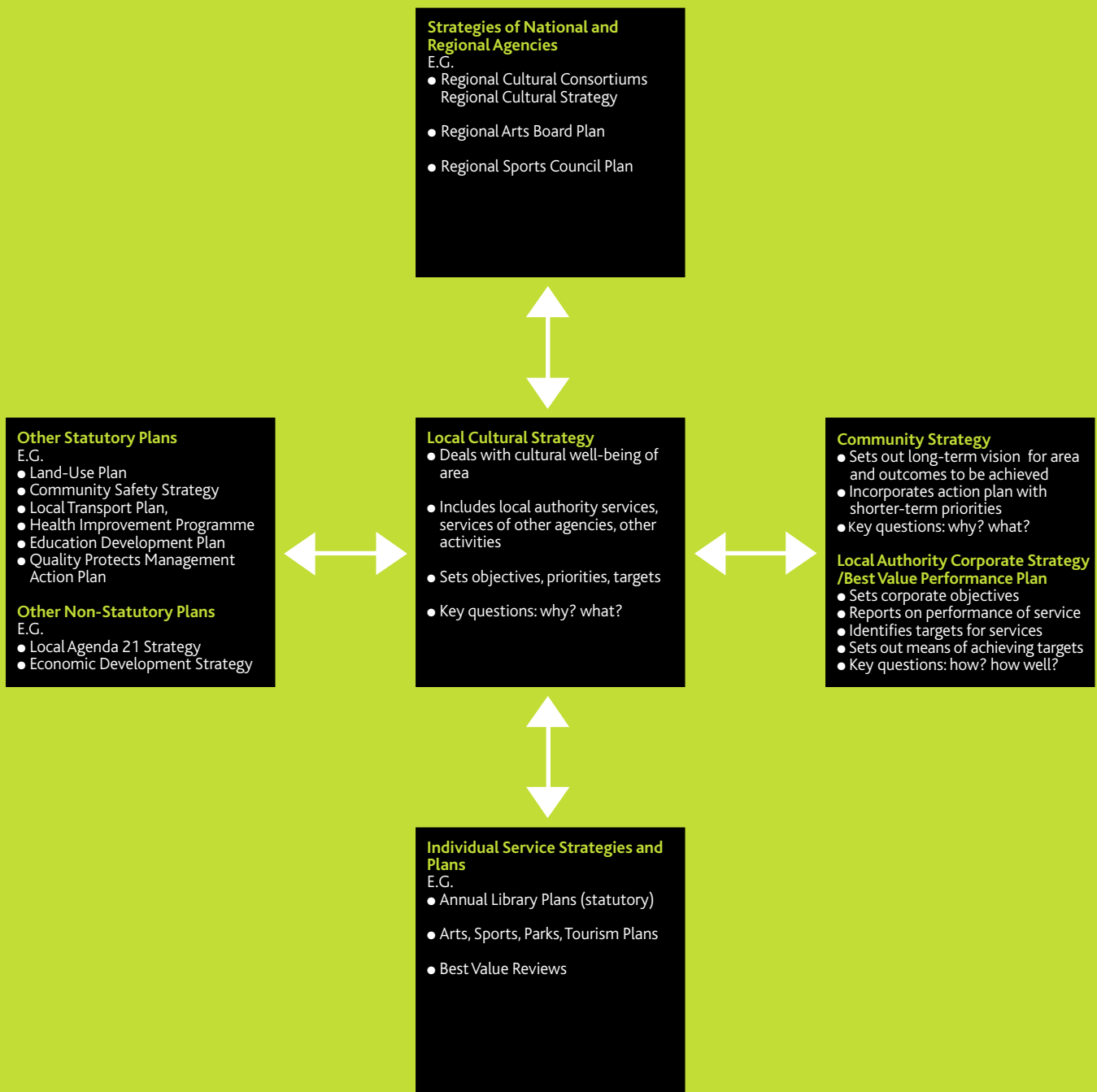
**3.23** The statutory Local Development Plan (also known as the Unitary Development Plan or Whole District Local Plan) will impact on a local authority's Local Cultural Strategy both through its role in terms of conservation and control of development, and through its policies relating to leisure and recreational land uses, to the historic environment and nature conservation and to matters relating to tourism.

