

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Oral evidence: The social impact of participation in culture and sport, HC 734

Tuesday 10 July 2018, Hope Street Xchange, University of Sunderland, Sunderland

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 10 July 2018.

Watch the meeting

Members present: Damian Collins (Chair); Julie Elliott; Ian C. Lucas; Brendan O'Hara; Jo Stevens; Giles Watling.

Questions 151 - 177

Witnesses

[I:](#) Rebecca Ball, Director, Sunderland City of Culture 2021, Dr Beatriz Garcia, Head of Research, Institute of Cultural Capital, Liverpool, and Rosie Millard OBE, Chief Executive, Children and the Arts, and Former Chair, Hull City of Culture 2017.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Rebecca Ball, Dr Beatriz Garcia and Rosie Millard OBE.

Chair: Good morning and welcome to this further evidence session of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee as part of our inquiry into the social impact of participation in culture and sport. Today the Committee is meeting at the University of Sunderland and we have had the pleasure of being here today and yesterday to visit a number of cultural organisations within the city and see the preparation for the Tall Ships, which are arriving on Friday this week in their full glory, and also to visit Sunderland football club to look at some of the work of the club and its foundation in the community as well. As part of our inquiry today, there is a particular focus on the impact of culture and sport in the regeneration of communities, with a particular reference to the City of Culture programmes as well, which will be a feature of this evidence session.

We are delighted to have Rebecca Ball from Sunderland City of Culture, Rosie Millard from Hull and Dr Beatriz Garcia, whose area of experience is Liverpool and the legacy of the Liverpool European City of Culture year as well. Before we start the questions and the formal evidence session, I believe Julie Elliott has a declaration of interest.

Julie Elliott: Thank you, Chair. Yes, I would like to place on the record that I was a member of the steering group for the Sunderland City of Culture bid in the last few months as the Member of Parliament and probably have links to or involvement with most of the organisations we are talking about in relation to this city.

Q151 **Chair:** If I could start off with the first question, I suppose principally directed to Rebecca Ball and to Rosie Millard, focusing on the UK City of Culture bidding process, obviously Sunderland was a very strong bid, but sadly not successful and Hull obviously made a successful bid. From your experiences of the bidding process, what do you think are the strengths of the bidding process and what do you think are the essential ingredients of a successful bid?

Rosie Millard: I was not involved in the bid, other than lending my name to it. I am a graduate of the University of Hull and I have always championed Hull in my work as a journalist, so I was very pleased to lend my name to the bid document. What I think the absolutely essential elements of the bid must be is total support and backing from the local authority. I think that a bid cannot happen without that; it relies on that. You can't have a bid without it. You need to show in the bid that you have thought about where the income is going to come from. I think things have changed now. The City of Culture honour comes with money—a little bit pledged already upfront—but when we won it, it did not, so you have to show where you think the money is coming from. Then some idea of the programme, without being locked into the programme, because if you look now at the bid document for Hull, the



HOUSE OF COMMONS

programme is quite different. We made 80 promises in that bid document and every single one of those promises was met. The last thing you want is someone coming up brandishing the bid document at you and saying, "You never did this or that". You have to be ready to deliver what you promised.

The last thing I would say is that I think we won it because we had a very strong bid document and the backing of the local authority, but we also captured the hearts of the advisory committee with an astonishing film, which went straight for the Achilles heel, the perception of Hull, which was that Hull was a grim and sad place. The actual place of Hull has been demonised and ignored and mocked for a long, long time in the press in the years leading up to this. The bid film went straight for absolutely showcasing—it did not beat around the bush—the place of Hull and I think a winning city will focus on the place. It is all about place-making and that is what we did.

Rebecca Ball: I think from our perspective in terms of the strengths of the bidding process, for us it was that ability to have a really public conversation about the role of culture within a place. As you will have seen yesterday, there was a huge amount of momentum in the city already and there were a lot of stakeholders who were really engaged in that conversation, but as soon as you declare you are bidding for City of Culture, it is within everybody's interests to get involved in that conversation, because maybe there are people who do not necessarily believe they have an opinion on culture—I would challenge that; I think everybody does—but they certainly have an opinion about their city: they certainly have an opinion about where they live and where they work.

For us, that meant that the work that we were doing in terms of cultural regeneration suddenly became of interest to a much wider group of people across the city and that was so important and so powerful. What that gave us was momentum. It gave us a much broader network of people to be talking to. It gave us a platform to be able to lever in resources against. It just gave us that visibility that we really wanted. For Sunderland, we always saw the City of Culture bidding process as a means to an end. It was about a catalyst for change and being able to become part of a national competition, if you like. It really helped us in that.

In terms of what we tried to do around creating a strong bid, it was about absolutely local authority support, but university support, business support, community support, artistic support within the city and gathering that partnership and creating something that did not replicate what other cities had done in the past, but learned from them and took the ingredients of the here and now in Sunderland and tried to create something that was authentic and spoke of this place, which was a long-term plan for change. That was what we were trying to achieve in the process.



Q152 **Chair:** To both Rebecca and Rosie: do you feel that in Sunderland and in Hull there was a need to get the community behind the process so that people who were not necessarily directly involved with culture in the city understood why this might be good for the whole city and good for them too? Was that an essential part of the early bid process to explain what this could mean, what this could be a catalyst for?

Rebecca Ball: It was an absolutely essential part of the bidding process. I would say it was absolutely essential for the city as well, though, and for culture in the city, because one of the things that I think the bidding process enabled everybody to do who got involved—we had thousands of conversations, with 250 advisers working on this bid—is to imagine the future of the city. That was through a cultural lens, but what that enabled us to talk about was health, jobs, economy, what the reputation of the city was like, what the values of the city were. It is important to the bidding process, but it is about creating the future of a place where people are excited about living there, excited about working there. I think that culture is a powerful way of imagining those possibilities and creating those conversations.

Rosie Millard: I would say there are three essential components apart from the ones I have already mentioned, the first of which is a bid committee that is drawn from every single element of the city. Hull is quite a small city, it is quite compact, but within that bid committee were people who worked in the voluntary sector, people who worked in the community, people who worked in business. Some people from the bid committee went on to work on the City of Culture, but not all of them.

Secondly, reasonably small amounts of money were pledged by a lot of local businesses, so there was buy-in. Because it was 2017, we had 20 partners—we called them Angels—and in fact there ended up being 21 paying £17,000. Some of those went on to be very large partners; others did not.

Thirdly, the buy-in of the local media. Because of its geographical position, the local media are very important in Hull. More people read the *Hull Daily Mail* than any other tabloid put together in Hull. It is a proper independent local newspaper, by which I mean it comes from Hull, it is reported in Hull and it delivers the news to people in Hull. They got behind the bid and that was critical; equally Radio Humberside got behind the bid. They got the enthusiasm and really got it going among a huge community, so that was very important.

Q153 **Chair:** Thank you. If I could ask Beatriz Garcia, listening to what Rebecca and Rosie have said so far about the UK City of Culture bid, do you think it is very similar for European City of Culture? Do you think Liverpool's experiences of preparing for the bid and getting the city behind the bid are similar to what you have heard them discuss?

Dr Garcia: Yes. I did a piece of work for the European Parliament on the first 60 cities to have European Capital of Culture. The bidding process is



quite essential. What has happened, especially over the last 10 years since Liverpool, is that it also becomes part of the media cycle, so it is the time to start telling the story and attract attention, with the difference that it is not just one city, it is a few. What the bid has done—and it is also the learning by the time of Hull and now with the 2021 process—is that there is much more understanding of the fact that it is not just about winning, but that being part of this process in itself should be beneficial, so that those behind it need to ensure that there are not just losers, with one taking the big prize.

The big experience with Liverpool was about obviously getting people to be involved, backing this up, and the big argument back then was about demonstrating which city wanted and needed it the most. There was an element of that, but the other element that is very important is how this kind of bidding process can act as a catalyst to develop strategic thinking around culture for the first time. The events bring a deadline, but often the request is that the city needs to think about what happens next—the legacy—so it can also be a trigger for more strategic and long-term planning. Also very important, the bid is the time to say yes. Afterwards, once you win, you have to start saying no, so it is a very exciting time to get everyone to link to each other in ways that tend to be rare in cities.

Rosie Millard: I would say, however, that our programme was remarkably different from the programme offered in the bid. The second meeting I had with Martin Green, the CEO of Hull City of Culture was about legacy. We started talking about legacy immediately after he was appointed. Legacy was obviously part of the bid, but I think that tying it to the programme in the bid is possibly a hostage to fortune, because the programme ended up being very different, and I think in our case better than in the bid.

Q154 **Chair:** Rebecca, do you feel that the legacy of the bid for Sunderland has been the development of more strategic thinking around the role of culture in the city?

