



ADDING VALUE AND A COMPETITIVE EDGE

The Business Case For Using The Arts
in Town Centres and
Business Improvement Districts

FINAL REPORT

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Creative Cultures

Cultural Capital Ltd

Perfect Moment

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CONTENTS	Page
Executive Summary	3
Section 1: Introduction	8
Section 2: What are the main concerns?	11
Section 3: The Bigger Picture	15
Section 4: What use are BIDs making of the Arts?	20
Section 5: Increasing the use of the Arts in BIDs	34
Section 6: Conclusions	40
Appendices	
A	Summary of brief, methodology and work undertaken
B	ATCM BID Ballots at March 2006
C	Analysis of UK BID Business Plans
D	Analysis of UK Questionnaire to TCMs
E	UK Case Studies
F	Full SWOT Analysis
G	Selected Bibliography

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research was commissioned jointly by the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM), Arts Council England (ACE) and Arts and Business (A&B), and was undertaken by Creative Cultures, Cultural Capital Ltd and Perfect Moment. The research was carried out between September 2005 and May 2006, culminating in a seminar and workshop discussions held in London in July 2006. The seminar was attended by town centre and Business Improvement District managers, local authority officers and representatives of the commissioners.

A copy of this report is also available to download from the ATCM website (www.atcm.org).

INTRODUCTION – A GOOD TIME TO ASK AND ANSWER QUESTIONS

This report seeks to answer three questions:

- A. What kind of involvement do Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) or similar Town Centre Managements (TCMs) have with the arts and arts activities both here in the UK and overseas?
- B. How can arts and culture contribute to economic business objectives in area-based improvement initiatives such as BIDs?
- C. What factors produce successful involvement of artists and the arts in town centre initiatives and how can that good practice be replicated elsewhere?

This is a good time to examine a number of issues central to the theme of how arts and culture can add value and a competitive edge because:

- a significant number of BIDs are being formed throughout the UK following successful ballots among local businesses
- the rich overseas experience of BIDs and BID-like initiatives extending over three decades can be examined
- across the UK there is widespread policy support within national and local government and other agencies like Arts Council England for linking arts and cultural development with economic, social and environmental issues
- there is increasing recognition that, for urban areas operating within a globalised economy, cultural assets can play a key role in addressing urban issues including crime, safety, business development, marketing, image and branding, and tourism.

Early work on the research revealed that with the recent formation of BIDs (and their limited number across the UK), there was comparatively little data available on the use of the arts in fulfilling their business objectives. The commissioning bodies agreed, therefore, that the study should widen its scope into the relationship of the Town Centre Management initiatives (established in the UK for nearly twenty years) and how these have successfully built up a record of involvement with the arts and culture. This has considerably enriched the information available on which this report has been based, and has enabled a better understanding of both issues and best practice to emerge than would have been possible through the use of BIDs alone.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR PRIORITIES OF BIDS?

As a starting point for viewing the potential role of the arts within BIDs and wider TCM initiatives, the report examines the business objectives of UK BIDs as well as experience in several overseas countries. These demonstrate a consistent emphasis on four themes or objectives:

1. Safety/crime reduction (increasing both perceived and actual safety levels)
2. Increase in footfall (creating festivals and events and better transport facilities to encourage people into the area)
3. Enhancement of environment (making the place cleaner, greener and visually appealing)
4. Marketing, Promotion, and Differentiation (improving the image, the brand, as well as leveraging visitor and tourism benefits)

The analysis of the intentions of UK BIDs found that at this early stage there was little explicit reference to or inclusion of arts activities and suggests that:

- a) all the BID business plans or proposal documents included priorities or aims which cover the well-established 'clean, green and safe' pattern although they are not always expressed in these terms
- b) all include at least one programme or activity which addresses each of the four categories of improvements listed above
- c) a number also focus on business support, training and networking activities which are directed inward at member businesses (rather than outwardly focussed in marketing and promotion activities), as well as some lobbying activity directed at local authorities or even national government
- d) there are very few projects or activity areas which fall outside this pattern although the London Bridge BID includes a 'Building Bridges' programme area which seeks to promote volunteering and funding for community-based projects. The Better Bankside BID in Southwark includes social and community projects in its programme and the New West End BID includes a programme of working with homeless people and the organisations which support them.

However, the analysis of the international experience, along with developments 'on the ground' within the UK, paints a different and more optimistic picture with a variety of cultural programmes and mechanisms involving arts activities being used to address all of the four themes or objectives of most BIDs. And, more importantly, this shows that some town centre schemes have accumulated evidence of hard, or bottom-line, outputs in terms of increased visitor numbers, retail spend, and marketing and advertising value, alongside other business impacts.

THE BIGGER PICTURE – CULTURE WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

There is also an international context that makes inclusion of the arts increasingly central to urban development. The role of the arts in town centre development is directly related to the positioning and marketing of urban centres within the globalised economy. Issues such as the development of the knowledge-based economy, the quality of life of a skilled and creative workforce, and the differentiation of places are now important elements in urban success.

This success is increasingly linked to the level and quality of cultural assets as a whole – both physical and human. These are seen as 'strategic urban assets' with a significant role to play in supporting both business success and quality of life in urban

areas. Across the globe more and more studies support the argument that arts and culture make a direct contribution to key urban concerns like crime, safety and business development.

HOW ARE BIDS AND TOWN CENTRES USING THE ARTS?

Despite the apparent low priority given to arts activities within UK BIDs, a survey of 101 BIDs and TCMs showed that 82% had made use of arts activities of some kind. Woven together, the messages coming out of the survey were generally more upbeat and give cause for optimism. The survey showed that:

1. a high proportion of town centre initiatives have used the arts
2. a wide range of arts activities have been used
3. performance events were judged to be most successful
4. this high level of use of arts and related activities took place despite relatively low budgets
5. direct budgetary provision for arts activities or programmes is very limited
6. use of the arts is not dependent on budget size suggesting creative use of minimal budgets and working in partnership with other agencies
7. a substantial proportion of respondents using arts activities report positive impacts of various kinds
8. most town centre initiatives had contact with their local authority arts officers but far fewer had contact with Arts Council England
9. financial resources are the key barrier to further arts activities
10. lack of specialist knowledge and a low priority in strategic objectives were not seen as major barriers to further use of the arts.

In addition to the survey, interviews were carried out with a range of UK BID managers and focussed on the following questions:

- Is arts activity seen as relevant to the BID objectives and, if so, by whom?
- What impacts are or would be sought through arts activity?
- Is arts activity part of the BID programme? If not, what are the reasons for this?
- What would strengthen the involvement of arts in the BID programme?

Despite UK BIDs being at an early stage of development with an explicit focus on other priorities, a number of points emerged which are relevant to or encouraging for the use of arts:

- it is 'early days' so arts not seen as an immediate priority
- there is a recognition of the importance of area image and brand-building
- BIDs can play a role in identifying and promoting what is already there culturally
- it is advisable to develop a wide range of arts activities
- BIDs can help to broker connections between businesses and the arts
- a toolkit for the use of the arts within BIDs would be welcomed
- many BIDs have explicit or implicit aspirational agendas and differentiation ideals
- BIDs use events to increase footfall
- BIDs have worked in partnership with local arts officers
- there is often more visible arts involvement in towns and cities with a pre-existing tradition of arts or a cluster of venues and events
- there can be legislative and licensing hurdles in staging events.

Although UK BIDs experience is limited, for reasons already stated, nonetheless a snapshot review of the extensive overseas experience, including over 30 years' operation of BIDs in Canada and the United States, suggests that arts activities can be relevant within a variety of urban settings or 'ecologies':

Cultural-industrial districts: (Los Angeles, Babelsberg near Berlin, Barcelona)

Multimedia districts: (Bay Area, San Francisco, Los Angeles County, New York, Austin, Toronto, Melbourne, Brisbane, Brighton and Hove, Huddersfield, Manchester, Slough)

Arts and Crafts districts: (Caltagirone, Sicily, Dieulefit, France, Tlakepake, Mexico)

Redevelopment-based districts: (Sheffield, Dublin, Folkestone, Margate, Redruth, Manchester Northern Quarter)

Heritage and Museum districts: (Nottingham Lace Market, Bilbao, Florence, Sydney, Bath)

Additionally, we found that arts activity within overseas BIDs was influenced by a number of factors:

- whether there was a pre-existing critical mass of cultural facilities and venues
- whether the area already had a strong cultural/heritage/arts tradition
- the varying scale of the area and its attendant priorities: BIDs could be in small districts within large cities, in larger provincial cities and towns, or in smaller cities, towns, and market towns.

Within all of these urban development settings a wide range of arts activities is present within BIDs programming and these essentially distil down to the following categories:

- Performances and Events (Concerts, Festivals, Street Entertainment)
- Streetscaping
- Walks/Talks (Artwalks)
- Space/Buildings (Venues, Artists Lofts and Studios)
- Visual Arts (Public Art, Galleries, Open Studios, Phantom Galleries, Artists in Residence)
- Other (Creative Strategies, Business Support for artists, Group Marketing Initiatives).

HOW TO ENCOURAGE GREATER USE OF THE ARTS?

Interviews with a number of BIDs and with a range of well-established TCMs provided a number of insights into the process of using arts activities. These were:

1. town centre arts projects are initiated by a variety of people or bodies associated with the TCM
2. getting financial and in-kind support from a range of partners is important
3. projects must 'hit the spot' in terms of their objectives
4. planning and communication are essential
5. arts involvement must not be sought too cheaply
6. the challenges or barriers are not just financial
7. the impacts of arts activities are diverse – as are the approaches for measuring them

8. positive outcomes may take place for artists as well.

Analysis of the experience of BIDs and other TCMs in both the UK and overseas identified success factors in the use of arts, these are:

- appreciating how the arts contribute to local quality of life
- working productively and creatively with cultural organisations
- making the most of a wide range of funding sources
- thinking and planning longer-term
- being good at evaluating and demonstrating success.

And meeting the key challenges facing BIDs and TCMs provides the basis of good practice in the use of arts activities which aims at:

- securing a deeper understanding of what the arts bring to the business world and retail sector in particular
- finding hard evidence of the impacts of the arts and how they deliver against corporate and commercial objectives
- getting the arts higher up the BIDs/TCM agenda
- addressing some practical barriers in using the arts
- investigating how to resource and sustain arts activities.

CONCLUSIONS

Although the major strategic objectives (cleanliness, safety, environmental improvements) of BIDs and TCMs take precedence, many schemes in the UK and overseas are using the arts. They are always, with rare exceptions, perceived to be successful to some degree in impacting on footfall, sales, profile-raising and other 'bottom line' concerns of businesses.

Even the poor performance of the retail sector should not be allowed to undermine the development of arts activities as it is at such times that innovative initiatives can create interest, differentiation and a competitive edge.

On the basis of our conclusions and analysis of all the data, we have supplied the three commissioning bodies with recommendations under separate cover. They are considering their response to the research outcomes and how best to take this forward.