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- 3.24** Where Local Cultural Strategies impact on land use planning, they should take account of government and local planning authority policies and the plans themselves. In turn, the development of Local Cultural Strategies should inform revision of the Local Development Plan and County Structure Plans. They may be regarded as non-statutory documents offering support to development policies. Local authorities will also need to take into account the major environmental impacts and need for good architecture and urban design of many of the cultural services, facilities and activities which come within the scope of the Local Cultural Strategy.
- 3.25** Cultural needs are considered in a number of Planning Policy Guidance notes issued by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. Local Cultural Strategies give the opportunity to implement this guidance in accordance with the Local Development Plan but extending its implications to non-planning issues. Thus Local Development Plans and Local Cultural Strategies become mutually supportive in helping to define the role of the local authority in the provision of cultural services and in applying the principles of sustainable development to a strategic approach to culture.

### Service Strategies & Plans

- 3.26** Local Cultural Strategies should also link with the service strategies and plans for each of the cultural services provided by the authority. In some cases this will be relatively straightforward. In others it will be more complicated, for instance with a local authority's 'Tourism Strategy' which may be defined much more in terms of economic development, or with the authority's statutory 'Annual Library Plan', which is a free-standing strategic document with an annual Action Plan component.
- 3.27** The process is likely to be an iterative one with existing service strategies and plans informing the Local Cultural Strategy and then the Local Cultural Strategy informing future updates and revisions of service strategies and plans. The approach favoured is one in which the vision, values, policies and strategic priorities of the Local Cultural Strategy act as a framework, with individual Service Strategies developing these for their particular sector, while specific Work Plans focussing on operational matters, individual initiatives and detailed outputs, outcomes and targets.

## Exhibit Five: Linkages between strategies and plans



## Section B: General Advice

### 4: Process

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This section is intended as practical help to authorities developing local cultural strategies and is based on current good management practice.

#### Strategies

- 4.1** A strategy is a plan that integrates the major goals, policies and actions of an organisation or partnership of organisations into a cohesive whole. Like all strategies, a Local Cultural Strategy should be viewed not as a firmly fixed plan, but as a continuing process, informing other strategies and, in turn, being informed by them. Strategies, in this view, are not so much about establishing once-and-for-all optimal solutions, as about understanding, and acting upon, the unfolding and complex strategic relationships, opportunities and uncertain futures in which local authorities operate.
- 4.2** The term ‘strategy’ refers to both strategy development and its subsequent implementation. We focus here on strategy development since strategy implementation will vary from authority to authority. Exhibit Six sets out the differences between operational and strategic issues.

## Exhibit Six: The Difference Between Operational and Strategic Issues

### Operational

- Routine
- Service/operational specific
- Small scale change
- Concerned with short term
- Resource driven
- Concerned with 'how to do this'
- Often characterised by crisis

### Strategic

- Complex, non routine
- Fundamental Organisation-wide
- Significant change
- Concerned with medium and long term
- Needs & aspiration driven
- Environment driven
- Concerned with 'why are we doing this?' and 'what should we be doing?'
- Characterised by 'reflection'

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## The Strategy Development Process