Rebecca Ball: I think, yes, that has certainly been one of the legacies. What the bid enabled us to do was create a really clear and widely shared understanding of what Sunderland felt culture could do for Sunderland. In articulating the impact that we wanted City of Culture to have through the bidding process and through consulting on that, we got a clear sense of what people wanted culture to do in this city, what they felt was important: the impact it would have on young people; the impact it would have on health; the impact it would have on the economy; the impact it would have on bringing people together, which was a major part of our bid; the sense of Sunderland as a city of villages, for which culture could be a catalyst in creating better, stronger connections. It absolutely enables us to be more strategic in that sense of what do we want to achieve.

The other thing though that it enabled us to do was put in place structures and mechanisms that would enable us to drive that forward.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

For us, one of the things that came out of the bidding process, or that ran alongside the bidding process, was the creation of Sunderland Culture, which is a governance mechanism for the city and brings together the partners—the University of Sunderland, Sunderland City Council and the MAC Trust—in a very strong and robust partnership. It enabled us to bring together a wider network of partners and to extend our reach into areas that we had not reached so far into in the past in terms of as a cultural sector. I think, yes, strategic thinking, but also planning, resourcing, partnerships and all those other things that are a legacy of it.

Q155 Chair: Do you think that work would have taken place without the City of Culture bid or was the bid itself the catalyst to develop that thinking?

Rebecca Ball: I think it was an accelerator. There was work going on. There was a huge amount of groundwork that the partners had been doing. I think what the bid enabled us to do was speed that up. It gave us a deadline, it gave us an imperative and it also made the work we were doing more visible, which is hugely important.

Q156 Chair: Rosie, looking at the Hull City of Culture year, what do you think have been the social impacts? This inquiry is about the social impact of culture and sport. What do you think the social impacts have been of the City of Culture year?

Rosie Millard: The social impacts have been absolutely enormous. I think that our year awakened a latent sense of pride in the city from the people who live there. That has to do with things that happened to them in the city in terms of the programme, because the programme was connected indelibly with the history of the city and delivered in an internationally high level of quality, so that people in the city saw their history being played out in a spectacular manner, beginning with the first event and carrying on all year. Also, they gained enormous pride by the way that the city was reflected across the year in the media.

I cannot over-emphasise how critical our partnership with the BBC was in the year. Tony Hall, the Director-General, said on 22 September 2016, which was our launch date for the press, which was a very important day, “I am going to make next year totally Hull-centric in the BBC, starting off by putting it on the weather map,” and Hull still is on the weather map. Many people in this country have never been to Hull, had never been to Hull—still possibly have not—and had no idea where it was. The fact that this modest-sized city was on the weather map, ahead of Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool, and still is, was very important. It was sort of funny—it was a nice little story for the press the next day—but it was important.

The fact that all the BBC’s flagship programmes one way or another came up to Hull in the year, starting off with the “Today” programme on the first day and running right through the year, including Radio 1 “Big Weekend”, including Radio 3 contemporary music, the Proms, “Breakfast”



news, "Question Time" et cetera, was critical. There was an enormous amount of pride internally and because of external reflection.

I also think that the use of the volunteers was critical, with 3,500 people—not the good-thinking or typical people from outside Hull who sometimes make up the volume of the voluntary sector, such as well-meaning middle-class people who have time on their hands. There were people from right across Hull. Again, Martin, with his experience with the volunteers from the Games Makers, and Phil Batty, who ran the volunteer project, made sure that volunteers came from right across every single strand of Hull life, down to putting online pictures of volunteers standing against their street sign, because if you see that someone from your road has signed up to be a volunteer, you are more likely to be a volunteer.

We made absolute efforts to go into every single postcode, every single ward, so the whole city was involved. We used digital techniques and we used old-fashioned techniques of letters through doors. We had a cube, an inflated cube, like a gameshow, a roadshow thing that went around signing up volunteers so that every single area of the city was connected. On your question about the social impact, I think it was an emotional one as much as a fiscal one.

Q157 Chair: Can I just ask, thinking about the most private areas of the city, how did Hull manage to engage people in communities that maybe have not usually been included or involved in culture in the city in the past?

Rosie Millard: Hull is not historically an arty city—it is a sporty city. It has two rugby teams, a football team and an ice hockey team and so on. Also, there was a sense that the city centre had been hollowed out. In the evenings it was very empty and that is where most of the arts institutions are, so it was our absolute urge to get everyone from outlying residential areas into the city centre. There is not a tradition in Hull of theatre-going really, and the box offices were not booming before the City of Culture. How we did it was a variety of things. We put on knockout things in the city centre, sometimes had free transport for people to get in there, certainly for the beginning show, and we had durational—this is a very important thing for future Cities of Culture—projects and projects that are free of charge or have a very low ticket price.

For example, "Made in Hull", our opening show, went on for seven nights, so if you were away one day or two days—because it was over new year—you did not miss it. It was free and it was on a loop, this extraordinary film directed by Sean McAllister. Here is a picture of it. The history of the city, its triumphs, its disasters, its glories—everything about it was screened on the actual buildings of the city. It did not need explaining. It was there, it was the people of Hull's history done in amazing scale. Once that happened, people were encouraged to go and see other things, because they thought, "This isn't going to be something weird that I won't understand; this is going to be something that deals with our city." It was not dumbing down or anything like that. Some of



HOUSE OF COMMONS

the pieces were quite challenging, but they were always connected to the city. That was the first thing.

There are two other things: secondly, our largest, most expensive event was an event called "Land of Green Ginger", which was an 18-month long community piece, involving every ward in the city, where urban myths of that particular place—it was hyper-local—were investigated by performance artists or artists hired specifically and deployed to be in that ward to find out what myths there are, what stories there are, what ghost stories there are, and then they put on a show reflecting that, so there would be work in those far-flung areas of Hull.

Thirdly, we had a quite brilliant programme called "Everyone Back to Ours", which is still going on and is for people who feel they could not quite make it to come into Hull to go the theatre—they were not ready for that—which is quite understandable, because if you have never been to the theatre, you are not going to suddenly think, "Oh, I am going to have a theatre-going habit." What "Everyone Back to Ours" did was it hired the halls and theatres of secondary schools around the residential areas, many of which have been rebuilt in Building Schools for the Future. Hull City Council had rebuilt all the schools in the 10 years before, so that was fortunate. There were these amazing theatres with fantastic lights and everything, and in half-terms and in the holidays we would hire small to medium-sized professional companies or circus companies, amazing performers, to put on shows in that school, because if your child goes to a school you are quite likely to turn up, because you know how to get there, and then we had volunteers there manning it.

I cannot over-emphasise the importance of the volunteers to encourage people to go and see stuff, because if you saw someone with that blue outfit on and that hat, you would know it was worth going to. We deliberately went out into the residential areas, we wooed them in with things that we hoped would be meaningful to them and we went out to engage them with stuff specifically aimed at their area.

- Q158 **Chair:** A final question from me to Beatriz Garcia before bringing in the other members of the Committee. It seems that there are some common themes from some of the things that have been discussed. It is quite interesting that we talk about programmes to encourage participation in culture and sport, given that culture and sport are essentially things that people have created for themselves, so it is a question of finding ways of enabling people to engage with something that in its own sense has been created by people for people, not by Governments for people., I think a lot of what we saw yesterday in Sunderland is focused around the central importance culture in particular plays in bringing life back into city centres. From the work you have done, what do you think are some of the best examples you have seen of achieving these goals and also achieving a strong legacy coming out of the City of Culture year programme?



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Dr Garcia: Yes, and let's remember that now we have the benefit of time, because what we have in the UK is now a real critical mass that has been gathered and accumulated since Glasgow in 1990. That was really the trailblazer in terms of a first city that really shows culture is not just Florence, Rome or Paris—you have culture in every single city. I think the best examples are on the one hand recognising that culture cannot be defined from the top, so obviously that it needs to involve a conversation and some humility on the part of organisers to listen and engage.

The best examples of events that have been really transformative socially and sustainable in the long term—because obviously you can inspire and have some headlines but then everything gets forgotten, or you raise expectations and then you disappoint—are those that result out of developing trust and two-way conversations with your communities. That tends to involve build-up, so it is not something that you can only do in one year. For instance, bringing the example of Liverpool and what was pioneering back then, that 10 years on has shaped the way we define cultural events nowadays. They built on themed years. For instance, they did not wait until 2008 to just put on the big show, because the big concern was that maybe no one would come, because they were thinking it was not for them. The approach was to be connecting with any layers and areas of the city that were meaningful—from sport to education, to heritage, to religion—and to touch on each of those areas by collaborating with the institutions, the representatives and the bridge builders from each of those sectors. That took some time, but then you were able to gather all of those communities simultaneously in 2008.