ADDING VALUE AND A COMPETITIVE EDGE

The Business Case For Using The Arts in Town Centres and Business Improvement Districts

1. INTRODUCTION

The report addresses key questions relating to town centre management;

- *what kind of involvement do BIDs have with the arts?*
- *how can arts contribute to business objectives?*
- *what makes for the successful involvement of the arts?*

Town centres have become a major focus for public policy and this is paralleled by the widespread interest in harnessing the arts to economic, social and environmental development. There is much good news about linking arts with town centre development in the report but it also highlights challenges and indicates how these can best be overcome.

1.1 THE POLICY FOCUS ON TOWN CENTRES AND THE ARTS

This report seeks to answer three questions:

- A. What kind of involvement do Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) or similar town centre initiatives have with the arts and arts activities both here in the UK and overseas?
- B. How can arts and culture contribute to economic business objectives in area-based improvement initiatives such as BIDs?
- C. What factors produce successful involvement of artists and the arts in town centre initiatives and how can that good practice be replicated elsewhere?

Town centres have become a major focus for public policy. There are concerns about competition with out-of-town retail and leisure centres, about 'clone towns' losing any sense of identity or local distinctiveness, and about the impact of anti-social behaviour in the heart of our urban settlements.

Business Improvement Districts, or BIDs, are an important element of the wider response to issues affecting urban business districts and seek to build on the wider experience of Town Centre Management and other initiatives. Town centre policy initiatives reflecting this array of concerns include, for example, the recently launched £40m initiative from the London Development Agency, which focuses on the economic development of town centres and business locations as one of its three themes of greatest need.

1.2 LINKING THE ARTS WITH TOWN CENTRE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

It is very rare nowadays for any urban renewal plan not to include reference to the role that arts and culture can potentially play in regeneration and there is a wide range of models and successes throughout the world that bear witness to this aspiration. In recent years, policy development for town centres has been

accompanied by an increasing focus on the 'extrinsic' benefits of arts activities and culture as a whole, and the linking of arts development with local economic, social and environmental priorities.

These linkages have been promoted by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Arts Council England (ACE) and the Local Government Association (LGA) and other bodies through initiatives including:

- Cultural Strategies and cultural input into Community Strategies
- the Culture at the Heart of Regeneration study by the DCMS
- the creation of the Culture Block in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment
- the current programme of Cultural Pathfinders.

Culture's wider contribution is now more fully acknowledged by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)¹ too, in the '*Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity*' document of spring 2005, and featured in the Department's recent guidance on the second round of Local Area Agreements. Initiatives like '*Wherewelcome*' (www.wherewelcome.org) are designed to respond to this linkage of cultural and community development by promoting culture in the context of sustainable communities. It is primarily aimed at national government, private sector developers and agencies working in housing and regeneration.

1.3 MAKING THE LINKAGE WITH THE ARTS WORK

This report demonstrates much 'good news' about arts and town centre business development. For example:

- 82% of UK BIDs and town centre initiatives have used arts activities
- UK Town Centre managements report positive impacts from arts activities on increasing footfall, visitor and customer satisfaction and in profile-raising
- the World Tourism Organisation reports that arts and wider cultural activity helps with differentiation and will become increasingly important to successful visitor attraction.

Despite this mounting evidence, and as this report has confirmed, the arts may not be number one priority for many town centre and regeneration schemes. In fact, in a recent regeneration easy-steps guide published by the Brookings Institution in America, *Turning Around Downtown: Twelve Steps to Revitalisation, 2005*,² "Creating an Urban Entertainment District" is Step 7, ahead of housing and retail but behind "Creating a Business Improvement District" at Step 5.

In addition it is not easy to implement 'copycat' strategies for successful linking of the arts and town centre development. The complex web of factors that create success and impact in one location are not always directly transferable to other places relying as they do on combinations or confluences of: size, location, baseline starting point, heritage, tradition, presence of creative industries, influence of key players (individuals and organisations), political will, availability of funding for cultural endeavours, etc.

¹ Now the Department for Communities and Local Government (May 2006)

² Turning Around Downtown: Twelve Steps to Revitalization by Christopher B. Leinberger March 2005, http://www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20050307_12steps.pdf

But, despite these differences and the need to customise solutions to location, there is a number of common lessons and models from the UK and abroad that can be considered as part of a BID's potential toolkit. Every town centre or improvement district is likely to have its own particular set of strengths and advantages which can be worked with, to move towards the holy grail of competitive differentiation.

This report hopes to make a contribution to identifying and facilitating the contribution that arts can make to town centre initiatives in general and the work of Business Improvement Districts in particular. Its brief, methodology and work undertaken are summarised in Appendix A.

2. WHAT ARE THE MAIN CONCERNS OF BIDS AND BID-LIKE ORGANISATIONS?

Most BIDs have broadly common objectives, often summarised as 'Clean, Green and Safe' and seek similar impacts from their work. Whilst relatively few UK BIDs explicitly include arts activities in their business plans, experience on the ground, and especially the longer-term experience from overseas, suggests that arts activities can contribute to the common BID objectives in varied ways.

2.1 THE FOUR THEMES OR OBJECTIVES FOR MOST BIDS

From both the UK and the international research it is abundantly clear that there are three key central concerns that permeate virtually all BIDs. Whether we call them 'Clean, Green, and Safety' or 'Crime, Grime and Beautification', they are often the first step to revitalising business districts and are intended to achieve a bottom line economic impact for the businesses within the BID area.

These impacts can be classified via a number of indicators such as:

- increased retail sales
- increased numbers of visitors and visitor spend
- increased dwell time
- increased number of jobs created
- increased occupancy rates
- increased approval from customer surveys
- increase in new businesses established
- improved competitiveness in relation to other areas and out-of-town malls
- increased property values
- better business retention and attraction rates
- improvement in skills development
- increased innovation in business.

Some Added Value or 'Softer' Impacts are:

- development of social capital and community cohesion
- increased level of collaboration between local businesses and artists/arts organisations

To achieve these impacts there are often four key thematic areas and objectives:

1. Safety/crime reduction (increasing the perceived and actual safety)
2. Increase in footfall (creating festivals and events and better transport facilities to encourage people into the area)
3. Enhancement of environment (making the place cleaner, greener and visually appealing)
4. Marketing, Promotion, and Differentiation (improving the image, the brand as well as leveraging visitor and tourism benefits)

2.2 THE PRIORITIES OF UK BIDS BUSINESS PLANS

An analysis was carried out of the Business Plans or proposal documents for 17 of the 18 town centre based BIDs which had secured positive ballot results at the time

of the research (Blackpool not being available). The position of BID ballots in the UK is set out in detail in Appendix B.

Of those BIDs established by ballot, a number had previously participated as pilot bids. The 22 pilot BID locations announced in January 2003 include 11 of the locations which have gone on to secure positive ballot results to establish full BIDs by early March 2006.

Whilst at the time of research few BIDs had been operating for more than 12 months and some were only beginning activities as formal BIDs, a number have had two to three years' experience of operating under the pilot scheme.

The Business Plans were reviewed to identify the main stated priorities or aims of the BIDs and the projects or activities which were proposed or being implemented to secure those aims.

An initial analysis was carried out of these projects or activities to identify their purpose. In some cases, explicit performance indicators were available against projects or activities, in other cases the context for the projects usually provided clear guidance as to the nature of outputs or outcomes expected. The full results of this analysis of BIDs business plans are given in table form at Appendix C.

This stage of the analysis was not limited to focusing on or identifying arts projects or activities, since explicit reference to these were limited. Instead, projects and activities were analysed into four impact areas identified above according to whether they were intended to contribute to improvements in:

- Safety, crime reduction
- Footfall
- Environment
- Marketing, promotion and differentiation

Some business plans or proposal documents provided more detailed information on activities and expected impacts than others, reflecting the early stage in the establishment of most of the BIDs. A number of points, however, can be made on the basis of this analysis:

- e) all the BID business plans or proposal documents included priorities or aims which cover the well established 'clean, green and safe' pattern, even if they are not always expressed in these terms
- f) all include at least one programme or activity which addresses each of the four categories of improvements listed above
- g) a number also focus on business support, training and networking activities which are directed inward at member businesses (rather than outwardly focussed in marketing and promotion activities), as well as some lobbying activity directed at local authorities or even national government
- h) there are very few projects or activity areas which fall outside this pattern, although the London Bridge BID includes a 'Building Bridges' programme area which seeks to promote volunteering and funding for community based projects. The Better Bankside BID in Southwark includes social and community projects in its programme and the New West End BID includes a programme of working with homeless people and the organisations which support them.

2.3 ROLE OF ARTS OR CULTURAL PROJECTS IN BID PROGRAMMES

Based on the analysis of the UK BID documents, explicit inclusion of arts or broader cultural projects is limited, for example:

- a) events programmes are included in several BID programmes including Paddington, Keswick, Kingston, Liverpool, New West End and Rugby, although not all these events programmes offer an arts element
- b) reference to cultural or creative elements to programmes are evident only within Keswick (Town Trails, Fingerpost upgrades), Kingston (promotion of leisure and tourist attractions), Bankside (environmental improvements including public art), Coventry (marketing includes leisure opportunities), Plymouth (new public squares and play area, contemporary signage), Bristol Broadmead (bespoke paving); Lincoln (street events and festivals).

Many BID programmes include environmental activities which might offer potential involvement for artists and arts organisations, but this is not explicitly stated within the documents reviewed.

Keswick BID stands out as one exception to this general pattern, with inclusion in its Upgrade Environment priority of an Art Works programme and also Fingerpost upgrades which are intended to offer an opportunity for a creative input. It also includes Festival development as part of its marketing priority, reflecting a substantial period of development as a 'festival town'. Lincoln's Business Improvement Group employs a part-time outreach arts worker, whose remit is to develop projects with local schools, and feature the creative outputs in the city centre.

2.4 PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE OF ARTS INVOLVEMENT ESPECIALLY OVERSEAS

Some caution, however, should be exercised in drawing definitive negative conclusions about the level of arts activity based solely on early UK BIDs documentation. Bedford BID for example, which does not make explicit reference to the arts in its programme, has commissioned the Bedford arts development organisation HAPPEN to establish a range of arts activities to help develop one street as a niche trading area. This sort of initiative within a more broadly drawn programme might become more common in the future.

The overseas experience provides a rich and longer-term history of involvement of the arts in BIDs and BID-like town centre initiatives. In the table below we highlight the four key objectives of most BIDs and potential mechanisms for tackling them. The right hand column provides an array of examples of how overseas BIDs have used the arts to meet these objectives.

