

achieving social inclusion

The Smith Institute

The Smith Institute is an independent think tank that has been set up to look at issues which flow from the changing relationship between social values and economic imperatives.

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achieving social inclusion

2003

A series of three seminars held between
May and June 2003

Edited by Tony Pilch



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Preface

Wilf Stevenson

Director, Smith Institute

The Smith Institute is an independent think tank, which has been set up to undertake research and education in issues that flow from the changing relationship between social values and economic imperatives. In recent years, the Institute has centred its work on the policy implications arising from the interactions of equality, enterprise and equity.

This booklet is based on a series of three seminars that took place in May and June 2003. These events were organised to investigate the roles that sport and active recreation, the arts, and architecture and the built environment can play in promoting greater social inclusion. While these areas may previously have been underdeveloped in terms of their policy implications, over the course of this series it became apparent that, if the government is to succeed in its overall strategy to promote social inclusion, these issues will have to play an increasingly important role.

Inevitably, in transferring live events into print, some of the colour and texture of the original may have been lost. We hope, however, that those who attended the seminars will recognise much of what is included in this booklet, and that those who read it will respond to the issues and ideas that emerged during each event.

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Seminar 1

Achieving social inclusion: the arts

A seminar held on Wednesday 7 May 2003 at
11 Downing Street



Welcome

Wilf Stevenson

Director, Smith Institute

This is the first in a series of three seminars about the role of sport, architecture and the arts in social inclusion. The series is an extension of work we have been doing recently on equality and equity; but the starting point for this stuff came from working last year on the Scottish Enlightenment, and in particular on Adam Smith. We are not the Adam Smith Institute – although we are sometimes rather amusingly taken for that – but we do owe a great debt to his writing, and particularly to his ideas on the wealth of nations.

He uses wealth not just as a stock of capital in terms of cash, but also in the sense that Amartya Sen has used it of “capability”. This includes innate resources, which are available within the community and to individuals, and this includes such matters as health, education, skills, sociability, happiness, altruism and culture. These are, in his words, important for the civility of the nation and are a necessary precondition to having a wealthy nation that can trade well and build up economic resources. So this area of activity goes back a long way.

We came across arts, sports and architecture almost as an accident. I had three meetings in three weeks in which people came to me and said they had a problem, a problem that the think tank recognises quite well: they had an issue which they themselves were passionate about, which they felt could do great things for society, but the main levers that they wished to access were in other departments, usually bigger departments with substantial resources. Their protestations and prayers were being met with superiority and indifference. You can see what I am talking about – art, sport and architecture have as a main base the Department for Culture, Media & Sport, which is a good and relatively new department that does good things. But in Whitehall terms it is significantly outgunned by the Department of Health, the Department for Education & Science, the Department for Trade & Industry, and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The issue is one we come across a lot. Everybody will agree that the case that has been made has merit, that if implemented it would achieve considerable social value, but nobody feels it is their responsibility to do the joining up, the necessary bridging between departments to get the thing to work. So we thought we would have a go. It may be a modest step, but I hope it will be in the right direction. We are starting with the arts, and we have a very strong line-up of speakers to take us into the debate.

The minister is going to raise some of the policy issues which reflect back a little on what I have been saying, and she will take us a bit further down that line. There are some quite big questions to be answered about this issue. It is obvious that the arts are a good thing, and it is obvious that we should all do more things around the arts agenda, but – particularly in today’s evidence-based culture – it is a big step from aspiration to reality. That does not mean we should give up just because it is difficult; we should be pushing harder and harder because it is important to make it right. I also thought we should hear from practitioners who might enthuse us about some of the issues we are talking about.

As well as understanding the context within which this policy game has got to be played, we should also understand some of the areas we want to get into. I think we will hear resonances across all the speeches about both the good things that can happen out of this, but also the reality about how important it is to do the groundwork and research that is necessary for this work. I am delighted to have Baroness Blackstone speaking to us. She is a regular attendee at our seminars and often gives some of our speakers a rather uncomfortable time with rather sharp questions. She also comes from a think tank world so she understands a little of what we are doing.

Rt Hon Baroness Blackstone

Minister for the Arts, Department for Culture, Media & Sport

First of all, I would like to say how delighted I am that the Smith Institute has decided to take this issue as a subject for these No 11 seminars. Obviously it is something that is being picked up by think tanks: the Institute for Public Policy Research is also starting a series of four seminars to look at the relationship between the arts and other areas of policy, notably in the social policy field.

I want to begin by establishing absolutely clearly that the purpose of the arts is about art for art's sake – it is about the pursuit of beauty and truth and great artistic achievement. The arts are not a branch of social policy – I feel that very deeply and very profoundly, although I happen also to be somebody who has spent quite a lot of my life concerned with and interested in social policy – and I think there is a relationship between them.

There is a relationship in the sense that the arts can and should be used to support social policy objectives in education, in particular; but also in employment; to an extent in health and in crime; and possibly in other areas too. To do that, we do not need in any way to dumb down what the arts are up to. The highest of high culture can continue, and should continue, and indeed it does continue. We only have to look at what our orchestras, our chamber ensembles, our theatre companies, our galleries, and our museums are doing. They are not just putting on work for children or uninitiated adults. Some of what they do would not be terribly accessible for those sorts of groups. That is absolutely fine, as far as I am concerned. There should be no sidelining whatsoever of the commitment to the arts for art's sake, and there does not need to be.

The critics of the so-called New Labour position have suggested that all we are interested in is using the arts in some instrumental way for promoting quite different objectives, particularly in the social policy sphere. That is not true. At the same time, it is the case that New Labour passionately believes – and I represent New Labour in that sense – that we can and should widen access to the arts, and that we should work with other government departments to try and do just that.

Wilf said at the beginning that nobody was really doing the bridging up between departments. If that is the case, then it is my fault and the fault of the DCMS because it is the role of the Department of Culture to promote culture for its own sake, but also to try to work with other government departments to make sure that they understand the extent to which the arts can be supportive of some of their objectives. I think, in spite of what Wilf said, that we are making quite a good fist of that, at least in some areas, particularly in education, and we do have pretty close links with the Department for Education & Skills, as Michael Bichard would confirm.

Making the arts accessible

Even though I have said – and I say with some conviction – that much of the work that the arts do is about the pursuit of excellence, I believe that what they do can be, and is being, made accessible. In making the arts accessible, the main objective has to be to provide for far more people than has been the case in the past the opportunity to experience the joy of the appreciation of the arts in whatever form. That must be the main objective – greater access. In doing that, we will enrich people, make their lives better, give them hours of enjoyment and pleasure, and lead them, I hope, to search for more, developing a taste for culture which will then stay with them for the rest of their lives.

I will give a little anecdote that will, perhaps, help to demonstrate this. When I was visiting the Baltic in Newcastle – and incidentally, this is not an advertisement for Newcastle and Gateshead being the European capital of culture. I could tell the same story, probably, about Liverpool, Bristol, Birmingham, Cardiff and Oxford – I was going around with rather a large entourage being shown the Baltic gallery, and a middle-aged woman came up to me and said, “Who are you?” So somebody said, “She’s the Minister for the Arts.”

She then shook her finger at me and said, “Why haven’t you told us about this place? I am from the West Midlands; I usually go on holiday in Spain. I am never going to Spain again; I am going to Newcastle and places like this. There is so much to do here, because there is all this culture.” This was a working-class woman who was enormously enjoying what one of our big cities can provide and what a contemporary art gallery was providing. She had got the taste for culture.

Incidentally, access is not just about being in an audience. This is something that I feel very passionately about too, and I do not think we have thought about this enough in the arts so far. One of the things I want to do is shape policy a bit more in the direction of thinking not just about audiences but about participation in a much more direct sense.

I would like to see far more emphasis on what is called in the trade “the voluntary arts”, what in the past we used to call “amateur dramatics” in a rather dismissive way. We should not be dismissive about this; it is a very important form of inclusion and it is too often forgotten, especially for adults. If you take part in a play, opera or workshop or you do some visual arts work or design, you will probably remember that more than any professional performance or exhibition that you will ever see, however great. It will give you a sense of being able to do something yourself, and will also lead to greater appreciation of what you might go on to see.

When I was in Reykjavik in Iceland a couple of years ago, I visited an arts festival which they have every other year. Iceland is a tiny country with less than 300,000 people, with an amazingly good arts festival. They had a rule – I am not suggesting we actually bring this in here – that there was no television on Thursday evening so that people could take part in arts events themselves. It was not just reading the sagas; it was doing all kind of other things. It certainly seems to have had an impact on the extent of artistic activity and understanding in that small country.

While the arts are about the intrinsic promotion of artistic excellence, they do also, in my view, have a big obligation to do what they can to support the wider objectives of social policy, to promote social inclusion, especially through their educational programmes.

In saying this, I do not think we should make silly and unrealistic claims about the life chances of all the participants in arts programmes. Nor should we make claims that all crimes will vanish as a result of doing arts programmes for children at risk, or that the sick are going to be raised from the dead or near-dead because they have been given the opportunity to listen to music at hospital, or that jobs for all the unemployed are suddenly going to materialise. The arts are not a cheap alternative to other forms of social

policy initiatives.

What we can do is hope for some otherwise disengaged or excluded people to become included, which will then lead to a whole range of other benefits for them and society. Arts projects that deliver excellence and are socially inclusive can complement each other. They do not contradict each other.

Proving art's power of inclusion

What evidence do we have to back up the claims that the arts can help promote social inclusion? Not enough. We need more work, new methods for investigating the impact of the arts in tackling social exclusion. I would say to the academics, to people like Julian Le Grand and others here: it would be really interesting if our departments of social policy started working with other departments in the arts and humanities areas on this issue. They have not really done so, although Julian mentioned to me, just before this seminar, that he has a PhD student working in this area.

We need to understand more about how interventions actually work, how we can replicate them, what kind of long-term impact they have, if any, and what are the cost benefits in terms of the taxpayers' money. We need to know more about that because – to come back to Wilf's earlier point – if we are going to persuade the departments of health, education and, above all, the Home Office, we need to be able to give them evidence that they are getting some returns on the money that we want them to put in.