The other big change that has now become common is that culture is not obviously just about the arts, so this very transversal approach to celebrating a cultural event that can involve every single sector. Nowadays it is very common that football might be part of your celebrations on the year, not just through theatre, but also playing and engaging, revisiting what it means to be a fan or to follow a particular team and having artists collaborate with the leaders in those sectors.

The volunteering element, Rosie has assisted on that. Again, I cannot stress enough how important that is and to redefine what a volunteer should look like—not just retired people but young people—and how that can emerge from different communities. So locate them not just in the city centre to inform the visitors but in every single neighbourhood. There has been a lot of learning on that front as well.

The area where we have still more to do, but the awareness is there—and again, it is not just what was done in Glasgow, then in Liverpool and then with London 2012 and the Olympics—is how you bring engagement that is across ethnic backgrounds, across age groups, and also the whole disabled community, and how you accelerate and develop accessibility of venues and you bring people from many different layers of ability to be part of this. There has been a lot of work done. With some of the statistics on some of the work that I have been doing on this, it seems to



HOUSE OF COMMONS

still be the area where more growth could be done over the next few years, but in the case of both Glasgow and Liverpool as early pioneers, what we have are some of the most advanced examples of bringing the disability rights movement to be part of the story at a time when it was not really that common.

In Glasgow, we have amazing stories of how professional arts groups were developed in that context. In Liverpool, the likes of DataFest became a real staple, and obviously post-London 2012 the Unlimited programme has become quite an international referent. But ultimately it also comes back to this: getting everyone empowered to tell the story. There is this idea that an event should not only be about the high-profile acts, but also what often is called creative community programmes, and it is about what happens in the different schools. Not everything is about national media headlines. Sometimes what matters is something that just those directly involved in it will know about, but they will remember it many years later.

I have been surveying cities and I am especially interested in what happens 10 years on, so not just the event but what happens five and 10 years later. What is clear is that with the credibility of events that have been truly transformative, you will need the big opening ceremonies and some of the big acts, but some of the most transformative and memorable activities are at times that did not gather many headlines but really touched and transformed the lives of particular individuals. We keep saying with bidding and with those teams that prepare for events, "Don't only go for the headline; you need all the layers, all the foundations, and they are the ones that really will sustain."

Rosie Millard: If I can just come in here, when I started, when I took the job as chair of Hull City of Culture, I went to see Phil Redmond in Liverpool because he ran the Capital of Culture so brilliantly. He said to me, "This is for the people of Hull. Have the outside press—that is great—but remember that the programme is for the people of Hull and, at its essence, it is for the young people and children of the city, because that is where you are going to have a transformation". I really took that to heart and built into our programme the engagement with 55,000 children and young people in Hull who do not have a privileged life—they really do not. Small children in Hull go to London on a day trip when they leave primary school and most of them I would say have never been to the capital before. Many children in Hull have never seen the Humber Bridge before and it is only 10 miles out of Hull. To bring the City of Culture to them with all the offerings of ballet, of paintings from the Royal Collection and of astonishing choral works was very important, but as Beatriz says, not to parachute in and say, "Look, how amazing," because that is just bewildering and meaningless—or not meaningless, but it could be difficult to really get the most out of.

We had a City of Culture champion in every school—a teacher—and we had an absolutely amazing programme called No Limits, which sought to



HOUSE OF COMMONS

engage every child, including disabled children, looked-after children and special needs children. We had a special event for children in a PRU school. Again, some of them were quite quiet events. I do not know if you remember the Blade, the 35-metre long wind turbine blade that was produced by Siemens and is a symbol of Hull's future as an area for green energy, which was brought in by stealth overnight and planted in the centre of Hull, where it remained for three months. It was an absolutely enormous thing and it was just astonishing. I came up from London one day and I was walking through the centre and I saw the Blade. The entire year 1 of a primary school was standing under the Blade, because they were small enough to all stand underneath the Blade with their files. That was a very important moment for these children. They will not forget that.

We had an architect from the RIBA in every single primary school, not talking to children about the Eiffel Tower or the Taj Mahal, but talking to them about the fabric of their city and taking them into the city centre and showing them the Dutch gabled buildings and the City Hall and the Blade. It was a simple thing: "Come and look at the buildings. I will show you about your town, your city." It was a pretty quiet event—again, no headlines about year 1 from Fairfield Primary standing under the Blade—but it made a big impact on me. I thought that that is what it is about, one of the elements.

Q159 Giles Watling: What fascinates me is you have all talked about the various strands you have pulled in for the bids for City of Culture, and what really interests me is how you organise the governance of this, because it must be like herding cats. You have so many people who want to get involved; there is enthusiasm. Did the governance grow with the project or did you establish it to begin with, or were you led to it? How did that happen?

Rosie Millard: We had a programme, we had a culture company and I chaired the board. It was not our job to work out the programme and very clearly that belonged to the executive, led by Martin Green. He did the programme and there was a clear delineation. The board was there to scrutinise and to champion the programme and the funding of it, obviously. That was one element, but then again Phil Redmond said to me, "Loads of people will want to do stuff. Let them. It is not just about the culture company". The City of Culture was not just about us, the culture company in the high street in Hull putting on a £32.5 million programme.

It was about the whole city doing stuff, so the Ferens Art Gallery, which is owned and run by the city council, made a deal with the Royal Collection and the Courtauld to borrow works of art, masterpieces, which is lasting over the next three years. They did that on their own. The Ferens hired Spencer Tunick to get 4,000 people in Hull to take all their clothes off and lie down, painted blue, on the streets of Hull. That was their programme. There was an astonishing mesh, where we gave other



HOUSE OF COMMONS

institutions, other cultural institutions, the opportunity because we were not kind of hugging it to ourselves. ELO came and played. Again, the BBC put on amazing things, the Radio 1 "Big Weekend". We paid for a little bit of that, but not most of it.

Q160 **Giles Watling:** The point I was trying to get to was—

Rosie Millard: The governance, sorry, yes.

Giles Watling: —every show requires a director, so you have these wonderful people coming up, deciding to take their clothes off and paint themselves blue, or get ELO, but you have to co-ordinate that. That is what I am looking for: how the governance came together to do that.

Rosie Millard: I am not sure you actually do, to be honest. I think that we had the programme and we had a website and if you had a show that you wanted to put on our website and it would be in the programme, you could do that. You could contact us, the City of Culture, and we would put your show or your exhibition in. Lots of people had photographic exhibits at the library. Obviously, if it was inappropriate, we would not have, so there was governance in that, but I cannot think of one example where that happened.

Again, Hull is a very small city and there were various areas where one would sit with the other heads of the artistic institutions and say, "What is your programme?" so we knew what the programme of Hull Truck was. In fact, Hull Truck was one of our partners. The City Hall would put on their own stuff. The Hallé Orchestra came up and played a wonderful concert. That was nothing to do with the City of Culture but it happened in our year. I think that was very important, because it was important to see the city flourishing on its behalf.

Q161 **Giles Watling:** More organic?

Rosie Millard: Yes. Therefore when the year is over and the culture company does not exist anymore, stuff can still go on. I think that is quite important.

Rebecca Ball: I would absolutely echo a lot of that. I think that idea of trying to work out what kind of governance you need for different aspects of a City of Culture programme, which is enormous, is one of the kind of arts of the process. What we felt was that there was a particular governance structure that needed to be put in place to deliver the bid. That was our steering group and that was made up of representatives from lots of different areas of the city. We had political representation and representation from the college, the university, the community sector, health—lots of different sectors. That was our governance mechanism for making sure that that bid went in on time.

The thing I felt was really important was that there was no control over who got excited, who had ideas, who could submit ideas, who was inspired by it, because to be powerful, that had to become the property



of everybody. We went out and recruited 250 advisers who fed into that steering group, who were feeding us ideas, but what we tried to do beyond that was almost let go of it and say, "This is an exciting opportunity. We want Sunderland to be really ambitious, we want Sunderland to do the best it can and if you want to get involved and you want to do something, then just do it. Tell us about it, but take ownership, take the lead". Because when we go back to that conversation about what are the events that really change people's lives, whether it is a performance or an exhibition or a bidding process, for me it is those ones where people have been able to take ownership and take the lead and really you have that agency in making a decision, because that is powerful in developing confidence and in developing skills.

What we tried to do is almost create circles that were all feeding into one another. Obviously, we needed a governance control to ensure that the bid went in on time and that all the stakeholders were signing up and knew what they were signing up to, but in terms of how far that inspiration went and how far people could take the ideas that fed into that, it was really just, "Take it, run with it. This is the city's opportunity, go with it".

Rosie Millard: Exactly. For example, the university art gallery was pretty small and it was in a basement. Before the year, the curator, the director of the university art gallery, had it rehoused in the library and he did a deal with the British Museum to have a drawing exhibition, including drawings by Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. The security needed to be upped. He got the grant from the Arts Council for proper plate windows and he devised the programme. They had an amazing Philip Larkin exhibition. That was obviously critical, to reflect Larkin in our year, but we did not do it—the university did it.