Theme	Examples of mechanisms – including cultural tools	Direct BID or BID-like examples
Safety/crime reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better environment ▪ Better lighting ▪ Better, safer parking facilities ▪ Use of CCTV ▪ Use of security personnel on streets and in stores ▪ Increased number of outdoor events ▪ Dealing with graffiti ▪ Improving cleanliness and dealing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dresden - Business sponsored light pyramids ▪ Hagen - public/private partnership to illuminate buildings ▪ Most BIDs e.g. Grand Central - street furniture, banners, use of abandoned space ▪ Most BIDs e.g. Boise, New York, Wels, Saalfelden -

	<p>with litter (inc wardens)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dealing with young people perceived as 'problematic' ▪ Tackling homelessness ▪ Informal trading ▪ Events for target groups such as young people, older age groups, disabled people, families etc 	<p>outdoor events such as concerts, fetes, fairs etc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 86th Street BID NY, Central Astoria - Activities for young people
Increase in footfall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better retail offer ▪ Performance events: e.g. festivals, music and theatre performances, carnivals ▪ Visual arts events: exhibitions, phantom galleries ▪ Visitor/customer satisfaction surveys ▪ Sponsorship of the arts for large events ▪ Better transport links and parking ▪ Better safety – see previous theme ▪ Use of cultural venues and facilities within BID area ▪ Guided walks and talks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most BIDs e.g. Times Square, Jamaica Queens NY, Boise Idaho, Metrotech NY, Saalfelden - concerts and music events ▪ Fashion Centre NY - dinner and theatre events/discounts ▪ Barcelona/Cadiz - Festa Major ▪ Hohenhems - puppet festival, music festivals ▪ Old Cabbage Town, Toronto - film and video festival ▪ Salzburg – a rolling programme of festivals throughout the year
Enhancement of environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality of public realm and sense of place ▪ Improved public spaces: landscape design, public art etc ▪ Design/production of street furniture, lighting, signage, banners etc ▪ Use of architects, artists and combinations thereof ▪ Dealing with cleanliness and litter ▪ Capital development & planning (inc buildings for creative industries and organisations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dresden - Bunte Bank, coloured benches, street furniture, light pyramids ▪ Hagen - illuminating buildings ▪ Parkdale, Toronto - World Peace Monument ▪ Graz, Austria - major cultural programme ▪ Brooklyn Academy of Music - BID based on music college ▪ Jamaica, Queens - development of performing arts centre
Marketing, Promotion and Differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marketing and branding campaigns ▪ Tourism campaigns (including cultural tourism) ▪ Benefits of collective marketing ▪ Evidence of increased profile: image and perceptions of the area, ▪ Demand stimulation and the development of new/niche/lifestyle markets e.g. cultural quarters, specific markets (food, crafts, etc) ▪ Cultural planning (including strategy development) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nottingham - Heart of the City ▪ Graz - City of Culture ▪ Salzburg - Mozart promotion ▪ Wels, Barcelona, Bregenz - cultural festivals/promotion ▪ Cape Town - Creative Industries Strategy

Section 4 of the report will examine in greater detail the use BIDs and BID-like organisations are making of the arts in their work.

3. THE BIGGER PICTURE

The role of the arts in town centre development is directly related to the positioning and marketing of urban centres within a globalised economy. Increasingly, the new knowledge-based economy is linked to the level and quality of cultural assets – both physical and human. These are seen as ‘strategic urban assets’ with a significant role to play in supporting both business success and quality of life in urban areas. Arts and culture make a direct contribution to key urban concerns like crime, safety and business development.

3.1 ‘SOMETHING IS HAPPENING’

Something important – a ‘*cultural turn*’ - is happening to the world’s towns and cities, especially, though not exclusively, in developed economies. The UN Habitat *State of the World’s Cities Report*, 2004, notes, for example,

‘...the growing trend of refurbishing and re-branding cities as cultural havens - a creative attempt by many local governments to revitalize economies in need of urban renewal mechanisms... Whether or not a city has a cultural heritage to draw upon, or merely a survivalist’s need to succeed, banking on the financial draws of culture – be it artistic, historic, athletic or religious - has proved to be a blessing for many urban officials and planners... On the assumption that culture can be a motor of employment growth, governments are directing investment toward new cultural industries and districts, including public spaces whose cultural amenities are intended to harmonize different social interests and improve the quality of urban life.’

This ‘*cultural turn*’ in the positioning and marketing of towns and cities is, in itself, a response to the profound implications for how cities work and survive in the context of two major forces: globalisation and the ‘new economy’ in which technology, creativity, human capital, and capacity for innovation are the watchwords.

The ‘new economy’ is affecting the nature and structure of place and causing a positive re-evaluation of urban assets. As the US organisation, Partners for Liveable Communities, – which has participated in and advised on many BIDs initiatives with strong arts and cultural elements – puts it:

‘Traditional urban characteristics such as density, diversity, turn of the century architecture and vacant industrial and commercial warehouse space – negative location factors in the old economy – are potentially positive factors in the new economy because they are attractive to those who bring with them the potential for economic growth.’

Those who bring with them the ‘potential for economic growth’ are, increasingly, the (normally) young, culturally diverse, and intellectual property-owning – or exploiting – knowledge-based workers of the new economy who now make up more than 50% of the EU workforce. These workers (and consumers) who are increasingly populating urban centres for work, residence and play, are attracted by certain features which the economist Richard Florida³ has called ‘the social structure of creativity’.

³ Richard Florida (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class...and how it’s transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*, New York, Basic Books

This is not an ‘arts advocate’ making the argument. It is an urban and regional economist whose work has become very influential for urban and regional policy and planning in North America, Europe and Asia. Florida has become influential not because he has all the answers but because he has recognised something distinctive about the contemporary make up of successful, innovative and creative cities. In his argument, this can be measured if you take account of the combined factors of technological innovation, levels of social, cultural, and lifestyle diversity, and the reality and prominence, in a knowledge economy, of what he calls the ‘creative class’.

For this diverse group, quality, range, mix, and diversity of amenity in urban areas are crucial determinants in their decisions to visit, locate, and stay there. These are also important quality of life/quality of place factors in the decisions of their employers on business location matters and in the decisions of investors in those businesses.

3.2 THE ROLE OF THE ARTS IN THE NEW ECONOMY

The arts – and broader cultural resources, amenities and facilities - are coming to be seen as a significant urban asset and they have an important and strategic role to play in the new economy. We can best identify this actual and potential role if we characterise this economy in the following ways and identify the possible contribution of the arts and culture.

Context	What Arts and Culture can do
Restructuring of the business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bring to prominence the strategic significance of intellectual property-based cultural and creative industries in urban business communities. • help to develop new marketing and branding practices for existing/traditional businesses. • work in partnership and synergy with existing/traditional businesses to enhance footfall, offer, branding and opportunity for consumption and diversity of experience
Importance of quality of life and quality of place factors in location decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • influence personal/career location decisions • influence business location decisions • influence inward investment decisions
Reduction of ‘suburban flight’.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make downtown areas more attractive for work and residence • enhance the potential of the evening economy/ 24 hour economy • encourage renovation of industrial/heritage districts • develop human and social capital • create safer streets through animation and related strategies
City-regions – not just localities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish a distinctive sense of local/regional identity and ‘brand’ of product(s) as in the example of ‘design’ in the Barcelona/Catalunya city-region or the Milan city-region.
Need for highly skilled workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attract highly skilled, high value-added, and knowledge-intensive workers

<p>The digital imperative: for infrastructure and content</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create, exploit and disseminate the ‘content’ of the cultural and creative industries • establish a distinctive brand and niche for the urban area • create synergies between ‘art’ and ‘technology’ for high growth sectors such as games and leisure software
<p>Importance of clusters and networks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide the elements of urban ‘critical mass’ and the occasions and venues for creative networking • create ‘non-functional’ and informal networks such as ‘First Tuesday’ and ‘Café Culture’ initiatives which bring together creators, producers, consumers, and investors to develop the industry base and market.
<p>Social inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate the relationship between cultural diversity and productive diversity • ensure that urban cultural strategies do not result purely in simple gentrification • contribute to safer streets and enhance retail offer • increase the diversity of populations, experiences, and footfall in urban centres

This is a long list of factors and ambitions, but the fact is that in various forms around the world, in towns and cities, these things are being done with culture and the arts and strategic partners in the development (for business improvement and other reasons) of urban centres.

3.3 THE ROLE OF THE ARTS IN TOWN AND CITY CENTRE MANAGEMENT, AMENITY ENHANCEMENT, AND ‘POLICING’

Commensurate with this strategic understanding of the role of the arts in their contribution to the new economy, urban vitality, and quality of life, is the more pragmatic analysis of their contribution to the immediate and nitty-gritty issues of ‘crime and grime’. In both European and North American contexts, these issues have been effectively addressed in strategies of ‘socio-cultural animation’ involving a wide range of art forms and experiences from paintings in shop windows through public art to festivals and street theatre.

The leading US expert in this field and President of Partners for Livable Communities in Washington, DC, Robert McNulty, underscores the US variant of animation - ‘making lively’ - as a key component of a cultural policy and of cultural planning for urban development.

‘We found’, he writes,

... that most US cities had only two types of people left after five-thirty or six p.m. - the victims and the muggers. We had no real downtown quality of life, except in a few cities. Someone needed to pay attention to the public squares, the plazas, the after-work activities - to make the city a stage, to convert suburbanites to using the downtown as a second living-room, as a social lounge where the whole family could come and meet for an evening of culture, eating or relaxing.

This animation was increasingly undertaken on contract by arts agencies. Special tax assessments of the business district or municipal allocations matched by business were used to create special events and activities. They paid for increased security and trash pick-up. It enhanced the profits of the downtown merchants and the owners of the parking structures, and it actually reduced crime - rarely do you assault someone with fifty people watching you.⁴

This last point is reinforced by evidence from senior police officers in two US cities to the effect that 'busy streets are safer streets':

'We believe that arts activities can generally help reduce street crime. Both in those areas of Boston which have regular street cultural activities and in our theatre districts, there tends to be less crime during those times as the cultural events are on-going.' - Robert Wasserman, Assistant to the Police Commissioner, Boston.

'I do believe the great interest and participation in cultural events in San José is a factor in the low crime rates we enjoy.' - Joseph MacNamara, Chief of Police, San Jose, California.⁵

From the same source, the Chief of Police of the town of Greenburgh in New York State comments on the importance of cultural activities programs specifically targeted at young people who, he says, *'in suburban communities like ours, have a great deal of idle time.'*⁶

With the current concerns over growing youth street crime, strategies for city/town animation which appropriately co-ordinate general arts, cultural and entertainment activities and targeted programs for particular social groups, can provide some more imaginative responses to issues of 'crime and grime' than more directly coercive policing measures.

This is an obvious way of linking the objectives of local economic development in the form of increased commercial and retail activity, the social and participatory objectives of community cultural development, and the enhancement of the civic domain where the city/town centre, by means of arts and cultural strategies and initiatives, can be more effectively self-managed.