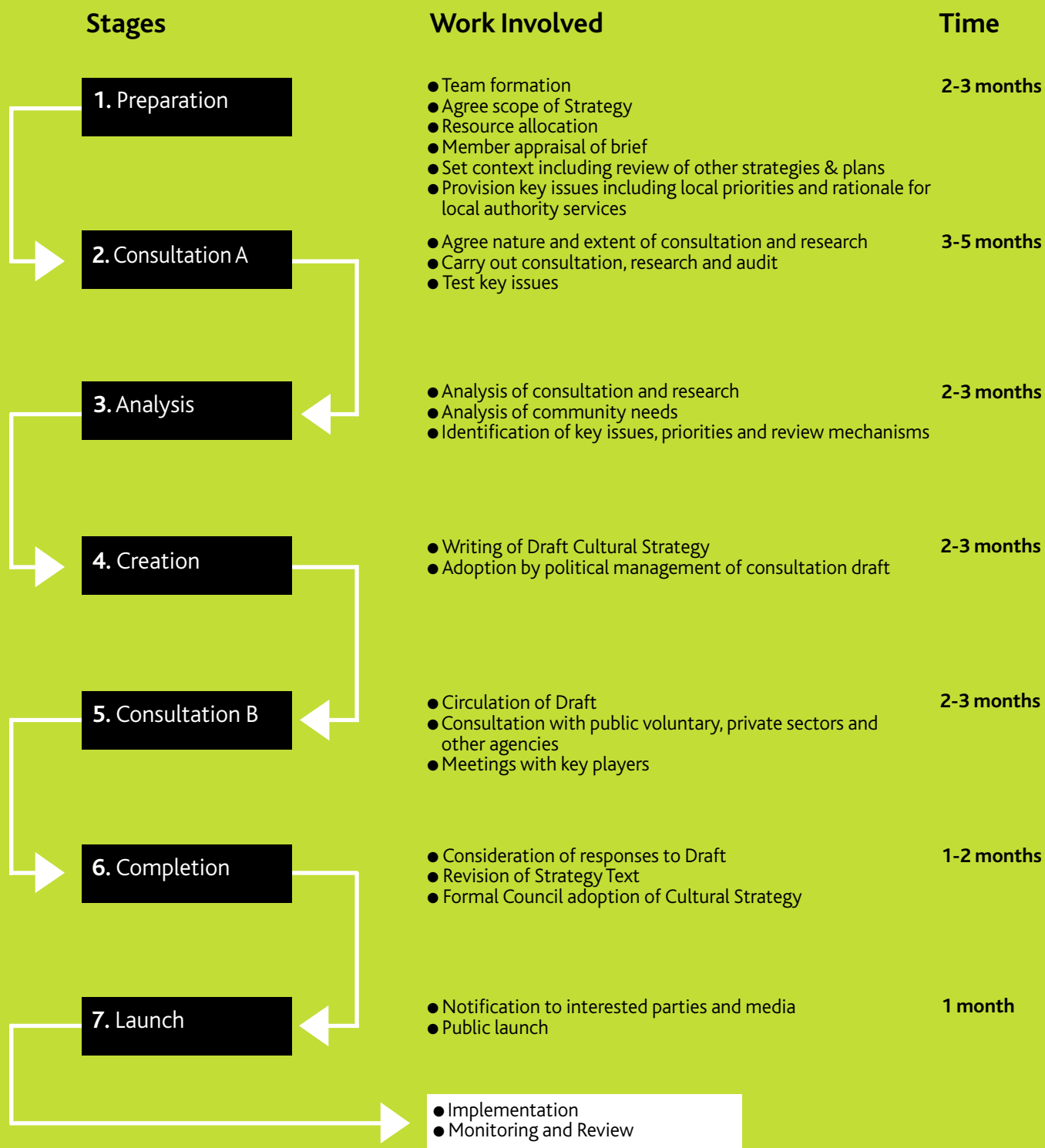
- 4.3 Any strategy development process is complex and time consuming, involves different skills and expertise, and is likely to take a considerable time from inception to publication. For this reason it is good management practice to think through the process before starting. There are a number of different models for strategy development: the model outlined in Exhibit Seven has proved useful to a number of local authorities, but is only one model out of many. Some authorities have developed their own development process, while others will be at different stages and already have undertaken some of the tasks outlined.