Now that the year is over, they are left with a fantastic state-of-the-art gallery with amazing security, so they can have anything on—they could have the Mona Lisa on show there if they wanted—and as Rebecca says, the confidence of knowing that they put on a knockout show and series of programmes: they were not guided. We were not something parachuting in and saying, "We are going to do everything". The whole city did stuff and that is very important.

Dr Garcia: I have been observing these types of events for 20 years now. It is more than 70 or 75 cities that I have documented in one way or another. One point that is essential is that we are not talking of arts festivals. This is not an arts festival. A City of Culture, a Capital of Culture event is something that is about bringing a whole city together and figuring out the appropriate governance for this type of event has taken quite a long time. It is a very important question and one where the maturity around thinking and also previewing how to manage it is key, especially because it tends to be the one area that attracts most of the media criticism. On the governance structure, when trying to manage the media cycles, they normally comment on resignations and changes of



leadership that tend to affect and often distract from the many achievements in terms of programming. But we were discussing earlier that in terms of ensuring a social impact, what you need is this diversity of structure, so it cannot be top down. Top down is more efficient from a governance point of view, but it is less sustainable, less meaningful and less socially valuable.

Devising a structure that can be flexible and that is open to change is quite tricky, but because of the amount of time that especially this country, the UK, has experienced events, some learnings have been made. Some of them include the fact that you might not always need an artistic director in order to run a successful City of Culture. Sometimes you do, but sometimes it may be the result of a collective creative board. This idea of the concentric circles or the networks of networks really become a model of governance in itself. There have been lots of discussions, especially after Hull. With the UK City of Culture programme, obviously we also had Derry/Londonderry before in 2013, I feel that we are reaching maturity now after a few additions.

The discovery has been not just about how you run the event within the city, but about how you get the national bodies to support you: the role of the BBC, so again the media, the role of DCMS, the British Council, the Arts Council. All of them realise that this requires a different approach that is not in the same way as supporting other types of events. What is clear is that although you might need a spokesperson, it is not just one face that will do it all, because you have very different constituents. You have your international audiences, which might require a particular kind of person to talk to them on your behalf. You have your national stakeholders and then you have your different neighbours, where at times the City of Culture is not really a Phil Redmond or a Rosie Millard, but that champion who is based in that neighbourhood, and this is the person they will respond to. You really need those different layers. It takes time and, yes, it takes a lot of media criticism. It is true: that is the kind of thing that most teams have to develop a thick skin about but what we have is that it is that flexibility that ends up leading to a much more resilient city running culture once the big show leaves the town.

Q162 **Giles Watling:** So there is no one model?

Dr Garcia: Not a single one.

Rosie Millard: I disagree. I agree with you in many ways, Beatriz: in small areas you need a champion and that will push it, and each arts institution in Hull championed the City of Culture, but for the programme, I think you do need an artistic director. I think if you have the board making up what the programme is, that is a nightmare.

You need a vision and I think what was critical—and your point about the media criticism of governance is very well-made—and where we really succeeded in Hull was that the culture company got on really well with the local authority. Martin and I used to joke that every time we went up



HOUSE OF COMMONS

on stage to do a talk, which was often, we would thank the city council first of all. We did every time, because the leader of the city council is a remarkable person and he and I had a Messianic belief in the fact that Hull was going to be a success. We knew it was. We absolutely believed in the city and there was not a wafer of paper between us. We absolutely believed in it and we always got on, me and the leader of the city council. Equally, Martin Green and I worked together really well.

You have to have that, you have to have the chair and the chief executive absolutely together, because if there is any difference, then the press will jump on that and then there is a problem. As an arts journalist, I have covered Cities of Culture and Capitals of Culture a lot in my career and I know where the skeletons are, I know where the problems are and I know where the stories are. It is usually about a fallout at the top. I have brought in with me my cuttings files. This is all the press from Hull in the year. It is amazing: this is every single article I cut out and put in here. There is an amazing—it is not really an arc; it is just an upward thing. It begins with scepticism and sort of, "Oh okay, let's see," and then after that press launch where Tony Hall said he was going to make the year Hull-centric and we had the photos of Spencer Tunick to make Hull look witty and on it and groovy, there was enthusiasm and, "Okay, let's see."

That was in the September, then in the January when this amazing film marked the opening, there was adulation. There was no criticism. I am a hawk over what is said about Hull, because I championed it and batted it off for so long, so many years when Hull was in the doldrums. I read everything and it was all nice and it was all pleasant and praising. I thought, "It is going to drop off in about the middle of February". What these files show is evidence of it absolutely not dropping off. It went on and on and on and on, until there was an amazing piece written by Rachel Cooke in *The Observer* in December 2017 under the headline, "We see our city with new eyes". Rachel Cooke came up to Hull. I did not meet her, but I warrant that she tried to find someone on the streets of Hull—230,000 people—who thought that the year had not worked and she could not find one person, not one.

All the media were looking, because obviously you want to have a bit of jeopardy, otherwise you do not have a story. They were unable to find one and I think that came from the united front that started off with myself and the leader, then myself and Martin, and then that spread across the whole city.

Dr Garcia: That is the big point, because this is quite essential for the future of these kinds of initiatives. It is what we mean by artistic director. The kind of artistic director that you might have in this type of event needs to be also a mediator, so it cannot be someone that has a bubble of isolation to come with this amazing idea that then inspires everyone else. It needs to be someone who can have the time for conversations without losing track. You need a vision but you need to be able to accept being challenged, because you need to have, if not a degree of flexibility,



a degree of patience to communicate and to absorb the reactions, otherwise you will not get this joined front. A lot of the kinds of resignations that are very common—I think after 30 years, over 70% of Capitals of Culture have had resignations of their artistic directors—tend to be the result of that, of not managing this great thing with the chair of the board, with the different cultural organisations backing you. It is a big question of how we define it and what is the name of the leader.

Rosie Millard: You have to hire the right person, basically. That is critical. That one role, that one appointment is absolutely crucial.

Q163 **Brendan O'Hara:** Following on from Giles about governance, I grew up in Glasgow in the 1970s and 1980s and I saw how Glasgow had just decided to transform itself through arts and culture. It then became, as you say, the 1990 European Capital of Culture and it was absolutely transformational. Glasgow now is not the city it was 30 years ago. I do not think it is just a legacy of being the City of Culture, because the city has completely changed. As I say, the arts and culture is not just a part of Glasgow, it almost is Glasgow, and that is what it is become.

In the area of governance, my experience just as a citizen of the city, the City of Culture took on a life of its own. It was almost let fly and it took its own direction. For Glaswegians, it was as if a cork had been taken out of a bottle and it came out and it became their city and it became the City of Culture. Its legacy was dictated not by artistic directors, not by a city council—who were fantastic at the time—but it was directed and ultimately led by the people themselves. The city you see now is the city that the people of Glasgow, Glaswegians, want their city to be.

Rosie Millard: I agree. When the Queen came up to Hull in November, it was very interesting. She saw one thing of the City of Culture and the thing that she saw was the volunteers lining the platform of Paragon station when she arrived. That was very important. It was the people of Hull that made the City of Culture.

However, I would just echo—I think Giles brought it up or maybe Damian—that it is absolutely critical to have national subsidised companies working with the City of Culture. It is their duty. We all pay for these companies. Most of them are based in London or large metropolitan centres, where the City of Culture does not tend to go. The City of Culture is designed for modest-sized cities, like Sunderland and Hull, that need it. It is their duty, the national companies, to see where the City of Culture is and to work with that city, not to parachute in and just say, “Hey, this is our latest show,” but to work with the companies. We had the RSC working with Hull Truck to produce “The Hypocrite”, a marvellous show about the history of Hull. We had Tate working with the Ferens, we had Opera North doing an opera on the Humber Bridge, with sounds made from beetles climbing up reeds under the Humber Bridge. It was innately from the Humber Bridge. You could only hear it if you were walking across the bridge and it was amazing.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

With the Royal Ballet, Kevin O'Hare comes from Hull and he stepped out on the stage of the new theatre and it was the most moving thing I have ever seen, in front of an audience of children, because we just devoted whole stalls to children who love ballet, and he just said, "It's good to be home." The impact of that, seeing the Director of the Royal Ballet with the words "The Royal Ballet" above his head on your turf in your city saying, "I'm coming home," is enormous.

It has to be a formula where the national companies come in and work with the local thing, so there is no idea of it just arriving in a cold manner, but it cannot be uplifted, the City of Culture, just by the institutions alone in the city, because it needs to have national impact. The arrival of these companies gives enormous pride to the people of the city. Also, as I said earlier, I feel it is their duty to support the City of Culture. The other thing I would say is that it has to be sustained. They cannot just go off and see where the next City of Culture is. Those companies need to maintain links with the City of Culture, which Tate in particular does with the Plus Tate connections with galleries across the nation. I think that is very important and I know this is something that the Arts Council also thinks is important, but it is crucial.