3.4 THE QUALITY OF LIFE FACTOR AS A STRATEGIC URBAN ASSET

In the end, for towns and cities, this is all about recognising the 'quality of life factor' as a strategic urban asset in terms of encouraging footfall, increasing safety, enhancing the quality of amenity and making urban centres work in the way they should. As the authors of a major US report for the Office of Business and Economic Development of the District of Columbia put it,

'Quality of life and local amenities, including the arts, have long been counted among the factors that contribute to an area's potential for economic

⁴ Robert McNulty, 'The Economics of Amenity', *Meanjin*, 1988

⁵ In F. Bianchini et al, *City Centres, City Cultures*, Manchester, Centre for Local Economic Strategies and Comedia Publishers, 1988, p.21

⁶ Donald L.Singer, cited in Luisa Kreisberg, *Local Government and the Arts*, New York, American Council for the Arts, 1979,p.75

development. In recent years, however, changes in the structure and composition of the economy have made them more significant relative to other investment influences. Often unrecognised and untapped, amenities are being given a central role in the development strategies of some cities that are stressing the characteristics that make them distinctively attractive as places to live, work, visit and invest. With imagination, determination and cooperation, most cities can link amenities and development in strategies that contribute to both economic strength and quality of life improvements.⁷

A survey of 1,290 firms carried out in 1980 by the Joint Economic Committee of the US Congress came up with similar findings:

'A city's quality of life is more important than business-related factors... The results of this survey suggest that individual programs and policies which respond to a particular business need will probably be of limited success in encouraging firms to expand or attract new firms if they are not part of a comprehensive effort to improve the quality of life in the city.'⁸

Linking both the *strategic* objectives of towns and cities entering the creative/knowledge economy and the *practical and pragmatic* necessities of dealing *now* with issues of crime, safety, business development, and quality of amenity, these examples should serve to highlight the important role of the arts and culture in BIDs. In the following sections of the report we provide more international and UK examples and models which can inform best practice in the UK.

⁷ R Leo Penne, Fred Jordan and Kevin Balfe, *Art Spaces and Economic Development Experience in Six Cities*, Washington DC, Partners for Livable Places, 1986, p.1-1

⁸*Ibid.*, pp.1-2 - 1-3

4 WHAT USE ARE BIDS MAKING OF THE ARTS?

As previous sections have mentioned, UK BIDs are still largely in their infancy, as is their use of arts and culture. The Arts are often less of a priority than the immediate clean, green and safe strategic priorities. However, our survey of UK BIDs and other Town Centre Management schemes around the country gives cause for some optimism, as there is already evidence of successful involvement with the arts.

The good news is that a high proportion of UK schemes have used a wide range of arts activities, generally resulting in very successful outcomes. Despite low budget allocations for the arts, most UK schemes had used the arts. Finance, however, was identified as the greatest barrier to further use of the arts.

The overseas picture may also offer clues to the longer-term scenario for UK BIDs, as BIDs, or BIDs-like models, have been existence in some countries since the 1970s and so offer a range of perhaps more established and embedded examples which are worth consideration. From our researches we found that most arts activities in BIDs generally fall into one of the following categories:

- *Performances and Events (Concerts, Festivals, Street Entertainment)*
- *Streetscaping*
- *Walks/Talks (Artwalks)*
- *Space/Buildings Initiatives (Venues, Artists Lofts and Studios)*
- *Visual Arts (Public Art, Galleries, Open Studios, Phantom Galleries, Artists in Residence)*
- *Other (Creative Strategies, Business Support for artists, Group Marketing Initiatives)*

This section, therefore, takes a brief look at what is happening now in BIDs/TCM arts-based programmes - drawing on UK and overseas examples to highlight the key issues.

4.1 THE EXPERIENCE AND LESSONS OF TOWN CENTRE INITIATIVES

In order to assess and draw out some lessons for involvement of the arts and artists in town centre programmes **three main activities** were carried out.

- First: a **questionnaire** to explore the experience of UK town centre initiatives with arts organisations and activities was prepared in December 2005. Drawing on ATCM support, an online questionnaire was developed and the details of this were circulated to ATCM membership databases totalling over 200 individuals associated with BIDs and other town centre management initiatives. A full analysis of the results of this questionnaire is included in Appendix D
- Second: interviews, further research of online and printed material and, in one case, a site visit, were undertaken on **six UK case studies** to explore in more

detail the experience of and lessons from arts involvement with town centre programmes. A full summary of the case studies is included in Appendix E.

- Third: a short, largely desk-based, **review of overseas BIDs** and their use of the arts.

4.2 KEY POINTS FROM THE UK SURVEY

Analysis of the questionnaire responses highlights **ten key points** about UK town centre initiatives and the use of the arts:

1. **a high proportion of town centre initiatives have used the arts.** Of the 101 usable responses to the questionnaire, 83 town centre initiatives (82%) stated that they had used artists, craftspeople or arts organisations for town centre activities. Those using the arts included the six stating that they were BIDs and all 15 respondents stating that they were in the process of forming a BID. Only 9 respondents stated that they had not used arts activities
2. **a wide range of arts activities has been used.** Respondents indicated that they had either used or were planning to use; design, public art, exhibitions, performance, marketing and PR activities and events targeted at particular groups
3. whilst many arts activities had been successful or reasonably successful, **performance events were judged to be most successful.** 80% of those schemes that had used the arts judged performance events to be successful or partially successful. The lowest ratings were for public art and for exhibitions which scored 47%
4. **the high level of use of arts and related activities took place despite relatively low budgets** for town centre initiatives. Only 15% of respondents reported direct budgets of over £200K, with 34% having direct budgets of £50K
5. in addition, **direct budgetary provision for arts activities or programmes is very limited.** 14% of respondents indicated no direct provision for the arts in their budget, with a further 29% identifying an allocation of less than 5% of the total budget
6. despite these very limited direct budgets, **the use of the arts is not dependent on budget size.** In fact, TCMs with smaller budgets seemed more likely to have used arts activities, with 35% of those with budgets under £50K using the arts compared to 18% of those with budgets in excess of £200K
7. **a substantial proportion of respondents using arts activities report positive impacts of various kinds.** The highest proportion (40% of those using the arts) reported positive impacts on visitor/customer satisfaction, with footfall and sales increases next at 36% and improved publicity, profile or public relations at 31%
8. **most TCMs had contact with their local authority arts officers, but far fewer had contact with Arts Council England.** 71% of respondents reported contact with a local authority Arts, Arts Development, or Entertainment Officer, but only 21% had contact with Arts Council of

England regional officers and 18% had contact with both groups of officers

9. **financial resources are the key barrier to further arts activities.** Lack of available funds was seen as the main barrier by 67% of respondents. Lack of time was identified by 37% and a further 33% identified lack of match funding or sponsorship as a barrier underlining the impact of limited financial resources on the use of the arts
10. **lack of specialist knowledge and a low priority in objectives were not seen as major barriers.** Only 10% of respondents identified these as major barriers to further arts activities.

4.3 IDENTIFYING THE UK POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE ARTS INVOLVEMENT

In order to explore further the current limited position of the arts within BIDs programmes and the potential for increasing that involvement, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with eight representatives of BIDs, or in one case, with a local authority officer responsible for arts activities with the BID.

The interviews focussed on the following questions:

- Is arts activity seen as relevant to the BID objectives and, if so, by whom?
- What impacts are or would be sought through arts activity?
- Is arts activity part of the BID programme? If not, what are the reasons for this?
- What would strengthen the involvement of arts in the BID programme?

One should exercise caution when examining these studies since it is easy to interpret the findings in a negative way as most BIDs are in their early stages and focusing on other priorities. However, a number of positive and illustrative messages are emerging, even if they are slightly buried within the priority strategies. The major points arising from these discussions can be summarised as follows:

- it is 'early days' so arts are not seen as an immediate priority
- there is a recognition of the importance of area image and brand building
- there may be a wide mix of businesses within an area
- BIDs can play a role in identifying and promoting what is already there culturally
- it is advisable to develop a wide range of arts activities
- BIDs can help to broker connections between businesses and the arts
- a toolkit for the use of the arts within BIDs would be welcomed
- many BIDs have explicit or implicit aspirational agendas and differentiation ideals
- BIDs use events to increase footfall
- BIDs have worked in partnership with local arts officers
- there is often more visible arts involvement in towns and cities with a pre-existing tradition of arts or a cluster of venues and events
- there can be legislative and licensing hurdles in staging events.

The following short extracts from a selection of case studies help to illustrate the points mentioned.

The Holborn Partnership: A Business Improvement District (Emma Elston, Project Manager for Marketing & Communication)

Holborn initiated the formal BID in April 2005 but has been operating as a pilot since 2001. It established its basic programme from that date, including the Holborn Street Ranger Initiative set up in 2001. The arts were not seen as relevant to their Safe and Clean (plus in their case Networking) agenda at that point.

However, following the establishment of the BID in April 2005 they held an 'Innovation Seminar' with Central St Martin's College and looked particularly at the built environment.

This led to the conclusion that the image of the area needed improving and they got agreement from the Board to conduct an audit of 'branding' to measure perceptions of the area and to build an understanding of what people would like to see.

From this have emerged outline ideas and following agreement to a budget, they are developing a series of permanent and temporary projects (one project is to celebrate Dickens who is associated with the area).

The key impact sought for this programme is about establishing a better identity for the area. Business interests in the areas vary: large companies, for example, want their staff to enjoy the area and feel safe within it, so it is hoped that there might be a variety of ways in which businesses could support creative input into the re-imaging of the area. They have a Public Realm Group and a Marketing Group who will develop and oversee the programme.

It is felt that this widening of the programme has been accepted by businesses due to:

- the track record of establishing and delivering 'the basics' whilst acting as a pilot BID
- convincing business through initial activities that were delivering additional services and not simply replacing those offered by the local authority
- a period of success in building up partnerships and developing shared objectives with the local authority, Police, Central St Martin's and other partners
- simply 'getting to know the area' and getting relationships right with established providers.

In conclusion it was felt that doing these basics was critical before 'the bar can be raised' and 'more interesting things undertaken'.

Reading BID (Neil Scott, Interim Project Manager)

The arts are not seen as a priority at the moment by businesses which have a typical business community agenda. There was a low level of response at this stage to questions about arts input, but a 'loud and clear' response on the Cleaner, Greener, Safer agenda items.

From experience, the Project Manager feels that 'it is unusual to find a business that allocates the time to look beyond its front door' and that local retailer managers, for instance, can be actively discouraged by head office from involvement in any non-operational matter.

Overall, the view is that for businesses these are early days, that BIDs are largely an unknown quantity in terms of delivery and that it not possible yet to assess what new projects businesses will move on to.

Once the foundations are in place, however, it will be possible to raise the issue of arts input, but the timing of this is important. BIDs do, nonetheless, provide scope for getting business to look at the wider agenda.

We should also not be too limited by the retail views of things - in many BIDs a substantial proportion of businesses may be non retail with differing priorities - e.g. for staff.

There could be a dynamic mix of businesses within the area. In addition some developers may have a strong interest and track record in arts involvement. It could be that this has been restricted to public art like sculpture, but that their initial high cost and initial impact on improving the environment may not be seen as good value for money.

If they become 'invisible', this could lead to developers becoming open to an extended range of art input they are prepared to support.

Not unusually, the project manager does recognise the future potential of arts input and sees a number of roles or steps that need to be developed in the future. These include:

1. the BID could help provide publicity, signage, and information on the existing arts provision and facilities; it could have a role in promoting what is already available within the BID area or to BID area visitors
2. the BID could work in partnership with arts organisations to jointly fund projects with

Universities and business, for example. Both arts and business organisations might find it difficult to approach each other, and the BID could be a way of opening up connections between the two

3. BIDs could build on the Section 106 approach and seek increased and more creative input from developers working on new shopping centres.