### Strategy Development: Stages

#### Stage One: Preparation (2 - 3 months)

- 4.4 This will involve decisions on the formation of the Team who will develop the strategy, the scope of the strategy and the time and budgetary allocations necessary to ensure the success of the process. Members will need to appraise the brief and approve resources. The context for the strategy, including a review of other strategies and plans, should be provisionally developed as should provisional key issues. Key issues will include the provisional identification of local priorities and will test the rationale why some services are provided or funded by the local authority and the ways in which these promote the cultural well-being of the area.
- 4.5 Strategies are better undertaken by a team rather than an individual because of the roles that need to be performed: champion, co-ordinator / chair, researcher, strategic thinker, constructive critic, and author, as well as those who will implement the strategy. At least one member of the team should have sufficient authority to ensure that the strategy is not sidelined. Elected Members need to be involved from the start to ensure that the local authority as a whole has ownership of the strategy. Having a champion and involving elected Members are key critical success factors for the strategy. In terms of size and composition of the team, a balance needs to be struck between having officers from other departments and agencies to help develop a shared ownership and vision, and ensuring that the strategy development process does not become too bureaucratic and an end in itself.

**Exhibit Seven: Seven stage strategy development process**



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- 4.6** In deciding the scope of the strategy, it helps to start with an approach that aims to include rather than exclude and to create linkages both within the authority and outside its own services, embracing other organisations which can contribute towards the wider goals outlined in the strategy. It is also helpful to explore existing and potential cross service links both between different cultural services, e.g. between arts and sport, and with services outside the traditional cultural services sector, including other council departments and other agencies, e.g. initiatives in health services, education and environmental improvement. This demonstrates culture's contribution to the wider agenda. It can also be supplemented by references to programmes and initiatives for targeted groups, e.g. children, youth, the elderly, black and ethnic minority populations, people with disabilities, and by policies and initiatives designed to ensure fair access.
- 4.7** When considering the scope, local authorities should also consider the specifics of their area. For instance, in some areas language, in other areas the diversity of cultures of ethnic minorities, will be integral to the Local Cultural Strategy.

### **Stage Two: Consultation and Research ( 3 - 5 months)**

- 4.8** This is the first, and the most important, consultation stage. While the extent of consultation will depend to an extent on the local authority and its resources, it is fundamental to the strategy process. Consultation will:
- help to identify and clarify the local agenda
  - test the provisional strategic cultural issues for the local authority
  - help to establish the needs of the community
  - help to prioritise services, activities, etc.
  - give an objective view of the present performance of services
  - help set a common agenda and objectives

- 4.9** There are many different ways of consulting, depending on the groups being consulted, the purpose of the consultation, the resources available to the local authority and the culture and approach of the authority. ‘Guidance on Enhancing Public Participation’ (DETR, 1998) and ‘Listen Up!’ (Audit Commission, 1999) are useful guides to this complex subject. Do not underestimate either the resources (money and time) which must be put to consultation, nor the steep learning curve required to get the best out of consultation.
- 4.10** Research should also be conducted into existing services, facilities, voluntary clubs and practitioners. While a full-scale ‘audit’ of present provision including the voluntary and private sectors can be time-consuming and beyond the resources of some local authorities, the Strategy needs to be informed by the nature, pattern and spread of present activity. As well as mapping present activities and gaps, this helps to define key issues and concerns. But it is also important to be pragmatic about what can be achieved and not to aim for perfection or be diverted into information-gathering for its own sake. A more detailed mapping exercise may be undertaken as part of the development of service-specific strategies.

### **Stage Three: Analysis (2 - 3 months)**

- 4.11** Once the consultation period is over, the responses and views must be analysed. Whilst the quantitative data will be useful (e.g. what percentage of the population take part in which cultural activities), often the qualitative findings prove more significant in clarifying key issues and informing strategic priorities (e.g. perceptions of the cultural sector and what the gaps and barriers are).
- 4.12** The identification of key issues, community needs and strategic priorities will also help to identify Review/Monitoring mechanisms. Preliminary identification of performance indicators and proxies (both quantitative and qualitative) can be undertaken at this stage. These will later be refined and targets set in the appropriate Service Plans.