Rebecca Ball: Can I just come in on what you said about the cork being taken out of the bottle, because I think it is a really nice image? It reminds me of something that Julie Elliott said after the bidding process. The *Sunderland Echo* ran an extraordinary front page when we did not become City of Culture, saying, "Weir"—as in the River Weir—"still a City of Culture". I think Julie was quoted in that article as saying, "You can't put it back in the bottle now, it's out," because what had happened—and I think this must have been what happened in Glasgow, from what you were describing—was about changing the way people feel. Paul Callaghan, who you met yesterday from the MAC Trust, talks about this process of changing people from a sense of no hope to hope, to belief something might change to seeing the change, to ambition for themselves. I think that process of changing the way people feel in terms of the social impact of that is enormous. It is really difficult to quantify, but it is enormous.

One of the things that is really interesting in terms of those national organisations coming into a city is, yes, they do bring pride and ambition, but what is the thing that makes that stick? What is the thing that then makes someone feel differently about the place that they live? I think there are companies who do it really well and there are companies who do it less well. In terms of those ones that do it really well, it is about persistence in building those relationships. There is an extraordinary dance company that is based in the north-east called Southpaw. They did a programme with a group of participants called Rush, where they created a big participatory piece here. It was the Cultural Spring commission, it was in this area, and it ended up going to Hull as part of their programme.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

But the dancers who took part in that show from Sunderland have gone with that company, and about a month ago that company did the commission to open Middlesbrough's new town hall. You saw the dancers from Sunderland and South Tyneside dancing as part of that. Often, these are women in their 50s. They were not dancers. They are women who have just found the love of dance, but they have built a relationship with that company and they have gone on and now this is what they do. That is life-changing. That is transformational. I think that thing of how do we enable our companies to learn the best practice of building those relationships and making the impact of their amazing shows, the high-quality shows, really stick in people's lives is important.

Dr Garcia: I am very pleased that Glasgow has been mentioned, because of the big point that we make when trying to document and provide the evidence about what goes on: I think capturing symbolic impact is a really important part of the story. The way to do that is to allow time to go by so that we can keep revisiting. Although we are in 2018, I think that the experiences in Glasgow since the mid-1980s are inspirational because we have decades now where we can observe what happens in a city and the iterations, the cycles that go through and that enable us to see there were moments that were key to change the level of confidence of certain individuals and also the generational impact. You were mentioning children, those children in the mid-1980s or 1990 in Glasgow who are now doing certain things that probably they would not have imagined if they had not been given that platform.

In the case of Glasgow, it has been very well documented. We have done a lot of work to see how you change a reputation completely. Both Glasgow and Liverpool are now phenomenal examples of an absolute turnover in an image representation, especially at a national point of view. Usually, the international views are not challenging—in the case of Liverpool, they are wonderful—but it is how you get your close neighbours to talk differently about you. We can prove, we can evidence, how this has happened, both in the case of Glasgow and of Liverpool. We are keen to see how things will progress for Hull.

The one point probably to mention in the case of Glasgow is how you reutilise spaces, how you reappropriate them and how you build capacity in your local communities—and if you need help from elsewhere—and using your assets and what is absolutely unique to your city. From the Glasgow story, the role of Tramway as a space that was rediscovered, reappropriated, and its trajectory over time, not just as a centre of contemporary arts but as a garden that invites the community in, has been key in that story and is something that especially in the first industrial cities is another part of its own legacy. How you rediscover and reappropriate your spaces, use them differently and make sure that being a City of Culture in Hull, Glasgow and Liverpool could only be there, in a way that is really situated in that place, that it is not just a formalised show that can move from place to place—that is also a very important part.



Q164 **Julie Elliott:** It has been fascinating listening, but I want to move on to have a look at cultural-based regeneration programmes and how you get the money, how they are funded, because they do not magic themselves. What support do Government offer you in this area? What challenges are associated with securing funding to make these things happen? I would like to know what you think and what your thoughts are on all of that.

Rosie Millard: We won the City of Culture honour with no money attached. The city council has already said we are critical and immediately pledged £3 million. Then the Arts Council came in and the lottery, and public funding was obviously crucial. The lottery gave us, in all, £10 million. That is split between Arts Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, Big Lottery, et cetera. Public funding, including the university who pledged £1 million and Spirit of 2012—again which is legacy from the Games—who gave us about £3 million, funded the volunteers, which was crucial. Our public money was about £20 million and then £12.5 million came from the local companies in Hull. At the end, we had over 80 partners, which was significant.

The amount of money we raised was much more than we thought we would raise. We started with an ambition of raising about £18 million, hoped we would raise about £25 million, and ended up raising £32 million. I think that we achieved it because the unity of the city was so impressive and the Treasury and DCMS responded to that because there were various things that needed to be rebuilt in order for the City of Culture to do its job properly. The art gallery needed to be rebuilt.

In terms of the private money, every single one of the companies that gave us money had a connection with the city. BP, for example, was a huge partner, but they are a huge employer in the city. KCOM, the local telephone company, is also enormous and the only independent phone exchange in the country, so it is part of the story of Hull. We were helped enormously in this by Lord Mandelson, who is the High Sheriff of Hull. He came up, and businessmen and the business community are going to listen to him. That was very, very useful. He was really helpful in unlocking and putting forward the financial rationale behind why the city should be supported.

Yorkshire Water made a public donation. It was a big public event. They were the first of the private companies to give a large amount, and it was “pour encourager les autres”. Everyone joined in. Hull is practically underwater, so it was appropriate that Yorkshire Water, who sometimes have to come and pump out the city, helped. Then local companies like MKM, which is a building company, helped us.

It became a thing where everyone joined in and everyone felt they needed to join in. By the end, we had Smith & Nephew, an enormous global company that happened to have been founded in Hull so they wanted to remember their roots. That was very handy. Virginia Bottomley is on the board of Smith & Nephew. She is also the chancellor of Hull University. That was helpful. The help of politicians: Alan Johnson, who



HOUSE OF COMMONS

was then the MP for Hull, was very, very helpful. We did it by calling in friends and critical voices who could see that we had a mission and that we were united and that it was a good thing.

Dr Garcia: With funding models, it goes back to the issues around governance and how you set up a system that is flexible and adapts to time, especially at times of austerity and so on. Traditionally, there has been a dominance of classic public sector funding for these types of events. Where we are is at a time when the entrepreneurial approach, thinking of alternative models to attract sponsorship and private contributions, grows but in ways that are empowering and inspiring. It is really thinking big about how you relate to those organisations in a way that they feel they can do something to contribute towards the city.

There are, I think, different opportunities here. On the one hand, it is about thinking of the different scales that an event should take on in order to have an impact and to be meaningful. Again, how much of it is around a certain type of grand intervention that you might need to surprise people? It is true that it is important to be ambitious and sometimes you have to do something that, yes, is expensive but it might change people's lives—to have a public art intervention, to do something that really has the wow factor. It is also clear how much needs to be done that is not necessarily expensive. What we have now is the model of Boroughs of Culture, for instance. That is another layer of programming beyond cities of culture that will be done in London and Liverpool, and the city region is also exploring that concept, which will be small scale and with very little need for big funding.

There is an element of how much is about the in-kind opportunities, again how you get the BBC to simply place you on the weather map. It is not very costly and it is absolutely transformative. Having the connections with Tate and the Turner Prize, those kinds of contributions are about having your national big impact interventions to move around and visit your city. The approach to funding goes hand in hand with how you develop your approach to partnership building and how much you can do that is not costly. It is time consuming and requires a lot of careful thinking and planning ahead, but it might be an alternative to your classic big budgets.

The other big element, obviously, is thinking cross-sectorally and not just relying on your classic cultural stakeholders. There is now a whole move on development into how a city of culture has an impact on health and wellbeing, so you should tap into funding that comes from the health sector. It should come from education, those links with the schools. There are other pots of money that could be used in connection with a City of Culture and demonstrate very, very good value.

It is that strategic thinking and it is what we were talking about before, from the bid stage, on how to think of culture as a catalyst for transformation in a city and not just approach it in a classic sense of who



HOUSE OF COMMONS

has traditionally funded your orchestras or your visual artists. Do it in a way that is far more holistic and ultimately demonstrate that the City of Culture initiative is something that should involve as many sectors as possible simultaneously and the private donors as well.

Rebecca Ball: It is certainly an intricate jigsaw, isn't it, the finances around these things? The model that is emerging in Sunderland and that certainly emerged around the city of culture bid but also in a more long-term way is that often there is a core local partner who is the principal investor. In Sunderland, we have a city council that is absolutely investing in culture and really sticking to its guns in terms of the importance of that. We have the university, which is a huge investor and has been a huge investor in this agenda over a long period of time. Then we have investment coming in from the business sector as well. We have a number of businesses who are putting their money in and a lot of that is being channelled through the MAC Trust.