Roy Shaw, who was Director-General of the Arts Council a long time ago, decreed that all its funded organisations should have to do educational work as early as 1979; and the Arts Council set up its own education department in 1982/83, more than 20 years ago now. It has taken nearly two decades to really establish this work, culminating with greater partnerships, which Peter Jenkinson is going to talk about a bit later. By 1993 there were some 60 orchestras in this country which had educational facilities. In 1983, only the London Sinfonietta had one. The lottery-funded arts for education programme, through the Arts Council, was an enormously big step forward.

However, given that we started this work two decades ago, it is high time that we were more rigorous in looking at how it works and what is effective.

I asked my officials to try to put together what evidence we have to help us answer those questions that I have just posed. There are very few large-scale studies with findings based on large samples in the UK. There are a few in the US: there was a research project based on a sample of 25,000 children that shows that learners can attain higher levels of achievement through their engagement with the arts. Although socioeconomic status was the most important factor influencing their learning, the effect of the arts was most marked among children from low-income families.

There was a 10-year study of over 30,000 young people doing out-of-school activities in sport, art and community service carried out by Shirley Bryce-Heath, who I think is now helping Peter with the evaluation of Creative Partnerships. This showed that arts projects improved participants' language development, negotiation skills and hypothetical option appraisal. Ofsted did some work in the area, which was published in 1998, arguing that the work of artists in schools enhanced the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom, developed positive attitudes, and improved learning of core literacy skills.

If we turn to work that is designed to use the arts to prevent crime, the most recent intervention of this sort was Splash Extra, which was evaluated last summer. An eight-week programme showed that there was a 5.2% decrease in crime, compared with areas without a Splash Extra scheme.

As far as health is concerned, I do not want to say anything more other than that the Chelsea & Westminster Hospital arts research project has done some work, although some of the findings are a little bit hard to believe. For example, in the medical day unit, as a response to the visual art that was provided, anxiety levels were found to be 18% lower than in the control group, and depression levels 34% lower. I am going to spend much more time at the Tate as a result of this finding, to reduce both my anxiety and my potential levels of depression! Work on post-surgical recovery suggests people had to stay less time in hospital as a result of being exposed to music and visual arts.

My final example is a study done in Sweden. What this shows was that even when key variables such as age, sex, education, income, long-term disease,

smoking and physical exercise were taken into account, attendance at cultural events, reading books or periodicals, making music, or singing in a choir appeared to reduce the risks of mortality within the time period of the study. Enjoy the arts and live longer, in other words.

Conclusion

To conclude, we really do not know what works best. We have a PSA target to increase participation in the arts for priority groups: those on low incomes, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities. We have some basic data being collected on things like numbers from different socioeconomic groups visiting museums and galleries as a result of free entry. For the rest, it has mainly been throwing bread on water. Creative Partnerships is being evaluated. There are pilots, but I do not think we have enough to go on yet, as I have told Peter on several occasions.

Finally, out there, there are lots of inventive people in the arts world. They are light on their feet, they are opportunistic and flexible, and they are delivering real outcomes, real benefits and real improvements in their communities. I want those to continue. Artists themselves frequently tell me that close engagement with those who are disengaged from society and have never been engaged with the arts is a great challenge, a challenge which can stimulate their own creativity and provoke new ways of working. So there is a two-way plus from this sort of work.

I will end, finally, with another personal anecdote. When I was invited to join the then ballet committee of the Royal Opera House in about 1985, I was told that there were quite a few people who had become obsessed with education – “Don’t worry about that; it really isn’t important. What we’re only about is what happens on stage.” Nobody, thank goodness, would ever say that today.

Wilf Stevenson

That sets out the parameters of the debate. I am sorry if I gave the impression that Baroness Blackstone was not as effective in going around bridging up these things as the other departments. I was not really saying that, because I know that good work is going on. What I was saying is that you do not get much of a response from the other side, and they are not really coming to you and saying, “Come on, tell us what more we can do in our programmes.”

The bridge has got to be a communication in both directions; that is what I was trying to get at. That is not in any sense to diminish the DCMS's role.

Now Martin Stephenson is going to talk a little bit about the practice.

Martin Stephenson

Director for Social Inclusion Strategy, Nottingham Trent University

I am going to talk about the arts from the perspective of the Youth Justice Board. As I am no longer a member, I am free to be even-handed in my comments.

Picking up on the last point Wilf made, I think ministers have – quite rightly – emphasised joining up and bridging things. I think the public and young people have a right to expect it. And we are doing a slow job of it in terms of civil servants and managers in central and local government. We are way behind schedule. So, I am afraid the tenor of some of what I am going to say has some harsh messages. It is only a device that covers the passion that believes we can make a difference, but we have got to be very realistic about where we are and where we are going in terms of youth crime and the involvement of arts practitioners and other professionals.

Real change is needed; it is not about simply doing what we have always been doing as an arts practitioner or youth justice professional with a lot more money to do it. That approach quite simply will not work. Underlying this, I am afraid you are going to have a tinge of the Gradgrind approach – that only hard facts matter for the 350,000 young people who are completely detached from education, training and employment in this country.

I am going to focus on the under-18s, and some of the points, because of limited time, may seem brutal and lacking in any underpinning facts and figures – which are there, I can assure you. In terms of youth justice, we are looking at about 180,000-200,000 young people entering the funnel. About 7,000 or 8,000 drop out of the bottom into custody. We have the system organised around youth offending teams, which are virtual organisations, comprised of a whole series of professionals that come together, and therein lies a huge strength and opportunity for arts organisations, and possibly the way forward for other services. Then we have the secure estate, divided up between the prison service, the private sector and local authority secure units.

Some of the more negative aspects, the biggest gaps between rhetoric and reality, are linked to custody, so I will be reserving special mention for that,

because we have got outstanding individual examples, mainly with adults, about arts achievement in custody. Sometimes we focus on the individual, and disguise what we are doing with very broad groups of people. I want to look at some of the ways the Youth Justice Board works as a non-educational institution, as an institution you would not normally associate with the role of the arts.

I am going to end on a more positive note about the practical realities of partnership – one of our overused words. You cannot make a funding bid, you cannot go to meetings, without talking about partnership. It is very glib. In reality, partnership is a hard, painful transaction. To pretend it is anything else is not being real. I heard recently the definition of partnership was the “willing suspension of mutual loathing in the pursuit of joint funding bids”. There is a lot of reality in that. I am going to end by looking at a very hard-nosed partnership that crosses a whole range of agencies, because if we are not realistic and honest about what happens as a result of our interventions, we are fooling ourselves.

How can the arts help young offenders?

So, in terms of the Youth Justice Board, and youth justice generally: Why arts? Why education? In cold, hard, factual terms, the single most important way of stopping offending and reoffending is having young people in mainstream education, training and employment, with all the cultural fulfilment and achievement that implies. There is no magic bullet, and the minister quite rightly said we must not overclaim on youth crime. The best we can ever claim is modest but significant reductions. I think we should all be humble enough in public service to remember that is the best we can ever hope to do; and if we achieve that, it is enough.

What has surprised and impressed me about the Youth Justice Board is, just in the same way that all of us should recognise that learning is far too important to leave to teachers, so the Youth Justice Board, under Norman Warner’s leadership, has realised that education is far too important to leave to the Department for Education & Skills. Many of the targets and leadership, the more ambitious targets, have actually come from the board: 90% of young people in the youth justice system to be in suitable, full-time education, training and employment by 2004. The Connexions service argued about it

being far too drastic. The Learning & Skills Council said it was far too difficult and challenging. It took the catalyst of an agency not traditionally associated with this field of development to push people forward.

I would think that arts practitioners, managers and the Arts Council England can have that same impact, that people who would not normally be associated with juveniles can bring about this level of change. Some of the key messages from the board are that to set ambitious targets and apply pressure behind them does make a difference.

The greatest danger we have got in the next five years is that we set up lots of nice, exciting, alternative projects; and then as the economic tide recedes, as it will, and as political currents change, we are going to be left above the tidemark, saying: "If only they would give us the money for these lovely projects, we could keep on making a difference." The challenge is how we embed the arts in mainstream services and get young people reattached to mainstream schools and colleges. It is not about setting up lots of alternatives and segregated provision. The hard evidence is, for pupil referral units, that all the separate work we do does not work in the long term.

One of the biggest challenges we face is that we are not going to have enough people, let alone of the right quality, in the next five years. So, from a crude youth justice perspective, we need the pairs of hands that arts practitioners can supply – of course, they are bringing much more than that, but that itself is a great deal.

The old days of the professional silos are going. All the boundaries across and within all the main agencies are being steadily eroded. We have got the slightly patronising titles of para-professionals creeping in everywhere, but I strongly believe that we need to move towards a new core curriculum for all people working with young people, which will help recruitment and retention. The Youth Justice Board has pioneered a new qualification, which I am very impressed to see the Arts Council putting pilot funding towards, so that arts practitioners too can gain the professional certificate in effective practice for youth justice, where we root what we do in both shared ethics and the hard, practical knowledge provided by research and evaluation.

Prevention, resources and joined-up services

There are a range of other areas which are important, starting with prevention. That is where the game should begin and end, but we cannot ignore the young people who have dropped right through our systems. At any point in time, we have 3,500 young people in custody – only the US locks up more young people. We could point to glittering examples, from custody, of art achievement, but the reality is close to scandal. Despite the changes, despite what ministers have urged should happen, the reality in prison services establishments leaves a huge amount to be desired.

I will use an anecdote as well, as the minister was doing effectively. I went around an arts department in a young offender institution, and one of the great things about art – and the danger – is that you have got so many products, so many tangibles. It can look really good, as long as you do not see old exercise books with crossings-out from the quarter of young people in custody who cannot read and write. I went around this young offender institution looking at fantastic artefacts and constructions. Then it emerged that not one single young person had started and finished any of those artefacts. That was because of the turbulence, the pressure on staff, and the fact we have not even got enough classrooms if everyone turned up for lessons, which they do not in young offender institutions. The best that a young person leaving could say is, “I put the ears on Mickey Mouse.” That was the reality of their brief experience.

