

Culture and Creative Industries

M48. Would Policy HC5 provide an effective and justified approach to supporting the continued growth and evolution of London's cultural facilities and creative industries? In particular:

a) Would it provide an effective and justified strategic framework for the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans in relation to those matters?

b) Would the identification of 'cultural quarters', comprising locally-distinct clusters of facilities, venues and related uses, be justified as set out in Policy HC5A2?

c) Would it be effective in supporting the diversity in London's cultural venues, facilities and uses?

d) Would the identification of 'creative enterprise zones' be effective in supporting creative industries? What justification is there that such an approach would 'help boost the local economy of more deprived areas and support regeneration'?

The London Plan does not give an explicit definition of culture. Though it contains many references to the vision of a more inclusive city, culture in Policy HC5 is used as a way to foster economic growth in the global market (the celebrated creative industry) and the creative class clearly entails a middle class bias.

This all comes at the expense of providing support in London's neighbourhoods so that citizens can participate in the creation of their own city, to look at culture as everyday social contact, local assets that promote social relations, the diversity of long standing cultures, places and communities. This is deeper and more vital than "areas of cultural interest" or cultural quarters which can engender a tick box approach.

Whilst the policy encourages the boroughs to evaluate unique and important cultural assets there is no specification of what forms of activities should be encouraged, though there is an emphasis on the business driven aspects of cultural consumption for economic growth purposes and tourism which is limiting. The Mayor's call "*to identify what is needed in order to sustain London's future as a cultural capital*" underscores the problem. Does the Mayor really intend this to be a policy for tourists and private investors; not investing in areas where there is an existing cultural hub, but looking for areas that the tourist industry can profit from.

What is really needed is to implement the recommendation of the Creative Tensions report (London Assembly Regeneration Committee) for local cultural audits giving a full and comprehensive view of what is available at the local level across all Boroughs. This would include youth centres, places of worship, libraries, allotments etc and not just creative spaces which seems to be the existing approach.

There is concern as to what happens to businesses outside the Creative Enterprise Zones when these gain all the attention. There is no mention of craft industry, social enterprises, ethnic clusters. Commitments to new projects must not undermine the existing culture of that place or replace the existing community. These new schemes need to create new genuinely public space - not private space masquerading as public. There is huge real estate at the iconic venues which should be opened up for free community use as a condition of the Mayor's funding and support.

An important issue touched upon in the non-policy box highlights the intensification of land and the difficulties of maintaining it for cultural spaces (HC5 7.5.3). We believe this potentially negative impact of intensification processes needs more attention and scrutiny and should be in the policy box.

Changes (to be added to the policy and text)

London's cultural offer is also informed by a historical legacy of Britain's diverse communities, their lifestyles, culture and faiths, including , importantly, their food culture. This also includes venues in which London's diverse communities celebrate their cultural calendars, births, weddings and deaths and hold community meetings to foster social cohesion, integration and wellbeing.

Essential spaces for cultural production also include community centres, restaurants, cafes, meeting spaces, theatres, as well as pubs, clubs and music venues.

All requirements must be in consultation with relevant community organisations, taking into account community knowledge and opinion in meaningful ways, to further identify culture with community value rather than a financialised agenda.