What we are seeing then is that local leadership is giving confidence, I think, to those national investors to come in, which are so important. What we have seen over the last few years in the city is a big increase in the amount of investment from Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery, those kinds of national funders. We still have a long way to go in Sunderland in terms of that national investment, but it is coming in.

Then it ripples out into a much broader conversation around money coming in from other sectors, other businesses, unlocking resources. We have seen some really interesting stuff in terms of space in the city and being able to unlock private sector space for cultural use. That all adds to the funding pot, to the resources, as Beatriz was saying.

The thing to note here, though, is we live in a nation that has huge discrepancies in investment in this area in different parts of the country. One of the problems, I think, is that sometimes it can feel like a self-perpetuating cycle. Sometimes those areas that are most successful in attracting national investment also have the strongest business base that means that you can attract the most sponsorship. How as a nation we try to look at places and an approach to place-based investment that helps us try to create a greater equality across the nation in terms of investment and unlocks some new opportunities for places that perhaps historically have not seen the levels of investment I think is a really vital question. Yes, essentially, a key local partner, national coming in on top of that, and then looking at what resources—

Dr Garcia: I would add that the international dimension is also one we now need to bring back into the agenda. It is not just about the EU anymore. It is your expat communities, your connections with the rest of the world. It is becoming more and more interesting and I think that the opportunities are big.

Rosie Millard: It is not my area of expertise, but just from observations of how we raised money in Hull, you are unlikely to get private money, a



lot of it, if you do not have a local narrative that connects emotionally with those companies. If those companies do not have some form of locus on your area, you are not going to interest them. The critical thing is to look at who is—and both Rebecca and Beatriz are correct. You have to make the case that it is going to be good for companies' staff to be involved. GF Smith, who are a paper maker—interestingly related to Smith & Nephew, two brothers who set up two different companies years ago—they were a huge partner of ours and they funded an exhibition about paper. They gave all their staff a day off to go and see the exhibition and it was good for the wellbeing of the staff. They could see the benefits. I don't think you are going to get huge amounts of money from a private company that does not have any buy-in.

Q165 Julie Elliott: Do you think that having private sector involvement, not just in funding but in support, is crucial to a bid succeeding for the City of Culture?

Rosie Millard: Completely, yes, and I think it was our list of the Angels that was one of the important things in the bid. It is really important. It is absolutely critical that Siemens helped, and what a great advert for them, having the Blade in the centre of town and international coverage. Everyone knew that Siemens was an investor in Hull and everyone knew that Siemens was doing green energy. It was a complete win-win event for them. Nevertheless, they did put this thing on and help us. It was absolutely crucial. You cannot do it without the private buy-in, because it gives it credibility as well.

Dr Garcia: It is not treating them just as a cash machine. It is that they can also inspire a conversation. It is being demanding on them, in a way to make them mature and step up, but on the other hand having the time to benefit from their insights.

Rosie Millard: We are talking about the benefits of City of Culture here, and I think that we need to remember that Hull City of Culture so far has achieved 800 jobs and—the figures vary wildly—millions of pounds' worth of investment, which would have been from the private sector, hotels, shops, et cetera, and other forms of investment.

Rebecca Ball: Yes, I would absolutely agree with that. In Sunderland, the business sector is crucial in terms of governance, content development and advocacy. The Sunderland Business Group did a huge amount of work for us in creating that network and getting the word out but also absolutely in terms of resourcing. Sometimes that is cash and sometimes that is about the other huge resources that the business sector can bring to bear in this: materials, space, all sorts of things. It is absolutely vital.

Rosie Millard: They do need persuading, though, don't they? Oh my gosh, the business sector! One can assume that the Arts Council and the university and Spirit of 2012 have already been on this journey in various cases and understand the power and importance of culture; the business



sector are not necessarily so easily swayed. They had to be tempted along.

Q166 **Giles Watling:** I have one very quick question. We have touched on many things. You have touched on pockets of deprivation, legacy and so forth. How much should or does regeneration feature in putting together a bid for City of Culture?

Rosie Millard: Enormously. As Rebecca said, City of Culture is given to a city that needs it and that also deserves it because it has a culture that is worth celebrating. Let's be honest, Bath is never going to win City of Culture because it already is acknowledged internationally as a cultural beacon and a wonderful city. I am not slagging it off, but it is never going to win that title. Regeneration is critical.

If you go to Hull today, you are still going to see bombsites and pockets of challenge. It is a low-wage economy in Hull, and I think that what is very important about Hull is that regeneration happens but not gentrification. The house prices have not soared up in Hull and I think that is a good thing because what you want is people to come. You can buy an affordable house in Hull still, a nice house, and you can walk to work. Because of the previous economic investment that I have just mentioned in the city, there are now jobs in Hull. You can set up in Hull with your family. You can walk to work. There is a job. Gradually, regeneration happens. It is a long-haul thing.

The way I feel about Hull is one would think that it was all glittering and marvellous, and when I go there with visitors who have never been there, they look at it and they think, "Okay, it is not all amazing". I think that it is a slow-burn thing. If you suddenly had a shopping centre of the magnitude that you have in Liverpool arriving in Hull, it would be crazy because it would be out of people's pockets. You do not need a Harvey Nichols in Hull. What you need and what they have now is a slow-burn growth of independent shops and shops that are connected. Regeneration is obviously the aim, but it is a slightly more nuanced thing than just having soaring house prices.

Dr Garcia: I think that, especially in the UK, but it has also happened in many parts of Europe, the whole approach of regeneration and the idea of cultural-led regeneration is the model that Glasgow initiated back in the mid-1980s and in 1990, and it has become a very important motivation for a certain type of city that needed that renaissance, that repositioning. Often it is the post-industrial city, the port city, that is a particular model. In the UK, most of the examples have been of this kind, and certainly in Liverpool, for instance, the bid was led by the regeneration team, not the culture team, in Liverpool City Council.

I do believe, however, that there is room for other approaches elsewhere eventually, maybe not now. There are lots of cities where probably what they need as a leading trigger is, whatever we understand as regeneration, a transformation often of a physical nature, but I feel that a



HOUSE OF COMMONS

City of Culture initiative could also be important even for wealthier cities that need a push for reasons of tolerance and openness. There are other types of triggers that might be needed in order to rethink how you engage with communities. It might happen that after a cycle where what we have are the cities that are, through this kind of economic deprivation, leading the way to change and to develop other opportunities, at one point we might think we need this kind of event to come to the supposedly privileged places that are ignoring the importance of diversity and to connect and acknowledge the range of cultures that compose them.

I think that it is possible that eventually we might have other motivations leading the way. Right now, yes, the regeneration approach has been essential. It was for Glasgow, it was for Liverpool, it was for Derry/Londonderry, and it was for Hull.

Rebecca Ball: My take on this is that City of Culture is a catalyst for change, and I think that it is for each city to define what change it needs to make and how that change is best implemented. For some cities, that will be a physical regeneration agenda. For other cities, it will be a very different agenda. I think that it would be a real shame if City of Culture became entirely about one type of city with one type of need. We should be able to look at a situation where, whether it is Bath or Hereford, a city is of a different type because all cities can use it. Being able to redefine it in some way in the future and it not becoming about one type of city is probably quite important for the health of the programme in the long term.

Essentially, it is about defining what that city wants to achieve over the next 10 years, the next 15 years, and there will be different ways. In Sunderland we had some physical regeneration projects as part of our bid. In the 2021 bidding process, the shortlisted bids had different amounts depending on what they needed. You saw some of them yesterday here that were part of our bid. I think that the change can be multiple and plural and we should take a more holistic view to what it could be.

Rosie Millard: The trouble about that, then, is there are some cities that always seem to get the attention and always seem to get the investment. Anyone looking at where Channel 4 is about to go to will agree with that, I think. Hull had four national portfolio organisations before the City of Culture—I think that it has five now—for the Arts Council, four in the whole city. I think that there are more in Islington. If you say, "Let's open it out to every city of a certain size," or, frankly, every city, then you lose the impetus that was begun by Glasgow the Capital of Culture. The first Capital of Culture was Athens. The second was Florence, I think, and then it was Paris. It was meaningless. Paris already is a capital of culture. Glasgow and subsequent Capitals of Culture really focused that and proved that it was an amazing mechanism for regeneration. If we move away from that, fine, you can do that, but I think that there are



HOUSE OF COMMONS

other things that can happen. You can have other festivals and other things that can celebrate the culture of a city, but the City of Culture and the Capital of Culture are so well focused now and they are such good mechanisms for regeneration that I think that to dilute it would be a real shame.