The important thing is to think about sustainability, how to ensure ongoing artistic activity, meet a need to liven up the street, provide accessible activity and to find ways to cover the whole spectrum from permanent public art to temporary activities.

A 'toolkit' approach for BIDs and businesses showing how arts can be integrated into medium-term plans (once the basics are established) could be useful.

Paddington BID (Chris Peers, BID Manager)

The BID is coming to the end of its first year of a 4-year term. There is no demand at present from business for arts input. The BID agenda reflects the area as one of hotels and restaurants that primarily serve tourists/visitors as a base where they can eat and sleep. This might change with the forthcoming Hilton Casino development and the attraction of a wider range and variety of shops to the Paddington area.

The area has very limited green space and as a conservation area with a large number of listed buildings has planning restrictions on the creation of new public art and installations, for example.

The BID is managed by Paddington Waterside Development, which does have arts and entertainment activities within the Paddington Basin area and promotes them via specific publications and a newsletter. This is driven by a wish to reflect the 'lift' in the area and appeal to new employees from the wider variety of businesses located there.

But the BID is at early stage and the general view is that arts input is not for the immediate period. They do have some events but these have been related to local retailers, such as food and drink themes; they fund guided walks on local famous figures, but these have not used arts organisations or artists.

To develop future arts programming they would draw on the experience and expertise of the Waterside Partnership which has the established contacts for arts and events activities. As they share some staff this would be relatively simple to achieve.

Kingston BID (Graham McNally, CE Kingston TCM Ltd)

The BID Chief Executive believes that businesses will not respond at this stage to arts input and that there is little point in a direct approach. The BID does currently undertake performances and activities for children, including free workshops on dance, circus skills, for example. As a University town where Sir Peter Hall is Chancellor, Kingston already enjoys a broad range of arts and cultural activity such as the successful Readers Festival.

They (KTCM) support the local Carnival and work with the local Arts Officer and on a broad range of events. They hope to take part in a Festival of the River next year.

They set a target of attracting additional people with these activities and achieved an increase of 450,000 more people in the last quarter of 2005: footfall increase is the primary impact sought from events by the Kingstonfirst Business Improvement District. But the BID budget is directed at the Cleaner, Safer, Greener agenda and at transport and access as the basic approach.

Business as a whole, however, does have a wider agenda and does support 'an aspirational environment' for Kingston. The accepted view is of a hierarchy of needs that must be satisfied, the basic issues at the bottom and the 'what makes a memorable visit' issues at the top, and tackle these in the right order.

There are potential creative partners in the University and the Theatre and some of the larger businesses do have an existing involvement with the arts.

For smaller businesses it is essential, however, to first get to know them and their range of interests and relate to them.

The 'aspirational agenda' is related to the differentiation issue. Kingston needs to compete for higher spending groups and a wider age-group; it needs to build on the quality of life of the town centre, specialist shops or heritage, for instance.

There are signs of development: a public art project is being considered with the Arts Officer. The BID has both a Media and Promotions Group and a Special Events Group which is attended by the local Arts Development Officer, so there are organisational structures for future development of arts input.

Keswick BID (Tina Smith, Project Manager)

Private sector businesses led the proposals for arts involvement. Businesses took a wider view than 'crime and grime', and adopted a wider social and cultural agenda.

It is emphasised that all proposals were initiated, voted on and developed by the private sector members of the BID. They wanted arts input into linking the centre and lake foreshore, input into the finger-posts programme, and proposals for local children to work with artists. The arts input in the BIDs programme is reflected in a specific Artworks budget and in other initiatives.

The approach in Keswick BID reflects both a lead that suggested that the basics of crime and grime would obviously be included and prioritised, but asked business what else they wanted done.

The local business community is seen as highly integrated into the community; it includes creative businesses and the town as a whole is orientated to attracting visitors.

There has been a long history of arts activities in the town and this includes a festival programme for at least ten months of the year; there is also an exceptional local school arts department. The initiatives in the BIDs programme have been around for a long time, the BID presented an opportunity to realise some of them.

The Project Manager feels that if 'crime and grime' are not placed at the forefront of discussion within the BID, then this allows thinking about wider issues and more concern about the community as a whole (such as recent discussions about proposed closure of the local hospital).

It is also worth noting the special nature of Keswick in social/economic terms and the long history of festivals and development of arts proposals.

London Bridge BID (Helen Moore, Business Liaison Manager)

Arts input achieved a very low response in consultation with businesses on 'what would you pay for' when establishing the BID priorities. Public Art was seen as a 'luxury item' and was low on the priority list. Bigger companies involved in the BID, however, have a corporate social responsibility approach and related budgets and some of their work will be art-related and use arts organisations.

A BID task group will look to develop proposals under their community programme: this might involve artists, public arts, events or volunteering as part of the social responsibility agenda (there will be a small budget for their 'Building Bridges' programme).

The BID will take over some of the activities of the existing Pool of London Partnership which is nearing the end of its life. This has

experience of work with the community and links with the local authority, but primarily tourism officers rather than arts officers. The BID is likely to take over the community small grants programme currently operated by PLP. Any work with artists is likely to be with local artists.

Birmingham Broad Street BID (Nigel Peardon, Project Director)

The BID has been live only since July 2005. Arts are not seen as central to its programme in terms of activity. The area is not retail-dominated but does include a large number of cultural and leisure and entertainment facilities (including Symphony Hall, Birmingham Rep, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the IKON Gallery) and these bodies are involved in the BID.

The area is, therefore, already something of a cultural quarter with hotel and office presence. The focus of the BID is on problems of the night-time economy, including alcohol-related anti-social behaviour, which was seen by all businesses/facilities as threatening the future of the area and so a Clean and Safe approach was adopted.

The focus has been on changing people's perceptions of the area to change their behaviour and the BID has had good results from early initiatives such as evening wardens, floral decorations, lighting (both commercial and more creative) and cleaning the area. It is about 'dressing' the area.

Lighting is seen a key project for the area: the Chairman is a developer and is leading consultants to look at this through a consultation programme. Overall, BID members (including retail in particular) have taken a hard line on expenditure.

They have got very positive early feedback about floral decoration and they are interested in the 'whole experience' of people visiting the area and accept that visual interest and excitement are part of this.

But in terms of art, however, they are not as yet planning to move beyond the priorities stated in the BID Proposal aspects such as street furniture, and there is still a limited understanding of the arts beyond this.

Plymouth BID (Paul Kelly, Principal Arts Officer)

(Interview with the local Arts Officer at request of BID manager)

No detailed work with the BID has yet been established but some proposals for arts activities are on the table awaiting discussion. Town centre based arts activities have a long history, begun ten years ago with ERDF/SRB

funding and then managed by the Council's Economic Development Department.

More recently a City Centre Management company has been set up. The council has a separate Events Team which also manages activities.

The Council's Arts Unit has little direct contact with the business community, but is developing links with the town centre management staff who used to work for the Council. They are unclear at the moment what business attitudes to arts activity would be.

The Arts Officer takes the view that the major problem in establishing arts activities is that town centre managements do not realise or accept the time that is required to develop specific arts input, or understand the process of finding artists and developing programmes. Arts activities can therefore be seen as poor value for money, long in preparation and short in actual duration. They also don't realise that artists and arts organisations themselves have plans and cannot just be called in when required.

There is also a plethora of legislative hurdles which mean that activity organisers need to deal with health and safety issues, risk assessment and licensing. Plymouth Council is licensing public spaces to alleviate some of these difficulties.

Sustainability is seen as the key issue for arts activities in town centres. Once the early SRB funding ran out, the initial activities ceased and, without the possibility of charging the public, it was always going to be necessary to find public and business funding. Permanent art works can be high cost and involve ongoing maintenance; performance-based work can be cheaper and have an instant impact, but then disappears.

BIDs (in the Officer's view) offer a key partnership vehicle for arts, bringing together the local authority, businesses and arts organisations. The local authority role is increasingly in brokering partnerships between arts organisations and businesses and the public realm: for example, a large screen will be erected for Wimbledon but will be available for use by a local media group on one Sunday.

4.4 BEYOND THE UK

If, by common agreement, the UK BID's are at the start of their development cycle, then we need to look further afield for more developed models of arts and area-based business improvement schemes to shine some light on the longer-term contribution the arts can make.

Given that BID's have been in existence in areas like Canada and the USA for over 30 years, it is not surprising that other areas and agencies have conducted their own research into the performance of BID's and the relationship between BID's and the arts. Below we highlight a selection of the more interesting and relevant findings we came across.

General International Research into BID's

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has been monitoring and tracking the progress of International BID's via its Department of Urban Studies and Planning and conducted the first ever survey of BID's outside the USA in 2003. Although largely focusing on issues of governance, funding and strategic objectives, the report, *The Business Improvement District: An Internationally Diffused Approach to Revitalisation*, found that, in terms of the marketing and differentiation angle, the BID's model "allows commercial interests to aggressively promote downtown areas by managing sophisticated marketing campaigns and outdoor events that attract visitors".

MIT has also highlighted a number of areas of debate about the pros and cons of BID's⁹. With regard to the longer-term development issues, a number of interesting positive and cautionary messages were put forward and should be borne in mind for UK initiatives:

- whilst BID's raise money from private sector interests, they can allow business and property owners to influence the management of public spaces – as reinforced in a Society Guardian article *Unwelcome Development* - p7 Weds 29 March 2006.....*"In the US, BID's have proved controversial for eroding local democracy, as decisions about public areas increasingly lie in the hands of business leaders"*
- BID's can alter the physical nature of the urban environment. At best, BID streetscape improvement programmes visually and physically unify public spaces, creating a sense of place. At worst, BID's allow business and property owners to influence the character of public spaces and programs and often encourage generic design schemes
- BID's alter perceptions of the urban environment and can develop niche markets and work to promote business attraction, retention and expansion, but BID organisations can over-simplify the problems facing cities by focusing on "clean and safe"
- BID proliferation may detrimentally impact on comprehensive plans or undermine long-term development strategies.

International Research into Arts and BID's

In 2003 the Alliance for the Arts in the USA, a research and advocacy organisation based in New York, conducted a *Survey of Business Improvement Districts, Local Development Corporations and their Relationships with the New York Cultural Community*. It analysed 62 schemes (out of 181) within the New York area. Not too dissimilar to our study, its aims were to:

⁹ Lecture Notes from Massachusetts Institute of Technology Department of Urban Studies and Planning

- build a broad composite picture of the business-culture relationship
- point out the benefits of these interactions and provide case studies.

Notable examples were *Broadway on Broadway*, organised by the Times Square BID, which offers free snippets and sneak previews of Broadway shows and is attended by hundreds of thousands of people and seen on TV by millions.

Also featured was the Lower Manhattan *River to River Festival* organised by the Alliance for Downtown New York, which has brought new life to that part of the city.