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### **Stage Four: Creation (2 - 3 months)**

- 4.13 Based on the work so far, the consultation draft of the strategy can be developed, drafted and re-drafted. Whilst there may be contributions from several sources within the authority, it usually makes sense for one person to be responsible for drawing it all together. This is not the final strategy, only a consultation draft; but it should be endorsed by elected Members and - where appropriate - partner agencies before being circulated more widely. This does not mean that the Council has finalised its view, but it secures elected Member support for the overall approach outlined in the draft.

### **Stage Five: Consultation B (2- 3 months)**

- 4.14 The second consultation stage is designed to encourage feedback on the consultation draft, to refine and improve it, and to remedy any gaps or errors.
- 4.15 If practical, the draft should be circulated to all organisations that responded formally. It should also be widely publicised, so that interested members of the public can also respond in detail. There will also be meetings with the key players to discuss the consultation draft and, through this dialogue, amend and refine the draft.

### **Stage Six: Completion (1 - 2 months)**

- 4.16 The responses to the consultation draft need to be collated and analysed and the consultation draft re-written - this is more likely to involve re-editing and amendment, rather than wholesale revision. The final version will then be presented to elected Members for adoption and a public summary produced.

### **Stage Seven: Launch (1 month)**

- 4.17 A strategy is more than just words on paper. To be successfully implemented it will need the co-operation and enthusiasm of a wide range of individuals and organisations throughout the community. A high profile launch will help to start the process.

## **Implementation, Monitoring and Review**

**4.18** A strategy is only as good as its implementation: once the strategy development has been completed, the strategy needs to be implemented. Monitoring mechanisms should be in place to ensure that the Strategy remains on course: this does not mean that the strategy is fixed in stone. Indeed, a good strategy will be flexible enough to take on board new legislation, new developments, new priorities and new aspirations. Similarly, a date needs to be set when the Strategy will be reviewed.

## **Timescales**

**4.19** The production of a Local Cultural Strategy using this framework takes from about one year to 18 months. Longer than this and you are in danger of losing momentum, while the extra time for consultation and drafting does not always lead to a better strategy. This timescale assumes that the local authority is starting from the beginning of the process. If it has already embarked on strategy development, or is reviewing an existing strategy, then the process will be shorter.

**4.20** The timescale for the Strategy should be reviewed against the local authority political management cycle. The original document approving budget and time allocations (Stage One), the consultation draft (Stage Four) and the final Strategy document (Stage Six) need to take account of the process of political management.

## 5: Content

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- 5.1 This section gives proposals for the overall structure and content of Local Cultural Strategies. These are based on the experience of those local authorities which have already successfully produced local leisure or cultural strategies. Whilst these existing strategies are presented in different ways and are of varying lengths and styles, there are a number of core sections common to nearly all of them. These are:
- 5.2 **Advocating the Benefits of Cultural Activities** This advocates the intrinsic benefits of cultural activities to the individual and to the community. It also usually shows how cultural activities contribute to the achievement of wider social and political objectives and help address the cross-cutting issues. It sets out the overall rationale for public funding of culture.
- 5.3 **Setting the Strategic Context** This summarises the wider context in the cultural sphere - relevant regional and national strategies, policies and legislation and the trends which impact on the demand for and provision of cultural facilities and services.
- 5.4 **Setting the Local Context** This outlines the size and make-up of the local authority population, and its specific characteristics relating to age structure, socio-economic profile, ethnicity, local economy and employment etc. This section also covers the current levels of provision for, and participation in, cultural activities.
- 5.5 **Key Cultural Issues** This describes and analyses the most important themes and concerns which have emerged from the various consultations and discussions, and develops the strategic choices which have to be made. Clearly, these key issues will vary from authority to authority.
- 5.6 **Establishing Broad Cultural Policies** This section explains what the strategy is aiming to achieve. A clear statement of key policies helps to harness community support and ensure that the strategy has a currency for a number of years. There are alternative ways of presenting these policies, the two main distinctions being between a 'thematic approach' and a 'service-specific approach' (See 'Different Approaches' at Exhibit Nine).