However, Rebecca is not wrong in that there are other sorts of regeneration. The very interesting statistic from Hull—there are many and I could drone on about them for a long time—that I think is critical is that the City of Culture had 95% engagement over the year from the members of the public. Nine out of 10 people or over nine out of 10 people engaged with a cultural event in the city, and this is not, as I said before, an overtly arty city.

Inclusion was very, very important, and Sadiq Khan came up to Hull. The week after the Queen visited, the Mayor of London visited and he said this inclusion is astonishing because the arts and culture in London are hived off to a certain constituency. They are very polarised, I think, in London and they are particular, which is a nonsense when you see London is an international cultural beacon. The Boroughs of Culture, which have gone to Waltham Forest and then Brent, are not centres of culture and they have looked to Hull for that inclusion, to see how we pulled it off, how we managed that inclusion. I think that it is a very interesting legacy when a city the size and power of London is looking to Hull to inspire it. That should be in your measuring.

Rebecca Ball: Can I just clarify that I certainly was not saying that I thought City of Culture should be a prize for a city that is already thriving? What I was saying is that it has the capacity to achieve different types of changes in different places. We should not get to a point where it is only large urban centres that can apply for it, because we can recognise that it could have benefits for other types of centres.

Chair: That leads us quite neatly on to the next question, Ian Lucas.

Q167 **Ian C. Lucas:** Thank you, Rebecca. I am going to pick up a couple of threads that you have just thrown out. Rosie really touched a nerve on Channel 4, which I am going to explore with her in a minute.

Rebecca, you used a really interesting phrase earlier. You said that Sunderland was a city of villages. What I want to talk about is the impact on villages and towns because we have a crisis. A number of us represent towns; some of us are from cities. There is a perception that towns are really struggling. I know this area very well. I know that there are towns like Chester-le-Street and areas like that. When you talk about the City of Culture and bringing people into the centre with Sunderland, are you talking about those towns and villages around? Do you reach out to those areas or are you looking only at bringing people into Sunderland?

Rebecca Ball: No, it is a really important question. There are some of those villages that fall within the local authority of Sunderland, and then there are some that are a wider catchment. Our ambition is that people



HOUSE OF COMMONS

have both a vibrant and interesting active cultural life where they live, in their locality, however they define that locality, but that there are also interesting things for them to go to within the city itself.

One of the things that we find is that in areas of deprivation people define their locality in quite a small manner. One of the things we found through the consultation—and Rosie has mentioned this already—was the number of people who had not ever been into Newcastle or had not ever been into Sunderland city centre. It is not only deprivation but certainly there is a correlation between how local people's lives are very often and areas of deprivation.

The Cultural Spring, who you saw yesterday, were absolutely about ensuring that there were fantastic opportunities at the end of every road, in every working men's club, in the local shopping centre. Great Place, which we are working on at the moment, is doing some specific work in the coalfield villages, looking at how arts can contribute to agendas around health, happiness and wellbeing. This is about ambitious, high-quality work, but it is ensuring that it is not assumed that people need to travel into the city centre to get to it. Of course, to make the city work, you need a vibrant city centre as well. You need to balance both of those things, but it is really important that we take the work out of the city centre as well.

Dr Garcia: In Liverpool it is the same approach. The notion of a city region is completely part of the planning. The example there in terms of what has happened over the last 10 years, one of the big iconic interventions was this idea of the Giants. It was the spider back in 2008 and afterwards has been this family of giants coming around. Now you have them walking over, going into the Wirral peninsula, engaging. It is a whole operation and it is a fascinating learning curve because it also links up with transport links, with rethinking mobility and how accessible and how easy it is to explore different parts of your city. The expectation is on the one hand getting those communities to feel welcome in the hubs of attention in the centre but also to feel that things are going on in their different areas. Initiatives such as having pavilions in your different neighbourhoods in the different cities are also very common.

I feel that the element that is important out of this is how we document evidence in a way that takes us out to those different communities so that we are not only doing the capture of engagement by doing visitor surveys or audience assessments in the city centre areas. We have been doing a lot of following in Liverpool in terms of a 10-year legacy, going into all of these different communities that are defined very much like villages, that have their own name, and seeing how they connect, how they perceive the degree of closeness with Liverpool as a reference point or how much they feel that their own identity is also shaping the brother city. It is a really important and valuable part of the process, but again it is not just in the cultural activity; it is also the transport, it is all the



HOUSE OF COMMONS

infrastructure that you need around it to ensure that people can go in and out of the spaces.

Rosie Millard: It is a vexed issue. I think that it is a very good question, but it is problematic. We discussed this a lot back in the day, and the fact is Hull won the bid. It was Hull City of Culture. When I show you this picture, this says "Hull City of Culture 2017". Here we have naked people lying on the streets of Hull. They are not lying on the streets of villages in East Riding. They are not lying in villages near Bridlington. They are lying on the streets in Hull and it was a story of Hull. Every single thing we did in the programme was about the story of Hull, and it really focused everyone. It focused the media coverage. Because I have been an arts hack, I know the difficulty in trying to get media institutions, which are always focused in London, to be interested in something happening outside London. If you say, "It is a story about Hull"—which you have never heard of and you do not know where it is—"and Bridlington and Bampton Cliffs and the East Riding villages" and so on, it is just hopeless. You are not going to get media attention.

For finance, you also need to focus everyone's mind on the urgent nature of this city. I think that you have to acknowledge that there is a hub; it is Hull. It is the hub of the whole of the Humberside area. It is by far and away the largest city for miles around. You just have to say, "We were given this chance for regeneration and we are going to grab it and I am afraid it is our turn". You just have to be like that.

Q168 **Ian C. Lucas:** I am going to push back on you here, Rosie, because I represent a town. Most people do not live in cities. Most people in Britain live in the countryside or they live in towns. Towns are really under pressure at the moment, and there is a perception in towns that the focus of the City of Culture bids has been to the detriment of towns. Younger people are moving to cities, away from towns, because of lack of investment. I agree with you about Hull seizing the opportunity and I think that it has been right for Liverpool and for Glasgow as well to do that, but I wonder whether we should be shifting our focus away from cities. If you think that it is difficult to get the BBC to cover cities outside London, try to get them to cover towns outside London.

Rosie Millard: Indeed. I spoke at Doncaster, which is bigger and has a larger population than Hull, I discovered, which was interesting. It is a town and they are going to have a year of culture. They are not having any anointment from anyone; they are just going to do it. They have taken advice and guidance, et cetera, from Hull, who are very nearby.

As Borough of Culture has been invented, and I think that there is going to be County of Culture, which is a very good idea, you can vary it, you can leaven it. Much like the World Cup is going to go to the whole of America, it seems, why don't you have City of Culture shared? There could be some iteration, I agree, and I think that the position of towns and villages is perilous and worrying.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

You do have a major issue, and that is transport. You cannot expect the City of Culture, which only has x amount of money to spend, to, first, build a whole load of buildings and, secondly, put on buses, because people are not going to give money to you in order to put on buses. I do not want to sound like, "Oh, that is someone else's problem," but it is, actually. That has to be looked at and that has to be part of the urgent necessity, and the Government or whoever is giving the chance need to then insist that the local transport provider steps up.

Dr Garcia: Where we go back to is that notion of the concentric circles and how, depending on who you are communicating to, you will use a package or a tag or another. The reason these types of events are successful and make an impact is that they concentrate attention, this idea of having one name and not many. It has happened all over and, as an example from Europe, in the Ruhr region Essen was European Capital of Culture but it was Essen and 51 towns across the Ruhr. That was the approach they took, but with Essen fronting them. In the end, the regional name had the right ring to it and is the one that they have pushed, not this notion of the Ruhr metropole. It is interesting for cases here in the UK that could also become a model, where you have a collective of towns or villages represented through a name.

Back in the day as well with one of the bids for European Capital of Culture, you had the Highlands and Islands also doing it. It was a whole collective of spaces, with Inverness leading the way but also a brother group. It is true that the models are multiple. We are talking about how it affects governance and how it affects financing; how it affects communication is also there.

I do believe for communication purposes and in terms of making this visible, yes, you need a lead and you need a name and in some cases nationally you might focus on that, but then locally you need this other element of work about how you relate to these different and smaller communities. In many cases, what you will have is that after the event leaves town, as in the case of Hull or here in Sunderland, you might have initiatives about doing those smaller boroughs of culture or neighbourhoods of culture initiatives as a follow-up.

Rosie Millard: The recent £20 million grant from DCMS is a valid and an interesting follow-up because that has come directly from Hull, as I see from the press release that I read from DCMS. It was inspired by Hull and it is going to go in varying packages to different creative industries across the nation. That seems to me to be a very interesting way of using the legacy, the excitement of Hull, and capturing it while it is still in people's memories to go out and have a huge displacement.