We are just undertaking a piece of research for the Arts Council on the involvement of young people in custody with the arts. Surprise, surprise – as we find with so many of these studies, the myth of the completely disaffected or the uneducable is exposed. The control group gave exactly the same attitudes towards the arts for young people in mainstream school as those in custody. Seventy-five percent of young people in custody said they wanted to continue the arts on the outside, within their push to get qualifications. There was real recognition that all these things matter. Tragically, only 2% of these young people had had any professional talk to them about how they would carry on the arts on the outside, and there was nothing in sentence planning.

Willing arts practitioners are isolated; education staff do not plan around the basic systems that we set in place. The very hard, practical lesson is that where

young people do want to succeed, our systems as professionals do not join up. We are divided by our separate languages. Anybody here who sat in a youth justice meeting, or an educational meeting, or a social care meeting, would be bombarded by the acronyms. How on earth do we overcome our professional cultures and move forward on that?

What works

In terms of the challenges, what works is a very challenging concept. When the Prime Minister says, “What works is what matters,” people assume it is almost a truism. It is actually a real challenge, because what does not work has to stop being done. Although the evidence base is thin, there are plenty of interventions we are undertaking where the evidence suggests it does not work.

We are all guilty of this – I spent years dangling young offenders off ropes in the Lake District. They seemed like life-changing experiences to me and the young people. We were all really fired up going back. How does that learning transfer? The one thing we are really bad at across public services is the transfer of learning from one environment to another. When you have got no home and no job on the streets of Wolverhampton on a February evening, you do not remember Scafell Pike too well. It is similar with motor projects. I set up more motor projects than Ferrari – involving karting, banger racing, off-road driving, motorbike scrambling – as a way of engaging, of getting people involved in activities. Of course, when the cold facts come out, it was painful as an enthusiastic practitioner to see my practice slain by the reality of research studies: we are taking an impulsive young man and getting him even more excited in those activities. How does the learning transfer? It does not.

So there is a real challenge in the whole evidence-based culture. Arts practitioners have an opportunity to join that, but you are going to have to adopt some of the stringent rigours and methodology of health and of criminal justice in terms of validating what we do. Subjective, feel-good stories are not enough. Changes within the four walls of custody or a pupil referral unit are not enough, because the acid test is what happens to that young person back in the community. Do they stay in the arts, do they stay in learning, and do they stop offending? What happens to their life chances? Not enough of us can move between these segregated environments. The

challenge, in human resources and learning terms, is to create the new, amphibious professional who can move backwards and forwards between these environments; we are still all too segregated.

One last point about social inclusion, then I will move to more positive points. Do we really believe in social inclusion? To many of those involved in social policy, social inclusion simply means what we do to the excluded. As a concept for everybody about ensuring the access, participation and progression of all young people in mainstream services, are our teachers and professional associations signed up to that? Are they confident enough in dealing with all the demands and challenges of those who are excluded from the system? There is a huge skills challenge out there, but there is a values challenge as well. It cannot just be something we put in funding bids. Do we really believe in that, from social policy through to delivery?

Examples of partnerships

This is the positive anecdote. I went to a meeting recently in Norwich – no accident as to whose constituency that is. We had sitting around the table the chief executive of the Connexions Partnership, head of the Youth Offending Services, the key manager from the local learning and skills council, and a representative from Arts Council England, on behalf of the regional arts council and Creative Partnerships. The head of the local education authority services for those out of school, and the Youth Justice Board's literacy and numeracy strategy – PLUS – were also represented. We quite simply horse-traded there and then how we were going to draw down what we knew, share our joint targets and operational pressures, throw them into the middle of the table, and not leave the room until we had put together collective funding for posts, a commitment to research and evaluation in a stringent way, and a new approach to joint training across those services to create a potentially replicable and sustainable model for socially excluded young people.

We have all seen the fireworks syndrome where some pioneer sets off some exciting arts project, and everybody stands back and gasps. They are promoted and move on; 10 years later, the initiative is reinvented. The big challenge which government is demanding of us is: how do we design robust project models and then roll them out at speed? We have got a huge dearth of implementation skills, right down from central government through to local

authorities, because we have spent so long not really using them, not developing them for 20 years. Time is short. What I think we need to do is pick up on where we can get those key agencies together at the table, realising that in the long term we do not want Connexions in terms of their work with social inclusion, we do not want youth offending services at the level they are at. What we want is to keep people in the system in the first place.

The following anecdote shows how the language barriers can be breached. The local learning and skills council manager at the meeting in Norwich – who funded a crucial post which has the potential to be replicated in all 46 learning and skills councils, which will link up Youth Justice, Connexions and the arts – was a volunteer on a referral order panel for young people who offend. She was now able to see through the language that youth justice professionals, like others, are cloaked in, and understood how the threats and difficulties in young people’s lives were entangled, rather than as neat professional divisions. This reality was perceived by her acting as an individual contributing to her community rather than as a member of an agency. She completely signed up to an initiative which had an arts theme entwined with literacy and numeracy, running from prevention, in terms of summer colleges, right the way through to using the arts as a vital catalyst for those in custody.

Mary Robson

Research Associate, Centre for Arts & Humanity in Health & Medicine,
Durham University

Following on from what Martin was saying about long-term projects, I am going to start by giving an example of one such that was started by enthusiasts, and we are still in there 10 years later. Then Mike will look at the ramifications of that.

Almost 30 years ago, Michael Wilson wrote a book called *Health is for People*; in it he said that factors which make for health are concerned with a sense of personal and social identity, human worth, communication, participation in the making of political decisions, celebration and responsibility. The language of science alone is insufficient to describe health; the languages of story, myth and poetry also disclose its truth. I suppose we enthusiasts would include almost any art form in that list.

The Happy Hearts lanterns event

Community-based arts and health projects have sprung up across the UK since the late 1980s. One example is the Happy Hearts lanterns event in Wrekenton, bringing together arts, health, education, the voluntary sector and local people, and demonstrating how individual involvement in collective creativity can lead to communal change. Wrekenton is a corner of the borough of Gateshead. It has an unenviable and undeserved reputation as something of a black spot; it has a poor health profile in a borough with one of the highest morbidity rates and coronary heart disease in England. Education results are poor too; and there is a high percentage of teenage pregnancies in the locality.

The big heart lantern is the centrepiece of an annual procession of 500 or more people carrying lanterns they have made over the previous fortnight. At the end of the walk, it is hoisted up the hill for everyone to see; then it is seen from a distance, as part of that very particular landscape, under a night sky. It has come to be called by the locals “the Heart of the Community lantern”. This sense of metaphor is really important, for at the core of this event, as of much of arts and health work, is a nurturing of emotional intelligence and informal learning. As a nine-year-old commented, “When

the lanterns light up, everyone turns into my friend.”

This association of good times and a positive self-image within an ephemeral arts event and its processes is an important one. It is the after-image, the one of the heart on the hill, that is left on the mind’s eye. That is why great, hulking 16-year-old lads come to lantern workshops of their own volition. They do not think that making beautiful objects and talking about feelings is sissy. I am of the Jesuit school of lantern-making – I believe that if you get them at seven, they are still making them when they are 16. The congenial space of lantern-making workshops consists of a spirit of high energy, laughter, purposeful creative activity, and the nurturing of the beginnings of trust, credibility and confidence.

These lanterns are made from willow sticks and tissue paper. They are lit by candles, and as dusk falls they are revealed to be very delicate, lacy structures. They glow amber, bobbing along in the darkness. Every individual effort finds its place in the collective stream; none is dispensable. This is the rite of transformation, not just for the people involved, but for the streets as well. As a local woman who has worked with us over the years pointed out, “Some of us just do not get on, but at Lanterns we put all of that to one side – you see each other differently.”

This year saw the 10th procession in Wrekenton. Developments have happened that could not have been planned. Every lantern has the image of a heart secreted in it by its maker. Lanterns are made in memory of those who have died and for those newly born. It continues to develop beyond being an annual event, spawning activities that will take place throughout the year.

Participants have gained confidence for themselves and where they come from. This is the space from which latent talent can emerge. It is not only the usual suspects who show an aptitude for civic participation. This year interest came from regeneration schemes in Newcastle and Sunderland. Happy Hearts will be passing on the skills to other communities: we realise that this can hit spots that other methods cannot, and will be using it to deal with more complex intercultural scenarios.

Other projects

Happy Hearts is not the only lanterns event with a health focus in the country. Another is *Zindaagi Kai Noor*, which is an Urdu title meaning “light up our lives”. It is based in Manningham, in inner-city Bradford. Initial evidence following the first event showed an unexpected and somewhat persistent increase in attendance in the targeted year group in the school, and much improved communication between the school and parents. We have identified several others, in the Northern region initially, and plan a longitudinal research programme that will look into their potential influence on public health.

This will mean new, participative ways of working, ones that involve participants not merely as data collectors, but as analysts, as part of and working alongside the research team. Everybody involved feels that the strong, collective, good-time nature of the event feeds individual and communal health needs. Indeed, it is now a very particular tradition. Ally McGee is a woman who has been involved in Happy Hearts from the very beginning, and she put it like this: “It’s definitely made me think about my health and my kids’ health, and given me the confidence to do something about it. We can now choose to be healthier.”

Mike White

Director of Projects, Centre for Arts & Humanity in Health & Medicine, Durham University

Mary has given an example of collective creativity making a committed expression of public health. This is what distinguishes arts and health from art therapy, and it is what connects it into social inclusion work. When the NHS was set up, Aneurin Bevan observed that the maintenance of public health requires a collective commitment. The Chancellor himself reaffirmed this in a speech in 2002 on funding for the NHS.

At Wrekenton we see collective creativity with collective commitment. The lanterns event shows how health awareness can become a felt experience, and even have a commonly owned iconography. Grounded in local arts development, the project joins up theory, strategy and practice. We can build on this with some longitudinal research to examine the therapeutic benefits and communal change that arts activity helps motivate.