The survey found that many local business communities had recognised the great social and economic impact of the arts and successfully used the arts to “*jumpstart the economic engine that revitalises and re-energises neighbourhoods*”.

In fact, over half of the respondents indicated that they were currently working with local artists and cultural groups to promote their businesses in their neighbourhoods and were interested in doing so in the future.

Our UK survey encouragingly showed a much higher figure of collaboration with the arts. 82% of UK BIDs and Town Centre Management schemes had used artists, craftspeople or arts organisations for town-centre activity.

Similar to our UK investigations, they found that the depth of involvement varies widely between BIDs and highlighted a number of BIDs as having potentially transferable models such as the Fashion Centre BID.

This area (between 5th and 9th Avenue in New York) is an area in transition with much of the garment trade moving out and new cultural organisations such as Off-Broadway Theatres moving in. They are keen proponents of schemes like “Eats and Seats” featuring promotional restaurant/theatre collaborations.

Key research findings were:

- 52% sponsor performances or other live public events involving the arts. These were mostly annual events centered on holidays and festivals
- 42% organised art exhibitions (temporary or long-term). Many businesses actually provided display space in their stores for artwork. Others provided guided Artwalks around local galleries
- 52% collaborated with local artists and arts organisations
- 23% had commissioned artists or designers from their district to produce permanent improvements such as public sculptures, benches or other street furniture. Grand Central Partnership, for example, had commissioned bronze sidewalk plaques that line 41st Street leading to the New York Public Library
- 47% produce cultural events or programmes for distinct groups such as school children or elderly people
- 45% sponsor marketing programmes combining local businesses and local cultural organisations.

Guides and Toolkits

Some organisations such as the Washington-based *Partners for Livable Communities* (<http://www.livable.com/>) had usefully published a number of relevant documents based on long-term experience. These included *Arts in a Living Downtown – The Next Steps* and *How To Incorporate Arts and Culture into*

Neighbourhood Revitalisation Programmes. Both of these helpfully include a range of detailed case studies across the USA and Canada.

4.5 INTERNATIONAL MODELS AND EXAMPLES

To underpin the UK research we undertook a very short review of models and examples from overseas, to try and highlight a number of potential channels of investigation for UK BIDs.

On a broad scale we were aware, from the research team's previous experience, of the general and more specific 'ecologies' of the business/arts relationship in an international context. In more specific terms, this refers to the different types of beneficial relationship and dynamics that can be established between the arts and business needs and interests in different configurations such as:

Cultural-industrial districts: (Los Angeles, Babelsberg near Berlin, Barcelona)

Multimedia districts: (Bay Area, San Francisco, Los Angeles County, New York, Austin, Toronto, Melbourne, Brisbane, Brighton and Hove, Huddersfield, Manchester, Slough)

Arts and Crafts districts: (Caltagirone, Sicily, Dieulefit, France, Tlakepake, Mexico)

Redevelopment-based districts (Sheffield, Dublin, Folkestone, Margate, Redruth, Manchester Northern Quarter)

Heritage and Museum districts: (Nottingham Lace Market, Bilbao, Florence, Sydney, Bath).

These have distinctive relationships between business and the arts in each of the contexts and can be analysed from a range of perspectives such as 'supply or demand side drivers' or where a particular BID working with the arts sits on the spectrum between production or consumption-led models of culture and economic development.

The above categories are a useful starting point but, in searching for interesting examples to highlight issues for this project, we recognised from looking specifically at BIDs around the world, that there were a number of more straightforward geographic, scale, and cultural activity descriptors. In the table below we list the types and offer a number of examples of each in the right hand column.

BID Descriptors	Example
Existing critical mass of cultural facilities and venues	Times Square, Hollywood
Strong cultural/heritage/arts tradition	Salzburg, Austria (Mozart), Grimstad, Norway (Ibsen), Brooklyn Academy of Music (New York), Austin (USA) Hohenhems (Austria), Graz (City of Culture - Austria), Dresden (Germany)
Small districts within large cities	BIDs in New York, Toronto, Philadelphia etc
Larger provincial cities and towns	Dresden (Germany), Boise (USA), Hagen (Germany), Charleroi (Belgium)
Smaller cities, towns, and market towns	Bregenz (Austria), Wels (Austria), Keswick (UK)

From our research we found that most arts activities in BIDs generally fall into one of the following categories:

- Performances and Events (Concerts, Festivals, Street Entertainment)
- Streetscaping

- Walks/Talks (Artwalks)
- Space/Buildings (Venues, Artists Lofts and Studios)
- Visual Arts (Public Art, Galleries, Open Studios, Phantom Galleries, Artists in Residence)
- Other (Creative Strategies, Business Support for artists, Group Marketing Initiatives)

It should be noted that many BIDs took advantage of what already existed in their area - e.g. Times Square/Broadway on Broadway and the Hollywood area. Clearly many BIDs are not lucky enough to have such high profile cultural venues and activities pre-existing in their area.

Where BIDs did involve arts and cultural activities, it was hard to ascertain from the evidence available how much of an integrated strategic action it was. Cape Town Partnership in South Africa was notable as being one of the few BIDs researched that had an associated Creative Industries strategy.

The BIDs which showed the best use of arts seemed to be those that had established very good links with artists and arts organisations in their area. A good example of this was Downtown Boise (USA). This BID showed very strong artistic links and a programme of activities throughout the year. It had also undertaken some research to show the economic impact of arts activities in the area.

In many examples we found that the BID was not necessarily arranging activities itself, but was cross-promoting, sponsoring or funding events (e.g. with tourism agencies).

In summary, whilst many BIDs had a high degree of associated artistic activity it was hard to gather enough evidence to work out how much of this was the result of an intentioned long term strategy initiated by the BID itself. However, a number of interesting examples stood out within the research as demonstrated in the following tables of activity.

Performances and Events

Many BIDs either organise or sponsor concerts and music/art festivals and events. Those listed below are a sample of the larger events. Most run smaller concerts or mini arts/crafts/music events, some throughout the year, some as a one-off event. This serves to raise the local profile, encourage people into an area and increase revenue generated by businesses. At the very minimum, most BIDs provide listings services for arts activities.

Nature of Art Activity	Which BID?	Notes
Broadway on Broadway	Times Square BID	www.broadwayonbroadway.com Major event - free concert/show, huge TV publicity, 50,000 people attending
Arts and Music Festival	Jamaica, Queens BID	85,000 people attending 3 day concert
Alive After Five	Downtown Boise	Concerts in the summer. Evening activities and increased footfall
River to River Festival and Outdoor Concerts	Alliance for Downtown New York	Identified by the Alliance for the Arts as a key initiative in New York
Lunch Time Jazz events	Metrotech BID (New York)	Ongoing series of events rather than one-off annual festivals
Three Rivers Arts Festival	Pittsburgh	Targets a regional audience which spends \$15 million over the course of a 17 day event
Dinner and Theatre Events	Fashion Centre	Increased footfall in evenings, better use of

Nature of Art Activity	Which BID?	Notes
(e.g. Eats and Seats) - including discounts for shows/ coupons etc	BID, NY	facilities, more attendances
Celtic Festival	Vancouver	Celebration of Celtic art, music, heritage, culture of Canada
Street Fairs and Street Entertainment	Several	Increased foot-fall, attractions/shopping – Boulder (Colorado) has a managed street entertainer scheme
Entertainment Guides	Most	Better information and access
Fall for Boise	Downtown Boise	Showcase for the diversity of Boise's arts and community
Capital City Public Market	Downtown Boise	General arts and crafts fair and street musicians plus Boise City Arts Commission sponsors performing arts on Saturdays
Middle Ages market, Puppet Festival and other cultural events	Wels, Austria	www.stadtmarketing-wels.at www.wels.at
Festa Major (Festival)	Barcelona/Cadiz	Traditional city festivals, not BIDs as such but financed in a similar way
Homunculus Puppet Festival, Schubertiade Concerts, Transmitter Hardcore/Punk Festival	Hohenems, Austria	Has a Cultural Society for promotion of graphic arts, literature, traditional values, local history etc www.hohenems.at
Bregenz Festival	Bregenz, Austria	www.bregenz.ws - main site for festival (in German) and www.bregenz.at
Spectaculum	Friesach, Austria	Middle Ages festival and other events including open air theatre, jazz concerts and other arts, crafts and cultural performances www.friesach.at
Graz Festivals and Culture Subsidies	Graz, Austria	European City of Culture 2003. Has a Cultural Database of artists, calendar of events and a Cultural Affairs office which gives cultural subsidies: www.graz.at
Poetry Festival	Trois-Rivières (Quebec, Canada)	Just won an award for its downtown revitalisation
Halloween Art Contest (children paint storefront windows)	86th Street BID	Many BIDs use arts activities that focus on children as a way of engaging young people, families etc
Fringe Festival	Philadelphia	Based on the Edinburgh model, 20,000 tickets sold for 200 shows

Streetscaping

Many BIDs researched promote improved environment and 'face lifts'. Artists have been involved via the commissioning of street furniture, banners etc.

Nature of Art Activity	Which BID?	Notes
Commissioning bronze sidewalk plaques	Grand Central Partnership	Competitions/streetscaping/environmental improvements
Mosaic Art Tile Project	Vancouver	Private/public streetscaping
Creating murals and banners	Many	Better use of redundant space
Murals on vacant properties	Many	Environmental improvements
Bunte Banke and Light Pyramids	Dresden	Coloured benches and street furniture, entrepreneurs sponsor light pyramids etc: www.cm-dresden.de
City marketing with lights	Hagen, Germany	Public-private partnership to illuminate buildings: www.stadtmarketing-hagen.de

Walks/Talks

Many BIDs arrange some kind of guided walking event. Sometimes this is linked to a specific historical site or event rather than for artistic purposes. Some BIDs also arrange external speakers, others with speakers from businesses in the BIDs.

Nature of Art Activity	Which BID?	Notes
Walking tours	Many	Increased visitors
Riverdale Artwalk	Riverside District BIA (Toronto)	Creative industries such as film, television, music and design are growing in and around the business area
First Thursday	Downtown Boise	Gallery walks, arts events, stores stay open late - residents and visitors enjoy the activities and patronise downtown stores and restaurants
Artwalk - tour of galleries	Lower East Side BID, Old City Philadelphia	Can also involve open studio events

Use of Space and Buildings

Not a common theme in BIDs we researched. Brooklyn Academy of Music is unusual since it is a specific BID linked to music.

Nature of Art Activity	Which BID?	Notes
Development of performing arts centre	Jamaica, Queens BID NY	Improved arts activities in community
Display space in stores	Several: e.g. Charleroi (Belgium)	Local artists sell more work
Donation of space for cultural events	Several	e.g. Phantom galleries
Building development - commercial, cultural - exhibition space, performance space, live-work studios	Brooklyn Academy of Music, NY	Artists Lofts and Studios are being developed in a number of areas: Torpedo Factory (Alexandria, Virginia) Peekskill (New York)
Office space for cultural organisations	Brooklyn Academy of Music	Cluster and networking development

Visual Arts

Public art can improve an area's image and reputation and in some instances become an iconic image for a city or region (e.g. Angel of the North). However, it was hard to find large-scale funding of public art directly from BIDs. Justifying public art programmes to businesses in BIDs who are paying a levy to effectively increase their 'bottom line' is something that requires a careful message and strong ambassadorial role. Some areas have explored the siting and exhibiting of artworks in more unusual settings.