**5.7 Action Plan** This Section sets out an Action Plan showing how overall policies and specific objectives will be implemented. The Action Plan:

- helps to ensure that the strategy is focused
- directs the strategy towards its implementation, both for direct services and - through funding and partnership agreements - with grant-aided organisations and other agencies
- gives a clear direction to the more detailed service plans
- sets the framework for monitoring by setting deadlines, milestones and local performance indicators and targets
- enables elected members, officers, other agencies and the public to review the Strategy in future years and see what difference it has actually made
- links directly to Best Value Reviews and Best Value Performance Plans for the services

**5.8** The Action Plan is often put in a table format, setting out the objectives, initiatives, timescales, responsible officers/partners, funding, performance indicators (PIs) and targets. It is normally reviewed through a specific monitoring mechanism, e.g. by regular performance management reports to elected Members.

**5.9** In most cases the individual programmes which cascade from the overall objectives and priorities of the Strategy will not be set out in detail within the Strategy document itself. These will be developed in the Action Plans which are more likely to be drafted and monitored on an annual cycle. An illustration of one page of a draft Action Plan being developed for a Local Cultural Strategy is given in Exhibit Eight.

**Exhibit Eight: Action Plan ( Excerpt)**

<b>Ref</b>		<b>Partners</b>	<b>Council Departments</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Links</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>An environment which supports a good quality of life</b>				
<b>3.2</b>	Encourage improved standards and choice of restaurants, cafes, and pubs	Pub operators Restaurants TourNorth, Pubwatch	Leisure* Environment	Mapping Exercise Spring 2001 Pilot quality assessment September 2001 Awards Scheme Spring 2002	Regeneration Strategy Local Environment Strategy
<b>3.3</b>	Develop strategy to encourage greater variety of pub/small scale venues, and review licensing arrangements for small venues	Promoters Venue owners Pubwatch Police Authority	Leisure* Environment	Draft strategy by Spring 2001	Local Environment Strategy Regeneration Strategy
<b>3.6</b>	Review waterside access issues for walking, cycling, informal recreation etc.	Port Authority British Waterways Environment Agency Park Authority Ramblers Association	Environment* Chief Executives Leisure	Report to Cabinet by Spring 2001	U.D.P Local Environment Strategy
<b>3.7</b>	Establish safe transport liaison arrangements	Police Authority British Transport Police Transport operators	Environment* Chief Executives Leisure	Report to Cabinet by Spring 2001	Interim Transport Plan Community Safety Strategy