The delivery partners behind projects like this enter into social relationships with the community. This challenges the way we ourselves work; and let us face it, for some of us participation in the arts can seem a fate worse than death. The point is, though, it is a learning process for all involved, illuminated by what the arts do best, in turning complexity into revelation. Arts activity can also address an underlying concern in the NHS to maintain trust between health professionals and the public. As the health secretary said to us at a conference we held two years ago, the arts play a very important role in communicating messages about healthy lifestyle, and of the health services' engagement with the communities they serve.

The arts and health field is now so diverse we are starting to see some emerging specialisms in different approaches that look for measures and outcomes appropriate to the creative intervention. One important approach draws on the concept of social capital. That leads to arts projects which start from the point of using creativity to enhance social relationships, reflecting growing evidence that good relationships are a major determinant of health. (I have not got time right now to run through the evidence for that.)

There is at present a window of opportunity to realise this social model of health. The move to multiagency working is new to the NHS, and arts can have both an integral and a catalytic role in this. What used to be understood as the preventative approach to healthcare is increasingly about building capacity – externally in developing social capital, internally in improved training and holistic approaches. These are approaches that the arts help define and contextualise.

Partnerships between art and health

The thinking that informs this work is now becoming mainstream, though the very diversity of funding partnerships that support it may actually mitigate against it being taken on as a mainstream financial commitment by any one sector. So, to demonstrate effectiveness in tackling social exclusion, arts and health practitioners want to share that practice more, as a basis for collaborative research programmes. This could then prise out an evidence base we know is already implicit in the qualitative testimony of participants in these kinds of projects. Networking of well-founded community health and arts projects is necessary now to take the research agenda forward.

Realistically, at present, if we were to place the case for arts and health on the Treasury green books appraisal cycle, it would be somewhere between the initial rationale and the setting of objectives. There is an improving dialogue between arts, health, medical and education sectors, helping us see the way forward. A welcome development is the growing interest in this area of research shown by the Arts & Humanities Research Board.

The call for this dialogue is not coming solely from the arts. A *British Medical Journal* editorial last Christmas advocated a half-percent shift of the health budget to be diverted to the arts because, as the editor says, if health is about adaptation, understanding and acceptance, the arts may be more potent than anything medicine has got to offer. That half-percent shift would increase Arts Council funding by 70%. It was quite a Christmas present – in your dreams, perhaps, but it is a very interesting ceiling to debate down from.

Our research centre has now set up a national advisory group for the evaluation of community-based arts and health, with support from the health development agency and the Nuffield Trust. It proposes to conduct a survey

of arts organisations in NHS trusts to determine what each sector expects of the other with regard to research and evaluation. This will be published, along with a lexicon of terms and definitions, guided by the question: What would constitute useful and valid evidence, and how should it be obtained?

I got into this work 10 or 15 years ago by working with a GP in the Midlands who wanted to have artists in residence in his practice. He long ago embraced the contribution the arts could make to his work, and recently said, “My 24 years as a family doctor have convinced me that many of the medical complaints reported by patients are in fact physical symptom manifestations of social, psychological and emotional problems. To create a healthier nation, we must start by encouraging inclusive and harmonious relationships in a society where so many find themselves socially excluded. The principle killers are not cancer and heart disease, but lack of social support, poor education and stagnant local economies.” We are now testing out the validity of that viewpoint through community-based arts and health.

Peter Jenkinson

National Director, Creative Partnerships

What we are doing this morning is asking some serious, profound, hard questions about the role of arts, culture and creativity in the development of young people. Questions to which there are no easy or glib or fast answers, because it is a complex and shifting terrain. We are all here in this seminar because we have a particular place in that terrain. I will start with the admission that I am hugely optimistic and excited about the possibilities ahead.

There is always a time for an idea to be right and for it to be wrong. Frankly, we could not have had the conversation we are having today 10 years ago, or even five. We have only had a Department of Culture in this country for just over five years. Before that, it was the Department of National Heritage, with all its associations with beefeaters and warm beer on the cricket green, and Miss Marple phutting along in her Morris Minor on her way to tea with the vicar. So that is an achievement in itself. I do feel now that a corner has been turned, and conversations are taking place that could never have taken place before.

In this country of clubs, silos and boxes, we are all forced to declare our allegiances, so I can confess that I come from almost 20 years of working in the cultural sector, which I suppose makes me a luvvie in tights! The wide-ranging debate we are having is one we have wanted for years, a debate about how the arts, culture and creativity can develop social capital and social justice.

Releasing creativity

I am going to discuss all too briefly the relationships of the arts, cultural and creative sectors with education. Those relationships at their best can have a powerful, transformative long-term impact on children and young people, inclusive of skills and knowledge, confidence and achievement – we know the script. Essentially, what it does is turn the light back on in children's eyes.

The amazing thing about being human is that we are all potentially 100% creative. At least, that is where we start out. Then things happen to us that close that innate and beautiful creativity down. Things can also go wrong, as

we have been hearing already this morning. As Gerry Robinson, the former Chair of the Arts Council of England, pointed out in his “creativity imperative” lecture, research has shown that at age five a child’s potential for creativity is 98% – by age 10 it has dropped to 30%. At 15, it is just 12%, and by the time we reach adulthood – and this is the really scary thing – it is just 2%. So, there is an urgent debate to be had at the highest political level about how creativity, and the associated innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurialism, can be nurtured and sustained in everyone. It is our right.

This, as we know, is an international issue. All developed countries are having just the same conversations as we are, considering new strategies to unleash creativity; and specifically how to transform education systems better to meet the needs of the 21st century, with creativity much more to the fore than it has ever has been, whether it be in Singapore or Hong Kong or California or New Zealand, or wherever else.

The UK is arguably in a position to be at the leading edge of this international enquiry in putting creativity into mainstream services. We are, we need no reminding, a very rich country, the world’s fourth-largest economy; although travelling around the country, as we all do, we have to pinch ourselves very often to remember that. But we also know we are rich in another way that we should celebrate, and that is that the UK is arguably the world’s most creative country. I do not want to sound naively flag-waving about this, but we do not reflect on this enough. There is hardly a creative activity – by which I do not just mean the arts and culture, but also science, engineering and design, and technology – in which the UK is not in the top three.

This year, we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the discovery of the codes for DNA by British scientists. That was an extraordinary creative achievement; and an extraordinarily creative series of acts that came from that. Or, if you think back to your desktop, you may have an Apple on it. Those Apples have been designed for the last five years by Jonathan Ive, a young man who went through what he described as a terrible school in Newcastle upon Tyne and is now living across on the West Coast of the States in northern California.

These stories of creativity and endeavour can be repeated over and over, but

how does this happen, what makes it possible, and how can we have more of it? Again, there are no quick or easy answers to these questions. We know the economic impact that this has. Sir Michael Bichard recently issued a publication in which it was estimated that the creative industries, by 2000, employed 1.9 million people and nationally contribute 7.9% of UK GDP. That is critical to the arguments about economic impact.

Creativity and education

Although many people will get jobs in creative industries, or more than have ever before, we will still need low-skill, manual workers, and not everyone can have a role in these industries. It is therefore more important that the majority of our young people have the opportunity of being creative, and of having their creativity enhanced.

We know that one of the best ways of getting creativity to flourish is to link up with silos of education, and the arts, and culture, in sustainable ways. We are lucky to have a very long history, in this country, of arts education that makes these links. Much of this has been short term, hit and run, flash and dash – what the Americans call “drive-by programmes”, where there are fantastic things happening, linking schools and cultural organisations. For a year, or two years if you are lucky, teachers, cultural partners, and young people get to a fantastic point of confidence about working together – it is difficult to learn how to work together – and then everything stops, and the learning and the legacy is lost.

What we are seeing with Creative Partnerships is the first ever co-ordinated and, we hope, long-term, sustainable and reputable programme of creativity and education starting in 16 areas of the country – from Teeside to the tip of Cornwall, from Merseyside to the Kent coast. What we want to see here is long-term thinking and long-term tracking of what is happening in these areas. They are all linked by the most crushing poverty of aspiration and imagination. People cannot see a future; they do not very often go more than a mile or two from their homes to school; they will not even go into the next town or city; they will not even go into the centre of the towns or cities in which they live.

We are hoping through Creative Partnerships, and through linking with the

creative sector more broadly beyond the arts, to tackle some of these very deep issues of children's confidence and limited world view. We will have – and Tessa has quite rightly said we want to see this – a great deal of evidence and evaluation to demonstrate this is working, because otherwise we will never get enough money to roll Creative Partnerships out to everywhere. We would like to see the kind of approach Creative Partnerships is pursuing put into the mainstream, at the heart of the education and cultural sectors. I obviously agree with Martin: that is where we are heading.

So, to move forward, the challenge is to find ways of embedding creativity into the mainstream of young people's lives, including their lives at school, by giving permission for people to do things differently. Government needs to give permission for teachers to innovate and take risks in developing their teaching and learning. This is beginning to happen, very excitingly. We do need a wider understanding of creativity. We could spend a whole week arguing about what it is. We need to understand the particular or unique role the arts, culture and creativity sectors can play in the development of young people. What is it that is specific about these sectors?

We also need to get mainstream organisations to reprioritise education. There is some fantastic work going on, but also quite a lot of lip service being paid to education within the cultural sector. We do, fortunately, have more education staff, but very often they are paid a lot less. They are not in the decision-making groups; they feel – if you talk to any education officers in the cultural sector – very marginalised. And they feel that they are the audience developers, that they are the ones – coming back to the Jesuitical saying – to “get them young and you'll have them for life”, and that is not good enough.

It is fine; it does develop audiences; but it would be fantastic if the cultural sector as a whole recognised its enormous potential to have a different kind of role in the development of young people. In doing this we need to know a lot more about the latest thinking in that area, and we need greater investment in the cultural infrastructure, for where are the artists and other creative people going to come from?

I passionately believe that access and excellence are not paradoxical statements, and that is something we are going to have to argue very strongly.

Most important of all, we all need to gather the hard, credible evidence of the long-term efficacy and transformative power of arts, culture and creativity.