Nature of Art Activity	Which BID?	Notes
Funding for Public Art	Several	Competitions/streetscaping/environmental improvements
World Peace Monument	Parkdale Village BIA Toronto	Brought a fountain back to use. Created a place to meet and a monument
Showcase Contest	Hagen, Germany	Artists and schools collaboration to create and showcase public art: www.stadtmarketing-hagen.de
Art in Transit	St Louis, Missouri	Art at public transport venues
Sculpture in parks	Staten Island	A rolling programme of artworks

Other Supporting Elements

Some BIDs have advanced business, marketing, and creative industry plans which can help in the long term buy-in and funding of cultural developments.

Nature of Art Activity	Which BID?	Notes
Creative Industries Strategy	Cape Town Partnership	Link - www.capetownpartnership.co.za Presentation, various strands seen as vital to general economic development. Artist Jackson Nkumanda commissioned to

Nature of Art Activity	Which BID?	Notes
		depict partnership.
Business support workshops and agencies for local artists and creative industries	Temple Bar, Dublin Tucson, Arizona Parkdale, Toronto	These show an understanding of the need to provide support and training to the creative individuals and businesses within an area
Collaborative Marketing	Providence, Rhode Island	Group marketing initiatives are encouraged to maximise budgets, and strategic impact

To sum up, our research found that around the world many BIDs and BIDs-like schemes had developed varying levels and type of arts and cultural activity largely based around both their natural assets (geography and scale of town/city) and their cultural assets (venues, events, facilities, heritage, local talent etc).

In the next section we move on to identify what factors might help to increase the use of the arts within BIDs.

5 INCREASING THE USE OF THE ARTS IN BIDS

We have seen how BIDs/TCMs across the UK and overseas are already engaged with arts and culture to meet their own local business objectives. Although the towns and cities in our study vary enormously in type and scale, nonetheless the best at using the arts have a number of characteristics in common, which underpin or help to account for their success.

The chief factors leading to positive outcomes include:

- *appreciating how the arts contribute to local quality of life*
- *working productively and creatively with cultural organisations*
- *making the most of a wide range of funding sources*
- *thinking and planning longer-term*
- *being good at evaluating and demonstrating success.*

In order to improve upon the current position, however, a number of challenges still need to be tackled, of which some of the most significant are:

- *securing a deeper understanding of what the arts bring to the business world and retail sector in particular*
- *finding hard evidence of the impacts of the arts and it delivers against corporate and commercial objectives*
- *getting the arts higher up the BIDs/TCM agenda*
- *addressing some practical barriers in using the arts*
- *how to resource and sustain arts activities.*

This section therefore takes a brief look at what is happening now in BIDs/TCM arts-based programmes - drawing on UK and overseas examples to highlight the key issues.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study set out to identify the elements which contribute to successful involvement of arts in BIDs/TCM initiatives, as well as to understand what currently inhibits its adoption or progress. In addition to research into the overseas position, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with eight representatives of BIDs as reported in Section 4:

- The Holborn Partnership
- Reading BID
- Paddington BID
- Kingston BID
- Keswick BID
- London Bridge BID
- Birmingham Broad Street BID
- Plymouth BID

The case study BIDs and TCMs listed below were also interviewed.

Aylesbury – a range of festivals including Roald Dahl, fun days and public art as part of regeneration

Brentwood – a trail of art in the town centre from local artists and from schools who had worked with local artists, plus a public art commission
Bristol Broadmead – use of vacant premises by an artists' group to display their work
Erdington – creation of a mural on the side of a Co-op store and subsequent public art commissions
Lincoln – a week-long Children's Festival with local schools
Peckham – a wide range of iconic buildings, public art, events and related regeneration and economic development activities.

5.2 SUCCESS FACTORS

Success can come from a combination of planning and serendipity, and is sometimes a case of 'right person, right place, right time'. Our researches have shown, however, that certain key actions, knowledge and attitude are strong indicators of successful use of the arts in BIDs and TCM. The key points that emerge from the case studies, from which we can derive a number of success factors and challenges to be met, suggest:

1. **Town centre arts projects are initiated by a variety of people or bodies associated with the TCM.** Initiators include local arts officers and town centre managers, elected members, as well as individual artists or groups of artists. The arts programme is only sometimes part of a formal town centre or regeneration programmes.
2. **Getting financial and in-kind support from a range of partners is important.** A range of funding from private, public bodies has usually been secured by successful programmes. In one case (Erdington), a very close and collaborative arrangement with a particular partner, the Co-op, was important.
3. **Projects must 'hit the spot' in terms of their objectives.** There needs to be a very clear reason for the arts activity which relates to key town centre priorities and, better still, to the priorities of the local authority or other partners. Arts projects can also address 'big' issues like the need for greater community cohesion.
4. **Planning and communication are essential.** It is essential not only to engage with the town centre businesses and address any concerns they might have, but also ensure that the artists or arts organisations are properly involved to build good relations.
5. **Arts involvement must not be sought too cheaply.** It is vital that development time is properly acknowledged and a realistic timeframe and budget provided for working with artists – particularly as good quality input cannot be provided 'off the shelf'.
6. **The challenges or barriers are not just financial.** The nature of the art (particularly challenging public or visual art), the lack of understanding of the arts by the business sector, poor communications, planning, a need to deal effectively with health and safety issues are all indicated as concerns in the case studies.
7. **The impacts of arts activities are diverse – as are the approaches for measuring them.** Clear objectives need to be matched by robust

measurement of impacts, including surveys measuring increased footfall, enhanced profile and media coverage, positive impacts on business views and on participants, environmental improvements.

8. **Positive outcomes may take place for artists as well.** It is important to ensure that all stakeholders involved in the arts activity and the town centre initiative can identify benefits to them wherever possible.

The following table groups points around core attributes and factors present in successful use of the arts in BIDs and TCM, and shows best practice in our respondents and case study areas, as well as drawing on examples from the international researches.

SUCCESS FACTOR	WHO'S DOING THIS
1 Commitment to a broader understanding of the arts and how they contribute to quality of life issues for the local area	
Having a wider sense of interest in and commitment to enhancing an area, including making use of arts for environmental improvements	Keswick BID; Peckham Partnership; Vancouver; Downtown Boise (US); Trois-Rivieres (Quebec); St Louis, Missouri
A commitment to improving an area for staff, including those in larger companies based in a district, and which might well not be retail-focussed	Holborn Partnership; Paddington BID; Reading BID; London Bridge BID
Using the arts and culture as ways to improve links with local communities, especially children, young people and their families	Lincoln BIG; Aylesbury TCM; Peckham Partnership; 86 th Street BID (New York); Jamaica, Queens BID (NY); Hagen (Germany)
Working hard to establish a better identity and image for the area	Holborn Partnership; Peckham Partnership; Reading BID; Times Square BID (NY); Grand Central Partnership BID (NY)
Contribution to local distinctiveness and differentiation, whether through design, events or community engagement	Kingston BID; Keswick BID; Holborn BID; Peckham Partnership; Dresden; Vancouver
Commitment to incorporate social responsibility in businesses and willingness to engage with local communities	London Bridge BID; Keswick BID; Erdington TCM; Alliance for Downtown New York
2 Opportunism in exploiting funding and drawing in other resources, linking with the local cultural economy	
Getting the most out of a range of funding opportunities, including Section 106 Agreements, ODPM or NRF programmes	Aylesbury TCM; Reading BID; Plymouth BID
Linking with local creative industries	Peckham Partnership; Keswick BID; Temple Bar, Dublin; Riverside District BIA, Toronto; Brooklyn Academy of Music BID, NY; Cape Town Partnership; Fashion Centre BID, NY
3 Building up and improving partnership working, especially with cultural organisations	
Creative partnership working with cultural institutions (including universities/professional arts organisations), to develop thinking and devise projects	Holborn Partnership; Reading BID; Kingston BID; Peckham Partnership; Bristol Broadmead BID; Salzburg; Brooklyn Academy of Music BID
Building on existing strengths in arts and culture, whether traditional or contemporary arts practice, and	Heart of London BID; Downtown Boise (US); Erdington TCM;

making good links with artists and arts organisations	Brentwood TCM; Vancouver; Times Square BID; Hollywood; Graz (Austria)
4 Finding and making use of the right champions and leaders for the arts, from a range of backgrounds	
Presence of a key champion or driver who advocates and actively supports the arts in the locality	Keswick BID; Peckham Partnership; Brentwood TCM
Having specialist staff or BID/TCM group members who can develop arts and cultural programmes	Kingston BID; Lincoln BIG; Aylesbury TCM; Peckham Partnership
5 Valuing the arts and artists	
Responding flexibly to artist-led initiatives, and being open to fresh thinking from outside the partnership, with a learning approach to project development	Brentwood TCM; Erdington TCM; Bristol Broadmead BID
Using artists and arts organisations as catalysts for change, including for community consultation or changing places through public art	Brentwood TCM; Peckham Partnership; Holborn Partnership; Downtown Boise
6 Taking time to get the infrastructure and support in place, and thinking longer-term	
Building on a track record in areas where some developers have already achieved positive results through the arts and have a body of expertise and confidence	Reading BID; Paddington BID;
Taking sufficient time to get to know the area and all the key players, building up trust and knowledge of their interests and priorities	Holborn Partnership; Keswick BID; Peckham Partnership
7 Having good and effective mechanisms for measuring impacts and demonstrating success	
Using a range of impact indicators to show the effects of the arts on the town or city centre, including increased footfall, positive press coverage, sales of artist work, customer and visitor surveys	Aylesbury TCM; Brentwood TCM; Charleroi (Belgium); Graz and Salzburg (Austria)
Having strong messages and good communication skills to promote the benefits of using the arts, and helping to change people's perceptions of an area	Lincoln BIG; Peckham Partnership; Birmingham Broad Street BID; Providence, Rhode Island

5.3 HOW TO IMPROVE THE POSITION OF THE ARTS

The challenge for the ATCM, ACE and Arts & Business partnership is in encouraging more BIDs and TCMs to invest in arts and culture as a way to promote their own areas' attractiveness and enhance local competitiveness. It is worth reviewing here the main barriers to arts usage and setting out some practical guidance and suggestions as to how these might be tackled. Although these cover some of the success factors, there are other elements, too, which need to be addressed.

The biggest concerns centre on a lack of understanding of what arts and culture contribute to the core business and role of BIDs and TCM, and how real benefits can be secured which improve the prospects for retail and commercial operations. At present the retail sector in our towns and cities is facing major threats to its very survival (from out-of-town shopping centres and the growth of on-line shopping), and we need to encourage a clear and strong case for regarding arts and culture as part of a wider stratagem to strengthen and refresh the quality of the town centre experience.