\*Lead Department

## **Different Approaches**

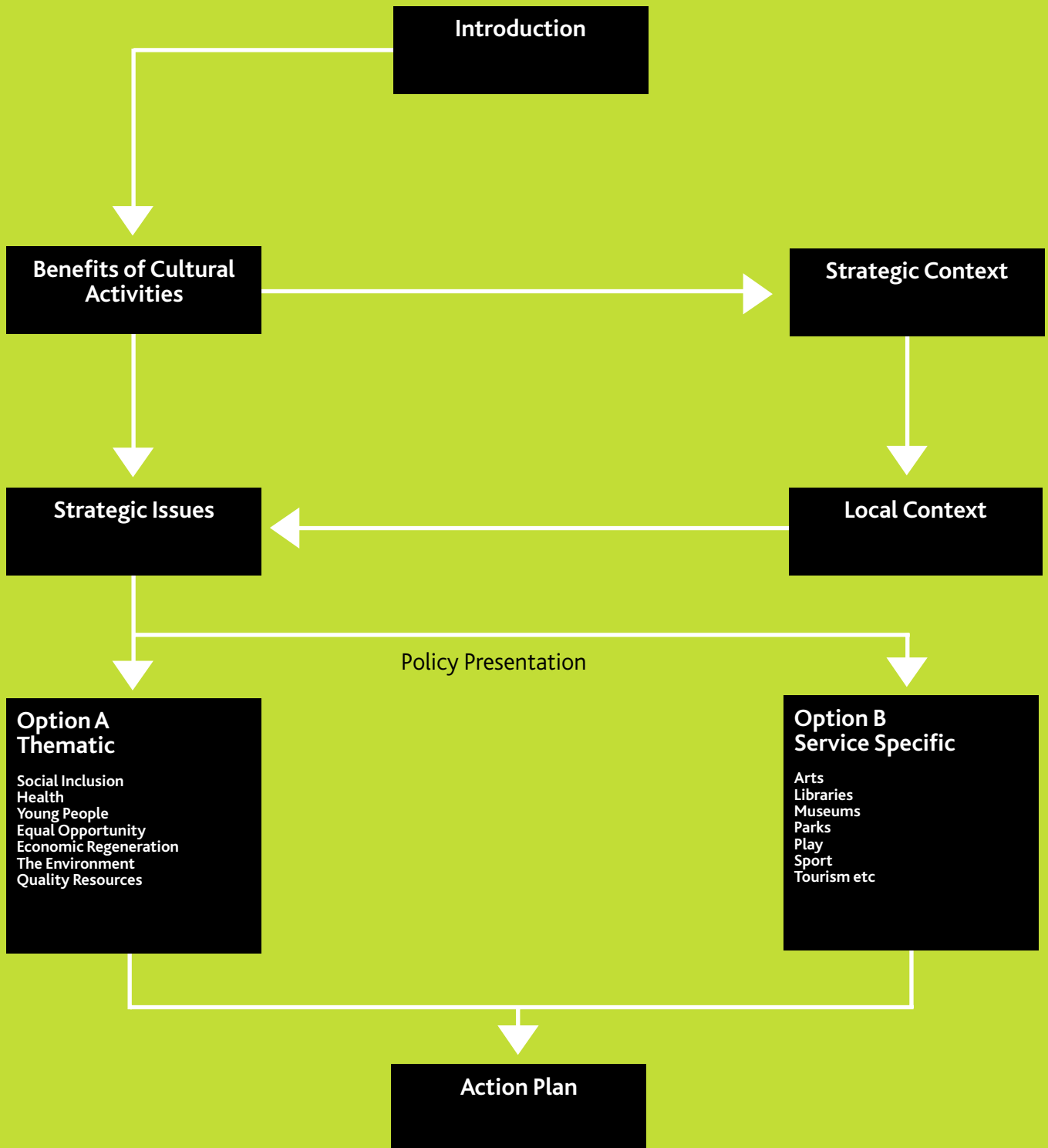
- 5.10** Although there are other approaches, the two main approaches to developing a Local Cultural Strategy are the ‘service-specific’ approach and the integrated or ‘thematic’ approach’.
- 5.11** The service-specific approach takes each service sector, such as art, parks, sport, tourism, etc. and examines in turn how each of them can contribute to wider community and corporate objectives. The end result is a series of service by service objectives and targets.
- 5.12** The thematic route first sets out the overarching themes such as tackling social exclusion, regeneration, etc. Then those aspects of the area’s cultural services and activities which impact on each theme are reviewed. The end result is a series of theme related policies and objectives, drawing in contributions from across the cultural sector and initiatives from other departments and agencies. The different methods are illustrated in Exhibit Nine. This also presents an overall guide to cultural strategy content.
- 5.13** Given the inclusive nature of a Local Cultural Strategy, the need to foster linkages and partnerships, and the need to advocate the contribution of cultural activities to the wider community agenda, the thematic approach is favoured.
- 5.14** The thematic and service-specific approaches can often complement each other. They can also be supplemented by adding a geographical dimension, i.e. a consideration of issues and services on an area by area basis, e.g. by localities, major towns, wards. This may be particularly appropriate in areas where there are major differences in provision of cultural services in different areas, where the community needs are significantly different between areas, and/or where localities have a distinct cultural identity.
- 5.15** Other local authorities may also wish to supplement their approach with reference to policies, programmes and initiatives covering specific target groups, e.g. children, youth, the elderly, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities. In the final analysis it is up to the local authority which approach it feels is best suited to its particular situation and resources.