Wilf Stevenson

There is no doubt that, from the wonderful examples from Gateshead to the realism of what Martin was saying, there is something here that is worth supporting and taking forward. It reaches out and touches all our feelings about what we should be doing as a society. But the evidence base is lacking; some things cannot be measured; and time may not be on our side. Martin's rather chilling thought that there might be a turn in economic circumstances and a withdrawal in political support for some of this work suggests that even if we did want to do all of the research that everybody has been saying, we may not actually have the time for that.

That is the paradox, is it not? We want humble and modest improvements, and we want mainstreaming, but we do not have the evidence base to support that. So we need to find the arguments that will win through in the first round of debates so that the creativity, the Youth Justice Board work, and the work in health can be supported. Any thoughts or contributions will be very gratefully received.

Discussion

Professor Julian Le Grand, London School of Economics

I am slightly surprised by the contributions from many of the panel because I was expecting we were going to include a discussion about a different kind of policy – which is probably, in terms of public money, much more important – in encouraging participation in the arts by the socially excluded: a policy of subsidising arts performances and lowering prices.

It may be right that we have not talked about that, because the researcher that Tessa was generous enough to mention, who is working with me on social inclusion in the arts, has been looking at the effects of subsidising prices, and whether that does encourage people to participate in the arts. It is very early days yet, but the beginning evidence suggests that it does not, that actually it encourages those who are already going to go more often, but it does not encourage those who are not going at all. Does that suggest we should be diverting public money away from subsidising arts performances and arts providers towards arts education?

Rabbi Julia Neuberger, Chief Executive, King's Fund

I wanted to add in a further dimension to do with social exclusion: people with enduring mental illness. We do have small amounts of evidence from a project we ran for a couple of years, called Imagine London. In this project, young people, thinking about what a healthy city might be like, highlighted their mental health as their number one concern.

Recently, we have been running a programme called Enhancing the Healing Environment, which is in the process of being evaluated, and very much ties in with the Durham work and the work that has been done by the Nuffield Trust and the National Network for Arts & Health, so it ties in with a lot of what is being said. The early stages of the evaluation of what we have been doing in acute hospitals shows that behaviour has changed significantly, particularly among those who might normally be thought of as socially excluded.

The one anecdote I will give is that Hillingdon Hospital, since completely changing their accident and emergency department with community involvement, have had no violence at all. Having no punch-ups on Friday or Saturday night may not sound significant to many people in here, but for anybody who works in health it is very significant. The problem is how to pick that up and run with it for with younger people at risk with mental ill health, and particularly with older people in long-term mental health institutions, and that is where there is a real question for all of us who are interested in these issues.

Michael Wicherek, Director, Box Clever Theatre Company

For a long time, arts practitioners have greatly valued partnership and the importance of sustainability. Speaking from the point of view of a practitioner, for many years it has been a lowly position that we have held, but it has been changing, and that is the good news. Greater partnership is a light in the distance which could hold a very strong way forward for being able to sustain the impact of individual projects.

There are two concerns from practitioners. One is: how do we retain good practitioners in this area? In the nature of the business, practitioners are generally freelance and it often is the case that once a wonderful project has taken place, they then fly. How do we retain them? Secondly: in terms of bridging out between agencies, yes, one has to continue undertaking missionary activity as a vital and an equal component of work; but at the same time I am not sure whether the barriers between the departments are being eroded as quickly as one might think. Time and time again, I come across a whole plethora of agendas, and a stubbornness from different departments to actually move. It has to be not just a bottom-up but a top-down approach in order for something to work.

Roland Muldoon, Artistic Director, Hackney Empire

When people talk about cutting our funding because we are not putting bums on seats, I always hope to know when the funding will begin. In Hackney our funding is 16% of our turnover, and because we are a poor borough we do not expect to get the money that other people in richer boroughs do. Nevertheless, we are the rock pool that you are talking about. We have a lot of young offenders; we have a lot of health problems; we have a mixed culture;

we have everything that everyone would want to invest in; and yet, apart from the central government which supported the development of the area through the lottery, the funding bodies themselves in London are now dysfunctional. The Association of London Government cannot be understood; and the local council does not really play along with the game at all.

You hear all these good ideas, but we have not even taken a fundamental step yet to actually regularise funding to see whether it works or not. The practice at the Hackney Empire is to get audiences other people cannot reach. Our figures are brilliant in terms of outreach, but in terms of support the authorities have one foot in and one foot out because they are fearful of what might go wrong in a poorer borough. And that, to me, is what has not yet been solved.

Response: Rt Hon Baroness Blackstone

I would like to start with Julian's point. I did not talk about subsidising arts performances through lowering seat prices because I did not think that was absolutely central to this argument. Much of this argument is about a huge range of project-based work, whether with young people at risk of committing crime, whether doing far more in hospitals – we are only just beginning with those sorts of programmes – and how we build on the rather longer-standing work being done in education.

I partially accept what Julian's student is beginning to find, that what lowering prices may do is, for the most part, make it possible for people who are already interested to go to performances by performing arts companies. But if we were to cut that subsidy, it would mean that quite a lot of work would no longer continue because it is far too expensive to pay for just through seat pricing, as every country in the world has discovered. If we want to have no more classical ballet, no more opera, no more classical work done in the theatre, that is the first way to do it: abolish the subsidy.

Even in the US, where subsidy levels are rather small compared with here, a huge amount of money is brought in through private sponsorship, through rich donors, and through foundations. Nowhere in the world can do it without financial support coming from somewhere other than just seat prices. I would also want to add that quite a lot of what we are doing, when

we are subsidising prices, is allowing people who might not otherwise come to take part in extra programmes that are associated with the performance that has lower seat prices. The subsidy is doing a number of different things, including helping to support project work to go with the particular events that are being put on, and this is true of museums and galleries as well.

On Julia's point about mental health: again, this is a terribly important area, possibly more important than physical health from the point of view of the contribution the arts can make. Mental health is a much neglected area of health policy, and many people are now starting to say that. I would hope that we could do far more work investigating what the arts can contribute to supporting better mental health.

Picking up the point about the practitioners' point of view, I was really glad that Michael thought things are getting better. I do not quite agree with what Peter said; I do not think education officers are marginalised any longer. I think they were, 15 years ago, but in the vast majority of arts organisations, they are not. If they are, I want to know about it and I will be writing to the chairmen of their boards, because it is certainly not government or Arts Council policy to provide them with funds for education, and then to see the people who are charged with delivering it pushed aside and onto the margin. They should be incorporated into the mainstream of the work of arts organisations.

How we retain good people is through more sustainable funding, so that people are not just taken on for short-term projects, but are given continuous employment for some time. That does not mean to say that freelancers cannot contribute. I think they can.

On the Hackney Empire, the work it does in this very disadvantaged part of London is tremendously important, but I was completely amazed by the suggestion that funding bodies in London are dysfunctional. Hackney council may not be doing as good a job as it should do. It is so completely focused on trying to deliver its main services, which it has done incompetently for such a long time, that I am not terribly surprised that it is not at the forefront of local authorities in supporting the arts. But London Arts is doing a tremendous amount of work, right across London, helping social inclusion projects.

Peter Hewitt, Chief Executive, Arts Council England

A number of speakers have referred, quite rightly, to the unhelpful polarisation between the instrumental impact of art, and the impact of art on its own terms. I believe that the time has come for us to ditch these sorts of polarisations. What I am really interested in is what it is that is special about the arts, what it is in a social context that creates change. I wish someone would have a look at the interventions that take place between artists and people in the variety of social contexts that we have referred to today, and really investigate how impact is made. What are the characteristics, what are the factors, what are the behaviours, what are the aesthetics which really create impact?

I believe we need to capture a higher ground – and that this is the time for us to do so – which is about the arts and also about the impact of the arts in social contexts. I would urge the academics and those working within education to have a look at this very particular issue so we in the arts, and those of us concerned with the arts in a social context, can reach for, and acquire, a higher ground than that previously achieved.

John Wyn Owen CBE, Secretary, The Nuffield Trust

It is fantastic to see the way in which these themes of the arts, health and well-being have become topics of mainstream conversation. When Nuffield supported initial work on this in 1997, and then, following our conference in Windsor, when we published *The Windsor Declaration on the Arts, Health & Well-being*, I had more hate mail than I ever had as a public servant, and that takes some doing. This was because we tried not only to pursue the theme of the arts as therapies, or the arts in community development and health, but we also suggested the incorporation of the arts and humanities into the professional education of healthcare workers. That is an important part of the dimension, and I think the NHS University will provide a very important vehicle for both the incorporation of the research agenda and the development of people who are going to be working in healthcare.

Just to give some weight to the fact that it is not a movement that is without opposition: when we published the declaration, an editorial in *The Times* said, “Doctors, and we probably should include into this healthcare professionals, should resist the adulteration of their profession, and recognise that the best

medicine is laughter in the face of such proposals.” So, there is opposition out there.

Adrian Stokes, Director, Mercury Theatre

I would like to make an observation about the bridge between using the arts and coming back into education. The Mercury Theatre is about to start on the fourth year of working with a small group of young offenders, 15- to 17-year-olds, at medium to high risk of reoffending, which I am told is 68%. Of those that I have worked with over the last three years, that rate is down to 32%. Having inspired some of these youngsters, we managed to get some of them back into mainstream education.

The observation I would like to make is that others, even if they are suitable to get back into mainstream education, simply do not have the support mechanisms that enable them to stay there. What would interest me to know is how I can use the arts to make that bridge across, and provide that support out of the enthusiasm that is generated through the project.

Sue Hollick, Chair, London Arts

I want to start by saying that I absolutely refute the idea that London Arts is dysfunctional. Social inclusion is absolutely a key priority for the London regional council. It goes through all our work, it is throughout the Arts Council document, *Ambition for the Arts*, and it is absolutely one of our key priorities.