CHALLENGE/ISSUE	WHO CITED THIS
1 Lack of understanding of the arts and what they can contribute to a local area	
Arts and culture are not at the top of the BID/TCM agenda for priority action or support	Reading BID; Paddington BID; Kingston BID; London Bridge BID
What could be done: foster links with cultural groupings within Local Strategic Partnerships in local areas to exchange information and advice; ensure that key bodies (including ACE, Arts and Business) promote the role of the arts actively through events and publications etc	
The business sector does not understand or recognise the extrinsic value of arts and how it can contribute to local regeneration and town centre revitalisation	Birmingham Broad Street BID
What could be done: encourage study visits, exchanges, mentoring or 'twinning' between BID or TCM areas which are successful in use of the arts; set up induction activities in the use of the arts for key figures in BIDs/TCMs, by ACE, local council arts or cultural staff, or other arts organisations	
2 Dominance of other priorities for BIDs/TCM	
The drive to deliver the 'Cleaner, Greener and Safer' agenda in local areas is dominant, and it can be difficult to find how arts and culture can fit into these	Birmingham Broad Street BID; Kingston BID
What could be done: provide information from major stakeholders on how the arts contribute to this agenda (including ACE, Government Departments, RDAs etc); set up small-scale pilot projects with arts organisations which address the 'Cleaner, Greener and Safer' objectives	
BIDs are very new and will take time to establish a clear role and identity, and to begin to focus on the longer-term. The arts are seen as an optional and luxury item by many retailers	Holborn Partnership; Reading BID; Paddington BID; Kingston BID
What could be done: start now with provision of arts and culture's contribution, and lobby key leaders and opinion-formers within BIDs, so that when these are better established arts will come into a more receptive operational framework	
3 Lack of skills, knowledge or experience of working with arts	
Lack of expertise and confidence in working specifically with artists and arts organisations does inhibit the development of activities	Many respondents made this point, even if their organisation had addressed it
What could be done: secure the pro-active involvement of local council Arts Development staff and cultural agencies in engaging directly with BIDs, through support for arts, including offer of seminars, 'how to' guides, advice surgeries or online help	
4 Difficulties in demonstrating evidence of impacts of the arts	
Problems with defining clear objectives for arts and cultural activities, leading to difficulties in measuring and evaluating impacts and outcomes in terms which are significant to retail and business interests (footfall, positive media coverage etc)	Most respondents refer to this
What could be done: co-ordinated action is needed at national and regional levels: ACE and ATCM could develop a broad performance framework for BIDs/TCM: local delivery could be helped through partnership with local councils, universities or cultural institutions	
5 Resourcing and sustainability for arts activities	
A tendency for the business sector to expect that artists will work very cheaply and respond instantly to requests to initiate projects	Brentwood TCM; Bristol Broadmead BID; Plymouth BID
What could be done: information on artist working practices, including project development processes in designing programmes (including public art) should be made available to businesses (from ACE or local arts staff), so that the sector can understand the artist profession and work with practitioners in ways similar to engaging with architects or designers. In reciprocation, artists should be provided with information on business practices and the aims, objectives and priorities of BIDs	
Sustainability is an issue and it is crucial that impetus built up by arts and culture is not dissipated	Plymouth BID

by a series of one-offs or short-term activities	
What could be done: encourage partnerships to take a longer-term view of what they want to achieve through the arts; carry out full planning cycle, including risk assessments and exit strategies, to build a more strategic approach	
6 Handling the practical issues, including licensing, health and safety for public events	
Difficulty of working through the logistics for planning arts events or siting public art, with the need for close collaboration between a range of bodies responsible for health and safety, risk assessment and licensing	Lincoln BIG; Erdington TCM
What could be done: cultural agencies to create a series of practical guides and protocols covering a wide range of arts projects, making these available online or in hard copy; foster closer links between BIDs/TCMs, local councils and artists to share expertise in dealing with the practicalities of town or city centre programmes	
Growing trend for large retail businesses in a locality to focus on operational issues and driven by Head Office, rather than getting involved in local activities	Reading BID
What could be done: better dissemination to business leaders on what culture contributes to increasing local competitiveness (by ATCM, Arts & Business etc)	
7 Need for quick wins and visible returns on investment of the business pound	
Retail sector is interested in 'quick wins' and in rapid return on its investment: arts and culture can take time to develop and embed in a local area	Birmingham Broad Street BID
What could be done: plan for a mix of timescales in arts programmes, including pilot projects, so that the sector can see things happening at an early stage: this should prepare the ground for a growth in activities over a longer timescale and encourage sustainable thinking	
Getting diverse partnerships, bringing public, private and voluntary sectors together, to agree on joint actions to use and promote culture within BIDs/TCM areas	Peckham Partnerships
What could be done: take the opportunity to provide regular sessions to meet, discuss and share best practice during BIDs/TCMs business and network meetings; set up seminars to encourage local agreement, identify common objectives and actions, and promote greater use of online information resources (including ACE, ATCM, Arts & Business websites)	
8 Challenging nature of some arts and messages which do not sit easily alongside corporate and commercial imperatives	
Potential for some arts activities to be confusing, 'difficult' or capable of alienating both business sector and general public, leading to an unwillingness to use arts in future	Bristol Broadmead BID; Brentwood TCM
What could be done: encourage better communications and dialogue between arts practitioners and BID/TCM partnerships, perhaps brokered by a local council arts officer: this would enable aims and objectives to be shared and understood; ensure that full artists' statements are available on site to inform the general public about the project.	

5.4 BUILDING ON SUCCESS AND TACKLING ISSUES

Much has already demonstrably been achieved by the TCM movement and the emerging BIDs. There is, too, an understanding of the main barriers and challenges to be addressed in making the most of arts' contribution to the life of our cities and towns. A number of clear lessons for the arts and business sectors has been identified, and the final Section of this report sets out recommendations on how to make the most of good practice in encouraging a wider use of the arts in the BIDs and TCM partnerships across the UK.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

2006 is an early stage in the development of UK BIDs, and it is clear that **the major strategic objectives of cleanliness, safety, environmental improvements, marketing and branding, take precedence over the use of the arts** and budget allocations reflect this.

Advocacy and awareness-raising alone are unlikely to influence strategic thinking heavily at this stage – **what is required are more resources in the shape of money, staff time, and partnership brokering**. Interventions by ATCM, ACE, or Arts & Business will need to be carefully considered, well-planned and well-timed.

Furthermore, a poorly performing general retail economy might act as a significant sea anchor on the development of perceived non-essential activities (such as the arts) within BIDs. However, it may be at such times when **innovative initiatives can help to create interest, differentiation, and a competitive edge**.

Nonetheless, there are encouraging signs as the UK survey of BIDs and Town Centre schemes has revealed that **many have used the arts, are well disposed towards them, and in many cases believe them to be effective at delivering increased footfall, more sales, a better visual environment, and raising the profile of the area**. For smaller BIDs, the lack of available monies has not stopped them entirely from engaging with the arts.

It is encouragingly clear from the survey that when TCMs/BIDs do engage with the arts they are **almost always perceived to be successful to some degree** (with the rare exception).

The arts and cultural activities that clearly work the best for TCMs/BIDs and have the most immediate impact, largely through increased visitor numbers, dwell time, and spend are **Performances/Events** (such as festivals) and **Marketing/Promotion initiatives** (such as 'Eats and Seats'). These performance activities may also offer immediate opportunities for increasing access and inclusion, ensuring, for example, greater involvement of young people and of families.

Areas such as design, architecture and capital development, contemporary art exhibitions, and public art appear potentially to incur the greater risk of debate, resistance and opposition and often require longer planning cycles. However, these 'riskier' areas also potentially offer the greatest 'longer-game' benefits in terms of differentiation, branding, and cultural tourism.

BIDs need to know what assets they have culturally (in terms of venues, heritage destinations, facilities, services, and personnel) and it is clear that some areas, cities, or towns start with a natural advantage of a high quality pre-existing cultural or heritage milieu and infrastructure (e.g. Times Square in New York, Salzburg in Austria). Others are starting from a much lower baseline. But even if high-profile cultural facilities and organisations are not present, a BID area may contain creative businesses which themselves have business relationships with creative people, artists and craftspeople.

The link with tourism and increased visitor numbers in many BID areas is high and requires exploration. The field of cultural tourism is relatively new but is growing fast (37% of all global tourism and growing at 15% per year according to the World Tourism Organisation). It requires a careful consideration of how to match the cultural assets on offer with the typical cultural tourist market segments. Differentiation in this new market is paramount and the arts offer scope to create unique brands, experiences and destinations for the increasingly knowledgeable and discerning tourist.

We have **summarised many of our key findings in the summary SWOT analysis** below (a fuller SWOT analysis is included in Appendix F):

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The arts can assist with increasing footfall (36% from survey), visitor + customer satisfaction (40%) and raising an area's profile (31%) • 82% of UK BIDs + TCMs had used arts • Good international evidence for use of arts in area-based TCM schemes • Culture helps with differentiation now and in future (World Tourism Organisation) • Cities in UK and overseas are sold on idea of regeneration through culture and arts • Arts and culture also contribute to safety and improving the built environment • Even small budgets can provide big local impacts • DCMS and Arts Council England are committed to principles of culture-led local regeneration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses require hard evidence for impact of Arts: current economic evidence base is weak or hard to substantiate • Interest in arts more likely to depend on individual action than business policy • Actual annual BID/TCM budgets are modest (78% under £200K from survey), with only 3% spending more than 10% of total on arts + culture • Many outcomes of using arts in BIDs are 'soft', and less attractive to business sector as arguments in favour of including culture • Potential 'Familiarity Split' (or culture clash) between Business and the Arts, perceived as having differing values, objectives etc • BIDs often seen as sitting outside of wider partnerships which drive local regeneration
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeness of agencies such as ACE, ATCM + Arts & Business to develop opportunities for Arts in BIDs • Addressing support needs around funding and partnership brokering • Encouraging pilot projects on a small scale to build confidence and give models of good practice for all BIDs • Guidance and education for local authority officers and elected members in the value of the arts • Linking arts in town centre regeneration with Government policies on sustainability and liveability • Creating support packages, including training, for arts practitioners in working with BIDs/TCM partnerships • Boosting media coverage and dissemination of good practice more widely • Growth of niche tourism markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers include lack of funding, lack of time or officers to create and run arts programmes and projects • 'Crime and Grime' issues are highest priority and drive culture down the pecking order • Geographic delimiters of BIDs might constrain partnership working and cross-boundary developments • Not coming up with the evidence and arguments to convince BIDs/TCMs to make more use of culture, would perpetuate marginalisation of arts • The current parlous state of the retail sector nationally could make it difficult to persuade BIDs/TCM that arts are not just a luxury item • Growing perception and concern over the increasing privatisation of public spaces by the private sector (shopping centres in + out of town)

APPENDICES – available upon request at
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- A Summary of brief, methodology and work undertaken
- B ATCM BID Ballots at March 2006
- C Analysis of UK BID Business Plans
- D Analysis of UK Questionnaire to TCMs
- E UK Case Studies
- F Full SWOT Analysis
- G Selected Bibliography