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## Style and Presentation

- 5.16** Although the cultural strategy's success will ultimately be determined by its usefulness in serving the community and service users, its main day-to-day function will be as a working management document for the local authority and other partners, its chief audience will be elected Members, council officers from different departments, officers and representatives from other agencies and local opinion formers and decision-makers generally. This will determine the style and presentation of the Strategy. The style will also be determined by the general approach the local authority takes to the public presentation of its documents. Some authorities will wish to produce documents which feature high production and design values; others will prefer a more low-key approach.
- 5.17** Local authorities should also produce a summary for the general public. This continues the process of consultation and sets out publicly the strategic choices, priorities and means by which the strategy will be monitored. The Strategy (especially its public summary) should be succinct, focused and written in a clear and non-technical style with jargon kept to a minimum. And, given that it will be a long-term document which will be reviewed periodically, its format should be reasonably flexible.

Exhibit Nine: An overall guide to the structure and content of local cultural strategies



## 6: Monitoring and Review

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### Monitoring

- 6.1 To be effective a strategy must set out how it will be monitored. An effective monitoring regime will assess whether the objectives of the strategy have in fact been achieved. The following factors need to be considered:
- When is the monitoring going to take place i.e. how often and at what specific times of the year?
  - Who is going to carry it out?
  - What measures or indicators are going to be used to judge success?
  - How is the monitoring going to be carried out i.e. what techniques are going to be used to collect the required information?
- 6.2 The extent and frequency of monitoring work will be governed by the local authority's own financial planning and corporate management framework and the resources available to the authority. Where possible, monitoring of the Local Cultural Strategy should be dovetailed with the requirements of Best Value. For library authorities, it should also complement the Annual Library Plan.
- 6.3 Local authorities should also consider whether there is a need to separate the roles of monitoring and implementation, and the resources that will be available for monitoring.
- 6.4 The work of monitoring the Strategy should be viewed as part of the normal work-load of officers. This, in turn, means that sufficient importance must be given to this work, and sufficient time allowed for it to be undertaken properly. Monitoring will include many different tasks, depending on the PIs and means of assessment chosen. Where possible the PIs chosen should be output and outcome based and assess qualitative factors such as user satisfaction, social impact, and community benefit as well as quantitative measures. The PIs and means of assessment chosen should complement those required for other tasks. Together they should be able to determine whether local authority services are achieving the Best Value goal of continuous improvement.

- 6.5** The professional judgements of experts from other agencies, peer assessment and self assessment can also be used to monitor the Strategy. Continuing dialogue with local organisations and local people will also help to establish the effectiveness of the Strategy and its contribution to the bigger picture - quality of life, social inclusion, community safety and the cultural well-being of the area.

## **Review**

- 6.6** Most Local Cultural Strategies will have a lifespan of five years. They will be reviewed - when the policies, rationale, priorities and issues are reconsidered and, if need be, the Strategy, re-positioned - after two to three years. However, local choice and the need to dovetail in with local timetables will mean that some Local Cultural Strategies will have a longer or shorter lifespan. Local authorities will need to decide what is best for them, given their particular situation, their approach to their Best Value Performance Plan, the Annual Library Plan and Best Value Reviews.
- 6.7** As noted under 'Content' most local authorities will wish to review their Action Plan - and the specific, detailed Service Plans which flow from this - on an annual basis, with the achievements of the previous year compared with the targets set, and new targets for the coming year set in the light of progress to date. However, some local authorities may wish to update and review their Action Plans on a more frequent basis, e.g. every six months, while others will review these on a less frequent basis, e.g. once every two years. These should link in with - and, where possible, form the basis of - the authority's Best Value Performance Plans.