The one thing I would like to say, which is missing from this seminar, is any discussion at all about regeneration and neighbourhood renewal. It seems to me we have talked about health, education, youth justice, but we have not mentioned the enormous possibilities for linking the arts with major regeneration projects and with neighbourhood renewal. The reason why Tessa met that woman in Newcastle is because at the heart of all the regeneration that is going on in Newcastle and Gateshead are the arts. There is no project there that takes place without the arts being absolutely embedded in those projects, and I think we are missing a trick. We should be having the key regeneration agencies here, and the chiefs of neighbourhood renewal projects around the table. We should be talking to them as much as we are talking to education and health.

We talk about the lack of evidence, but I do not think we should decry the value of personal narrative. Individual stories can be very powerful. We recently did a publication at London Arts talking to refugees. The stories of refugees and asylum seekers, and the effect that the arts have had on them, has made for a really powerful publication, which people are constantly saying they were really moved by and given an understanding of the importance of the arts in refugee work. There are other ways of gathering evidence, and we should not be too snippy about them.

Response: Mike White

I was very interested in the agenda that Peter Hewitt was setting out, in terms of what is special in the social context and how artists make an impact. It is by engaging in that kind of research that we can also tackle some of the less rosy evidence around the social impact of the arts, particularly with reference to the notion that arts projects are very good at building bonding forms of social capital, where members of the target group develop a solidarity, but arts projects are less successful at creating bridging forms of social capital that connect and integrate into the wider society. We need to move forward on the examination of how successful we are in creating that social integration.

Response: Mary Robson

I would like to pick up on Sue's point about regeneration: I echo that completely. I only glanced upon it because of shortage of time in my speech; but at Happy Hearts we are really getting to grips with the links to regeneration both locally and further afield in Newcastle and Sunderland. I think there will be a strong network of those kinds of celebratory arts events embedded into local regeneration strategies as a result.

Response: Martin Stephenson

Picking up on Adrian's point about work at the Mercury, I believe one of the underlying problems is that we are all prisoners of our organisational cultures, and that feeds through into fundamental issues about accountability. I am interested in the point that Peter was raising about what is special about the arts; it might be that what leads to the impact is what is special about artists. One of the things that I am very keen on is, how do we get the mavericks, who often say it is the school system and the traditional people that cause all these problems, to take on our staid, protected, conservative,

exclusionary institutions and become part of them? I think it is a real tension. It might be something about the mavericks and the mainstream.

The second point – the heartbreaking one that is still with us – is: who takes accountability? We have had several goes around this, and hopefully Connexions will fulfil its original purpose of having the one, multi-disciplinary, accountable professional for young people with multiple problems who rebound between care and criminal justice systems.

There is another problem underlying it: none of us see it as part of our professional, cultural heritage in social care or criminal justice to be advocates of the arts. We often do not know it and do not understand it. There is a real issue about how we are going to cross these organisational cultures. Equally, how do artists know to start playing the game, challenging the ethical assumptions, and getting involved in youth justice and other systems? The accountability issue is a crucial one, as is the whole issue about underlying skills and knowledge from all our different backgrounds, which actually act against each other, rather than complementing.

Wilf Stevenson

John Wyn Owen mentioned the NHS University, which has been teaching their teachers how to teach better. Is that not the key to a lot of the problems, to get the sustainability to train people better to understand how the process is set running?

Response: Peter Jenkinson

Yes, a very large part of Creative Partnerships is about working with teachers on their continuing development, enabling them to have new experiences, new forms of knowledge and skills, because that is the only way it is going to become sustainable. To do that we are going to need permission from head teachers, and therefore from the local education authority, and therefore from government. Otherwise, it is very difficult for them to move. Equally, and excitingly, we have to look at the commitment and competencies of the cultural sector. You might imagine that only certain kinds of artists and creatives are going to be interested in working with schools, but, refreshingly and excitingly, we are finding people coming forward whom you would never expect.

What we need here is to create an equal relationship, so we no longer have a situation where glamorous artists, or whatever kind of person, walks into the classroom, while the teacher disappears off to the staff room for a cigarette, saying, “You get on with it.” What we need to see is people standing side by side and learning from each other, and it is amazing what happens, because both the teacher and the artist will say, “I have learned so much about the context that each is working in and about their practice.” So there can be massive amounts of knowledge sharing.

Response: Rt Hon Baroness Blackstone

I believe passionately that an arts minister has a responsibility to promote social inclusion, however difficult. We should take seriously the salutary reminder from the Nuffield Trust and their initiative back in 1997. What Martin was saying earlier, too, is, again, something that we should all take away with us. The key to success is getting professionals from different agencies to drop the barriers and think about how to work together. If we do not do that, people will just go back into their boxes and fail to deliver that huge potential.

One thing coming out of all this discussion is that much of this is about building people’s confidence. There are millions of people with enormous potential to be creative and to do far more with their lives than they currently get the opportunity to do. We will only succeed in that if we can give them a sense of their own worth, provide them with that self-confidence that will then motivate them to go on to better and better things. It is by taking a socially inclusive approach to the work of the arts right across the board that we can generate that sense of self-worth, that belief in themselves, that greater confidence. Once we do that, we will win.

Seminar 2

Achieving social inclusion: sport and active recreation

A seminar held on Tuesday 13 May 2003 at
11 Downing Street



Welcome

Wilf Stevenson

Director, Smith Institute

Thank you for coming this morning. This is the second in a series that we have been running on social inclusion. The first was on arts and social inclusion, and the one next month is on architecture. But to some extent this is a first, because Richard Caborn, the Minister for Sport, got us in almost a year ago and explained the theory that he was running, which was about the need to build a coalition of interests across Whitehall on the role that sport can play in social inclusion. So we are delighted that has happened.

We could not have done this without the support of a very large number of people, who are featured on the front of the brochure that has been published to accompany this seminar; in particular to Brigid Simmonds of Business in Sport & Leisure, who has been fantastic in organising that aspect of the work. It has been a three-way partnership, because we have also worked very closely with the department itself and with those experts who have also contributed to the booklet, and we thank them for their support.

We chose arts, sport and architecture because they share, to some extent, some characteristics. They are all areas within which anybody who is in that field intuitively has a contribution to make to social inclusion. They also have a difficulty in trying to prove the case convincingly, particularly to those who hold the purse strings. The evidence is also very illuminating, particularly at a low level, when you are talking about individuals, but it is patchy, and often does not add up to a very consistent picture – and, as I have just hinted, the actual responsibility for changing things often lies outside the main department.

Today, we would like to do two things. Firstly, to celebrate the fact that we have published a series of essays and contributions to the debate; and to use the arguments in the booklet to try and share what might be the best way of taking forward the case for sport, active recreation and its contribution to social inclusion.

Rt Hon Richard Caborn MP

Minister of State, Department for Culture, Media & Sport

Thank you very much for coming this morning. Can I just remind you that yesterday was the ninth anniversary of John Smith's death, and I know that, if John was looking down, he would be quite pleased that this seminar, in the institute that was founded for him, is on sport; because John was a tremendous athlete himself – a great walker, particularly in Scotland, with many of my colleagues from the House of Commons.

Can I also mention two people who are not here this morning: Hazel Blears is unfortunately having to wrestle with the new timetable for the House of Commons, so it is unfortunate, as Hazel would love to have been here. Her contribution did not arrive on time, but it is in the pack, and she just wanted me to underline that she is fully on board with what Kathy [Baroness Ashton of Upholland] and, indeed, other ministers are doing. Alex Ferguson last night got the award of the manager of the decade up in Nottingham, and Alex sends apologies but is very supportive, as you can see with his contribution in the book.

When I came into this job Tony Blair said to me that sport, and indeed physical activity, is an asset that is under-utilised in our nation. Indeed, there needs to be a radical look at our approach to it. We are now moving in many countries, not just the UK, into a post-industrial society, where physical activity is going out of our culture, the way that people live their lives. I give you one statistic on that – we were looking back at a young child in school 30 years ago and a young child in school today. The physical activity levels have gone down by 70%. So that just shows the change, and that is why diabetes in our young people is increasing at an alarming rate – why obesity, the National Audit Office is saying, costs some £2 billion a year, half a billion directly onto the NHS.

You have got a whole series of statistics which indicate that our society is less physically active, and what we have to do is build that back into the culture of the nation. If we do not, the consequences are considerable; of that there is no doubt. I think what we try to do in this book is show that in some of the pilots that have been run – whether it has been education, social inclusion or the

health issues – sport and physical activity, in many ways, can play a very positive and effective role in delivering government policy.

When I came into this job, I looked at one or two examples around the world. The reason I am very pleased this discussion is taking place in No 11 is because, where there has been a significant effect of sport on a country, on a society, on a community, it has been done to a large extent by political decisions. I give you two examples, possibly three: Finland, 20 years ago, had the worst coronary heart disease rate in the world. They took a political decision on diet and physical activity – now they are ranking one of the best in the world. It took 20 years to do that. If you look at excellence in sport, and you look to Australia and why it is as good as it is, it is because it built institutions by political decisions back in the 1970s. That was because New Zealand actually whacked the Aussies at a particular Olympics and therefore they built the Australian Institute for Sport.

As far as the UK is concerned, I believe we are at a crossroads now, as to whether we genuinely want to use physical activity and sport in a way that is going to start addressing some of the problems that we find in our society. If it is, then we have to have political decisions to do that. I think what is said very clearly in this book – and, indeed, what I have been saying – is that sport has got to change itself. The administration has got to change itself; we have got to deliver more effectively.

I think what we are seeing here, in this contribution today, is how we start pulling together that structure. Without it, decision-makers in No 11 and at No 10 will not take us seriously. I believe we have a commitment from the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer and we have a major role to play, many of us in this room, to make sure we have the confidence to invest in it in the future. Thank you very much.

Baroness Ashton of Upholland

Parliamentary Undersecretary of State, Department for Education & Skills

I always get the easy job of following Richard, which is impossible. Wilf, thank you very much. This is my first outing with this institute, so I am delighted to be asked to contribute, and I will be relatively brief. My responsibilities at the DfES include sport and active recreation. I am very clear about my own priorities in this area, and those of the department. We want all children to participate and enjoy sport and physical activity at school. I want to make sure that every young person finds a physical activity that they enjoy and they can do that will also give them a recreational activity that will keep them fit and healthy for the rest of their lives.