Q169 **Ian C. Lucas:** I think that the lessons that you have been talking about are very relevant to towns and regions and areas that you are talking about. What would be really useful would be for the Cities of Culture to communicate that, but what is very complex in more regional areas are



HOUSE OF COMMONS

the governance structures. You are usually talking about a number of different local authorities. You are talking about areas that do not necessarily closely identify with each other. That is the challenge that exists in a wider geographical area that perhaps does not exist in the cities.

Dr Garcia: I think that there are growing examples. The Ruhr is one. Aarhus in Denmark, the way they have approached it is a whole collaboration. What I feel is that maybe within the UK we do not have enough exemplars. Internationally, there are many and it is growing. The model of the Ruhr is a fascinating one, but also Aarhus in Denmark and the way they approached their Capital of Culture with a whole set of towns also being part of the collaboration is extraordinary, and the legacies in governance terms, setting up those structures for conversation. In Marseille in 2013 it was also Marseille-Provence. Not everything was as successful but now there is a five-year legacy that also involves all of these different towns. There is a thirst. There is a growing interest in these kinds of models and it is possible.

Rosie Millard: When you see how difficult it has been for Yorkshire to speak with one voice—and I will not go into the issues there—it is problematic.

Q170 **Ian C. Lucas:** Chester and Wrexham made a cross-border bid to Channel 4 for one of the hubs, which was not considered by Channel 4 for their own reasons. We were trying to break the mould by reaching across a national border.

Rosie Millard: A brilliant idea, yes.

Ian C. Lucas: Well, Channel 4 did not think so.

Rosie Millard: It happens with the Premier League.

Ian C. Lucas: Having said that, just picking you up on what has happened in Sunderland, your bid was not successful but you are creating Sunderland Culture, which I think is a really good model. I think that that is something we can take away and I will personally take away and try to develop in my region.

Chair: If I can just come in here, we have probably about 15 minutes left and there are a couple of people I want to bring back in. I will bring in Brendan and then Jo.

Q171 **Brendan O'Hara:** Very briefly, just to follow on from what Ian was saying, although I am originally from Glasgow I now live in and represent a vast rural constituency: 26 islands, a number of very small, vastly separated towns. Do you think that the rural communities in the UK, taking it away from the towns, the rurality of the UK, has missed its opportunity or is there still an opportunity for regeneration of rural communities?



Rosie Millard: Yes, I think that there is an enormous opportunity. People might go, "It is impossible," but people said that when Glasgow won the Capital of Culture. People thought that was mad and impossible. I think that if you are looking at culture, the culture of the British Isles is intensely rural. There is a story there, a narrative, which is very rural. It is not impossible, but I think that you are going to have to nudge the issue of transport.

Q172 **Brendan O'Hara:** It is that culture-led regeneration, which we have seen as being so transformative elsewhere. Could the rural parts of the UK—

Rosie Millard: Totally.

Dr Garcia: Yes, but it cannot just be copied and pasted from Glasgow or from Liverpool. It needs a slight tweaking. If what you want to see is what culture can do to, again, drive and develop a collective mission, encourage the network approach that cities have learned and developed—

Rosie Millard: Now with digitally connected communication, arguably it is bringing communities together. I think that the Highlands and Islands as a Capital of Culture would be amazing. You would have to buy in transport and probably reinvest into it, which would be a good thing and would be a legacy. I do not think it is impossible. Again, not a cut and pasted thing, but I think you could have it. Why not?

Q173 **Brendan O'Hara:** Is there any work being done on it?

Rebecca Ball: One of the things I was going to say is I think that there are some interesting models, not within the City of Culture programme necessarily, although I think culture happens in all sorts of different ways. There are some amazing examples of rural culture, but if you think about rural touring networks or some of our amazing rural museums or some of those cultural networks that exist in rural areas, some of the work that has happened in Cumbria around developing festivals, it is a different model. It would be a different cultural celebration. If we really believe in cultural democracy and in everybody in this country being able to have a vibrant, interesting cultural life, we need to be open to other models of delivering this. With imagination and creativity, I am sure people are delivering cultural regeneration in ways that are not city-centre focused.

Rosie Millard: Without parachuting it in, though.

Q174 **Brendan O'Hara:** Yes, there are some wonderful things happening. If you haven't, I would point you in the direction of the Campbeltown Picture House, which is an astonishing, incredible thing and is well worth having a look at. Yes, I know that it does happen, but could there be this planned regenerative aspect as well to a lot of our small towns and villages?

Rosie Millard: I do not see why not, but you would have to think about the legacy very carefully and where the regeneration is going to happen.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

You do not just want to have buildings to come in, because that ruins the essence of a rural community. You want to see what needs to be bolstered and how that could happen.

Dr Garcia: As an example of something that was achieved here in the UK, in the context of London 2012 and the Cultural Olympiad, one of the approaches was to do this regions and nations programming, which often involved activity in very remote locations. This whole idea of the outdoors and the unusual spaces for art brought a completely different picture of how contemporary art interventions could be appreciated. This developed from 2009 up until 2012. There were some fantastic initiatives that probably could be followed up and triggered into some new type of event that is precisely about remote locations and the rediscovery of place.

Rosie Millard: Now you have quite a lot of arts companies that are not attached to a building—theatre companies, performance companies, all sorts of things. One thinks of Jeremy Deller's Stonehenge, which I always think about as my favourite event in the Cultural Olympiad. That relies on touring, and I do not know quite whether touring is going to give you the rural buy-in that you are searching for.

Q175 **Jo Stevens:** I wanted to ask you, Beatriz, about the role of DCMS in choosing and making the final decision on City of Culture. Do you think that that is the right way to go about it and are there any potential risks or conflicts involved with that?

Dr Garcia: That is an interesting question. On the one hand I think that it is valuable that DCMS is deciding to protect the initiative and want to see it as something that is ongoing. I think that the whole approach to selection needs to mature and there probably will be, again, a bit of experiment and trials in terms of how many other stakeholders you bring in, how many backgrounds should be represented in your juries to get the selection right. I feel that on the one hand, yes: having at least that leadership.

I am curious to see the teams. Who is it within the DCMS perspective that retains some sense of continuity, especially to retain the knowledge? There has now been a conversation with them around how we keep the knowhow, whether some kind of repository can be created so that the knowledge that has been accumulated since 2013 is not lost and you do not have upcoming cities having to start from zero. You need a central point to gather this kind of information, but they do need advice. In the same way as has happened with the European Commission on Capital of Culture, they cannot do it by themselves; they need the external expertise. The same will happen in DCMS. The key is who DCMS is talking to, how they establish those memoranda of understanding or partnerships with the Arts Council, the British Council and all of these other organisations that should also provide advice, but good if they have the commitment and especially if they support the idea of a repository so that the learning is not lost.



Q176 **Jo Stevens:** Rebecca, from your perspective?

Rebecca Ball: I think that it is a hugely difficult decision to make, isn't it? What the panel were looking for was degrees of transformation where the impact was going to be greatest, but also where the biggest national event and most successful national event would happen, which is a difficult balancing act.

There are other examples where these sorts of decisions I suppose are made by the arm's length agency, where sometimes investment is delegated, whether it be to Heritage Lottery or Arts Council England. The issue with City of Culture is as we have already discussed: it goes beyond the cultural sector. It is a much bigger agenda. I think that the panel that DCMS appointed this year was really good in that sense, in that it had a range of expertise, from large-scale events to housing to people working across a number of different areas. That was really important.

Yes, getting the right advisers. I keep coming back to this: maintaining an openness about the possibilities of the scheme is really important. Becoming formulaic about what it should look like is a risk to the programme, but if we ensure the diversity of advisers—and that is ethnic diversity, geographic diversity, sectoral diversity of the advisers—feeding into DCMS, it feels like the right place for that decision to be made.

Q177 **Jo Stevens:** Thank you. Rosie?

Rosie Millard: I think that it has to come from DCMS because if it does, it gives it that national fillip and it makes everyone sit up and take notice. That is critical. I think that the panel ought to show much more diversity. Disability, in my view, was not high enough on the agenda in Hull. I do not know about Derry/Londonderry, but I think that the panel ought to display more economic diversity as well so it is not just the same people in the room. I think that making a choice is impossible, as anyone who has ever been on an award ceremony knows.

It is also very, very difficult. We started off by talking about the bids and this has brought us around in a circle. It is impossible to see from the bid document what the event is going to be. It is like when you interview someone for a job. The interview is a very difficult instrument to use, isn't it? You cannot see into the future. It is really very, very difficult. What do you go on—crazy ambition, unrealistic projections or too much micromanaging at this stage? The emphasis on a big national event, is that appropriate? I don't know. I think that it has to come from DCMS, though.

Chair: Thank you very much. That concludes our questions this morning. It has been a fascinating discussion. Thank you very much for your evidence.

Rosie Millard: Thank you. Thanks for your questions, which were very interesting and good.



HOUSE OF COMMONS