Within the framework of what we are trying to do, it is very clear that we want competitive sports in schools, to find some of our stars of the future, to nurture them and help them grow; but also to enable children to try different sporting and other activities, to find that activity that they will still be doing when they are 60 or 70 as much as they do when they are 15, and to make sure that we recognise the role that sport and physical education plays in the breadth of experience of school. Yes, it is important to learn to be physically active and to be a team player, not just in the sporting world but because it gives you an attribute for the rest of your life.

We also know from the evidence we have got that involving children and young people in sporting and physical activity does help with issues like behaviour and attendance, not least because it can re-engage children who are perhaps becoming disengaged from school life, not least because you can write about football, cricket or netball. And those children who have not perhaps been quite turned on by literacy in the way we want them to be can find another way, through sport and physical activity, into the broader curriculum. And, of course, it does help children achieve; there is lots of evidence about the role sport and physical education has on your ability to concentrate, to learn and to participate.

Big ambitions

So that is why, working very closely together with Richard and Hazel as a triumvirate, we are investing the money you know we are investing, £459 million

over the next three years, with an additional £686 million specifically to transform school sports facilities. Our objective, laid down very simply, is to improve the number of children to 75% by 2006 who spend a minimum of two hours a week in physical education and school sport, and that is within and beyond the curriculum. It is a very big ambition.

I was mindful, when Richard was talking about the ways in which children's levels of activities have declined, of what happened during the World Cup. When I was visiting schools, or at least talking to my own children, instead of enacting the winning moments in all the games by rushing out into the garden or playground to play football, they all did it on their computers. FIFA 2002 is a hugely popular game, as was FIFA 2000 – both of which I cannot pretend I have not played with. But the issue for me was how different our children's lives are from what they were, and for me, that was a very important moment of recognising the differences, in terms of how they try and emulate the great sporting achievements of the future.

So, our journey has three different elements to it that I want to describe very briefly. We want to build a network of specialist sports colleges, focusing very much on helping us to take forward the work. We want 400 of them by 2005; by September we will have 201, so we are just over halfway there. We want to make sure that we have a school sport partnership linked to these specialist sports colleges; again, designed to develop the way in which we embed all of this within the schools. We are on track; we have about 220, with 1,200 school sports co-ordinators, and 6,000 primary or special school link teachers.

We want, of course, to improve the quality of the coaching and teaching that happens within schools, to make sure that we are helping children be guided beyond the school into the clubs. Lots of people will be aware that there is a school sports and an out-of-school sports world; I am getting those two to join up. I think it is something we have still to achieve in any really significant way.

The last message I will leave you with is in terms of schools and sports. It is also about embedding this activity into the school. It is not an add-on extra; it is not something that children can opt in or out of, and it is not something which we should approach with anything other than the fervour with which

we approach all the other key, core activities within the school. That means being more creative about how we teach children and how we help them participate. Some of you know I will start banging on about girls wearing short skirts in the teenage years, and the genuine impact that has of putting kids off playing games when they are in their most vulnerable years – the showers, and all that stuff. But actually, this is about making sure we get very clever about embedding it in schools, taking it beyond schools, and developing a rounded approach which needs the political will that Richard has described.

Panel discussion

Chaired by Hazel Irvine, BBC Sport

Panel

Sue Campbell MBE, Chief Executive, Youth Sport Trust

Fred Coalter, Director, Institute for Sports Research, University Of Stirling

Andy Ramwell, Head of Sport & Exercise Centre, Manchester Metropolitan University

Brigid Simmonds, Chief Executive, Business in Sport & Leisure

Nigel Wallace, Executive Director, Fitness Industry Association

Vanessa Wiseman, Head Teacher, Langdon School

Hazel Irvine

Ministers, ladies and gentlemen, may I add my welcome to 11 Downing Street. I never thought I would be presenting a breakfast programme, but here I am. Early starts are something I have had to get used to in the last few days, having just completed the Moonwalk marathon, Saturday night into Sunday morning – a rather painful insight into our topics this morning.

When I am not skulking around in the middle of the night doing marathons, I am a broadcaster with BBC Sport and BBC News, and have been for some 15 years now – yes, I am that old. Recently, I have had some insight into some of our topics as Chairman of the West of Scotland Institute of Sport, with the labyrinth workings of sports funding and the practical business of trying to create champions. It is something I have had a real insight into – it is not easy. So, I come at this subject from a number of angles today.

I would like to introduce our esteemed panel this morning. Vanessa Wiseman is Head Teacher of Langdon secondary school in Newham, a lady who, in her report, said that her greatest sporting moment was coming second in an egg and spoon race, but she is a proven winner in the field of education, because her school became a sports college in 1998, and it gained status as a beacon school three years later.

Nigel Wallace is Executive Director of the Fitness Industry Association: it is a non-profit trade association which represents the health and fitness sector, with over 1,500 members. Nigel's association works closely with government to promote the benefits of a more active lifestyle through various initiatives.

Brigid Simmonds is Chief Executive of Business in Sport & Leisure, an umbrella organisation for the sport and leisure industry, which represents the interests of over 100 private-sector companies, and she is also one of the editors of today's report.

Andy Ramwell is a man I know has quite a few issues to get off his chest, having chatted to him already. He is Head of the Sport & Exercise Science Centre at Manchester Metropolitan University. His PhD work is specifically targeted at the effects of use of physical activity in primary healthcare. I know he has got a lot to say about possible partnerships between sport and health, and I am sure we will get around to discussing those.

Sue Campbell is Chief Executive of the Youth Sport Trust. In a previous life, she was Chief Executive of the National Coaching Foundation. At present she is on secondment as a non-political adviser for sport for the Department for Education & Skills and the Department for Culture, Media & Sport. She is also co-author of today's report and, most importantly, she is better known to me as a co-commentator in my commentary box on netball. She is, in fact, a bit of a heroine of mine.

Finally, a man from my part of the world: he is Professor of Sports Policy and Director of the Institute for Sports Research at the University of Stirling, Fred Coalter.

Mass participation and social inclusion

You have been very kind to submit some questions. We have had a look at them, and I would like to start off with one which Roger Draper, the Chief Executive of Sport England, has submitted. Incidentally, Roger also submitted the answer, or some points for the answer, but I think we will get some views on that first of all. Roger asked, are mass participation and social inclusion complementary or competing objectives for sport?

Response: Sue Campbell MBE

I think it is a very big question. At first sight, when you look at that question, you say – why does anybody need to ask it? Is mass participation and social inclusion a competing agenda? One's immediate answer should be, of course: no, it is not.

I think the root of the question is, if we are going drive up mass participation we are going to have to have a number of very distinct strategies, because there are those people who can afford to take part in physical activity for whom the private sector, and private and public working together, can play a major part. We only have to look at the number of people that now go to private health clubs to get their physical activity. What we have to do there is encourage, support and motivate people to access those opportunities, and see that those opportunities are readily available.

But there is a huge sea of other people who cannot afford access to those opportunities. If we are going to drive up mass participation with those people, we need a very different strategy, and that is where I think government money and government intervention, across all the government departments, is so key.

This is not just a matter for sport and physical activity: it is a matter for education, it is something that can affect law and order, and can certainly impact on the health agenda. It is an issue that we really need to address in a cross-government way. It is not as simple as one department taking responsibility for this, and that is what this seminar is really about. It is saying: how can we work better together to reach those people, provide those who cannot afford it with the same access, the same opportunity and the same quality of experience as those that can pay?

So my answer to the question is exactly what Roger's was, actually, which is: we need very distinctly different strategies. One is to work very well with the private sector to expand the range of opportunities for those that can pay, and the other is to work very hard across government, beginning with schools and education, to make sure that all young people are not barred from participation because of our preconceived ideas of what you have to do to be a participant.

Response: Nigel Wallace

First of all, it should just be added that as many people participate in local authority gyms as they do in private gyms, so I think access in the UK is very strong, and it is right the way through the social structure, and many local authorities have open access to underprivileged people – people who are

unemployed, OAPs and so on. I think the structures are right; I think it needs two different policies in terms of looking at social inclusion and mass participation. The private sector also needs to support, in order to offer a fulfilling experience to the groups they serve, as do the local authorities for the groups they serve.

Response: Fred Coalter

I am an academic, therefore I am, clearly, the sceptic in this audience – and, given my accent, I suppose you also know why I am a sceptic.

I think it is more complicated than this. The government's social inclusion agenda is not just simply about getting people to take part in sport, but to do so for a reason, and that is to do with addressing issues of ill health and law and order, as Sue said. I think there is a target area for the social inclusion agenda, which requires radically different ways of working. It will be local, labour-intensive, and it will be providing sport with particular ways to achieve particular outcomes. Mere participation in sport does not necessarily deliver the very precise social inclusion agendas as set out by the government.

In a way, it seems to me that there might be two quite substantially different agendas here, in that sport deals with mass participation – a term I do not really understand, but that is about addressing those who are maybe constrained in participation in sport. I think one of the things we should recognise is that when you look at sports participants, they tend to be participants at a very, very wide range of things. In other words, most people already participating in sport are already socially included. They have got the social capital and the competencies, so they take part in a range of other things.

That would lead me to think that the obstacles to participation in sport might be quite deep-rooted. There might be other cultural aspects: it is not simply about money; it is not simply about access; it is about a whole range of other competencies. I think that we have to recognise, when we talk about the social inclusion agenda, how deep-rooted some of those issues are.

Someone said to me last week that the social inclusion agenda really needs social workers with a ball under their arm. In other words, it might be two

different types of workers, and two different types of strands involved in this. My final point is: the ladder needs a lot of investment; it needs people.

Response: Brigid Simmonds

It needs an enormous amount of investment. I also sit on Sport England as a council member. There is an enormous amount of work at local level that can be done, and a lot of the schemes we are doing – the Positive Futures scheme that is being done by the Youth Justice Board, which is very much looking at the social inclusion agenda.

I think we must also have that balance the other way around. We have talked a bit about the role of the private sector here, but there are some very good private-sector schemes, like pay and play, which can be used by anyone of any means. Cannons are here today; there is a very good scheme in Hull, it is called the pay and play tennis centre, next door to a membership health club, and we need to do more of those sort of partnerships to encourage everyone to be using it at one end, and those who are able to afford to pay, to pay.

I also think the key issue, which Sue mentioned, is to do with quality. People are not interested in taking part in an activity in downtrodden facilities; they want the sort of quality that everyone can have, and they want to aspire to that, so let us try and make these partnerships work a bit better.

Barry Gardiner MP

Government tends to work around departmental annual targets, and therefore I wondered whether we could just find out, particularly from the health department, what of its annual targets are actually orientated towards delivering this strategy which has been agreed between the three departments?

Imogen Sharp, Head of Heart Disease and Cancer Prevention, Department of Health

We have several targets which this relates to. One is specifically on heart disease reduction, one is on cancer reduction, and one is on health and inequalities reduction. We are also, from the Strategy Unit and DCMS report *Game Plan*, setting up the sport and physical activity board, which has a specific target of 70% of the population active by 2020, which addresses health as well as sport and physical activity. I hope that answers that question.

Response: Vanessa Wiseman

I just want to say a couple of things. First of all – if I can be slightly controversial – if you want investment in sport, then really you should only get it if there is an element, all the time, of social inclusion. I think that has to always be a part of it. Obviously, there is the whole issue of people who are gifted and talented, and already socially included, but for a lot of young people, sport is a route to being more involved in society. I think that really has to be a part of all the schemes.

What has been absolutely great has been the money that is going into facilities. We are just about completing the sports hall, which has been fast-tracked through the New Opportunities Fund, which will be great for our young people. Organisations like the Lawn Tennis Association are also working with our young people, to give them a chance to get involved in sports that they would not normally. I guess what I am saying is: it has to be a part. There is lots of success there that you can look at and see how it is impacting, but the social inclusion part has to be at the heart of what we are doing at the moment.

Government targets

Hazel Irvine

I think that came out very strongly in your report, particularly in extracurricular activities, and not just for pupils, but for involving adults in after-school activities. I think that is possibly relating to our next question, which comes from Professor Les Burwitz, who is head of the department at Manchester Metropolitan University. He too talks about targets. The *Game Plan* report refers to 70% of the population engaged in regular, moderate physical activity by 2020. Is this realistic and achievable, given the socio-economic factors that underpin the report? Vanessa, perhaps you have some more points to make on that, particularly including adults into this scheme.

Response: Vanessa Wiseman

I think, again, it is opening pathways to people who would not necessarily be automatically seen as leading sports activities. In the report, I mentioned one of the staff at my school who came in as a parent, from an Afro-Caribbean background, was not qualified in anything, was a very underconfident sort of person – but that is precisely the sort of character and interest of somebody

you could get involved. From that, she has done remarkable things – become, through some of the other funding we have had through Excellence in Cities, a mentor at the school, a sports coach, and is getting young people now into the county and national scene in netball.

In a way, it is by getting people like that on board, and the people that they enthuse, that you bring in all of these other people. I think that is the only way you can do it. I think what is happening now is that there is this major change and emphasis on getting people involved who actually carry enormous weight in the community. The person I spoke of earlier had a superb sports day with parents at the weekend, an Afro-Caribbean festival, which people came along to. It brought in people from the community involved in aerobics and all sorts of different linked activities, and now they are part of what is going on in that area. So I think it has been imaginative, and also reached out to some of those communities we have not involved before.

Hazel Irvine

Which is all very well, but it is 70% of the population – is that a realistic target, Brigid?

Response: Brigid Simmonds

No. The straightforward answer is no, because it would require you to convert 100,000 people a month to reach that target, which I do not think is achievable. If you consider all the amount of money that we have been investing in sport over the last 10 years, we actually have not changed the amount of people who take part in physical activity five times a week at all. It is stuck at 30%.

So we have got to be more imaginative in the ways that we are doing things, and this is what many of these essays are about. We have got to get out there and convince people that they do want to take part in sport, and if it is about providing bicycle shorts for girls to wear under their gym slips so they want to continue – particularly with girls looking at how they want to work in gyms and things like that, like aerobics, which has been a hugely exciting thing.

We actually have a lot of these things out there; what we are not good at is co-ordinating them. We are not good at making sure, particularly across local

authority boundaries, that people know where these activities take place, that we really do open up schools after school so that they are used by the community – that is what we have got to get better at.

Hazel Irvine

Do you have anything to add to this?

Response: Andy Ramwell

I think Game Plan has actually set us a realistic target and – if I look at the people who have been involved in writing the report – if we do not aim high, given the health consequences and the longer-term problems of not achieving that, then where are we going to be? Government has introduced legislation, such as pool funding, which now enables local authorities, health authorities, and other organisations, to really get to grips with things. Unfortunately, that message does not seem to have filtered down to all the organisations.

I think there are long-term problems, from a health and social care perspective, and they are not going to be solved in the next five to 10 years. I think, whoever gets in, what we need is a cross-party statement to say these issues run deep within the country. We need, I think, to start from a realistic point of view, and that would be getting some sort of statement from a cross-party perspective to say there are issues, of social inclusion, of health, etc. Finland did it, but it was diet and physical activity, and it was a range of policy initiatives. People like to look at that from a physical activity perspective and say physical activity drove it forward, when it did not; it was part of the solution.

I think this is where we have got to be serious about what sport can actually achieve, because sport is not a panacea; it is not a 21st-century snake oil. It can do many things, but it cannot do them in isolation. There are problems if we do not make the links back. Sport can be a hook, but where are the exit strategies? Where do we then use sport to send people on to? So if we use sport for social inclusion into education, what do we then do with those children? Do we push them into sports routes? All too often, that is the route we are heading in, when actually we should use this as a vehicle to move them on into other things. Then, I think, sport becomes this vehicle for social

inclusion and social integration.

Hazel Irvine

This is a fascinating point, the Finnish example, because, clearly, the minister was telling us that in 20 years they have massively reduced their coronary heart disease through a range of initiatives. Andy, do you know specifically what physical activity measures they put in place in those political decisions?

Response: Andy Ramwell

There was a range of them. They set up a number of institutes, and academics got involved in the process. Research that was produced by academia was actually geared towards reaching government targets, and moving agendas forward. I think that is where we have lacked sometimes; we have produced a lot of “evidence” about sport. We have commissioned wave after wave of strategic consultants to produce other documents for us, but I think we are left with a legacy that we still do not know what we want.

I think that what we have not got is a joined-up policy framework. It is easier to talk about it, but we do not have simple markers in place which enable us to track things. We have some of the facilities and resources in place, but, again, if we are to produce the 70% target, who is going to do it? Is it teachers, educators, sports scientists, community development workers? There is a range of professionals, and I do not think that from *Game Plan*, the discussions are really focusing on how we tackle this. I am hearing too many people now taint *Game Plan*, and everybody is jumping on the 70% target. There is a lot of good stuff in *Game Plan*; can we have a focus on something we can actually start to achieve? If we all did that on a day-to-day basis, lo and behold, by 2020, I think we might achieve 70%.

Hazel Irvine

You said something in your report which interested me greatly: you said that health is central to any government, and it is viewed as a basic right by the population; not so, sport. Do you believe that – is that something that is achievable?

Response: Andy Ramwell

I like to look for consumer-led examples and I think of the Pokemon

phenomenon – in two years, it went to something like a \$6 billion industry. In two years, it just went through educational systems. Kids could not name 50 countries, but they could name 150 Pokemon. It is about getting those levels, so that the individual accepts that they have a responsibility for individual health, and I think if you look at the growth industry in the pharmaceutical industry, there are many what are termed “lifestyle” drugs now. They top the charts all the time – statins, gastric reflux drugs; we have seen obesity drugs being licensed; smoking cessation has come on. Similarly, if you look now at the amount of manufacturers that are producing smoking cessation drugs, I think this is creating interesting issues for us, and I think that until we tackle some of those basic understandings, then we are not going to position sports effectively.

Hazel Irvine

I think we will come back to the health issue shortly. There is a point at the front?

Graham Ratcliffe MBE, Mountaineer

My point is on the 70%. I think it is a very honourable thing to have a target to aim for, but the problem you have got is to maintain a sport, maintain an activity. We have all taken part in sports and it drifts and goes away. Your biggest problem is going to be keeping people involved in sport in the long-term period.

Response: Fred Coalter

A simple example. A lifetime activity is cycling. Data produced last year shows there has been a 9% decrease in the number of children cycling, and the reason for that is parental concern about safety. I think that when we talk about physical activity, this has to be a cross-cutting agenda. I do not think that sport, however we define it, can do it on its own; there is a set of environmental issues here.

The issue really is doing things which lead to lifelong participation or delayed exit, whichever way you want to look at it. It is quite clear that many young people do not get that experience. A survey recently showed that within the physical education curriculum there is an overemphasis on team games and not enough on partner sports and single activities, a lifelong activity. If you

are talking about a package of activity, it seems to me an astonishing statistic – a decline of 9% in children cycling over a 10-year period indicates a much wider environmental set of issues that have to be dealt with.

Response: Vanessa Wiseman

I know that in the audience is Maggy Wyatt, Head of the Recreation Department at the University of East London. She is doing a lot of work with the over-50s, and reboosting people. I think one of the other things is actually coming back in, and not just assuming you do sport in school and that is going to sustain you; but like anything else, you come back. People drop out, but they can drop back in. I hope Maggy will speak at some point, because she is doing some really interesting work that is about lifelong involvement.

Professor Ken Fox, Head of Department, Bristol University

I was Science Editor for the Chief Medical Officer's report, which is forthcoming on physical activity and health outcomes. I would just like to strengthen the points that Fred and Andrew have made about the targets, and whether they are achievable or not. I think it is fantastic that we have got targets there, and I think that will be a driver in itself. Seventy percent is an extremely challenging target, and anything I say is not against sport. I think sport has been very exclusive in the past, and it is wonderful to hear the words about how we can make it more inclusive and accessible to a much wider range of the population.

Seventy percent is something like 30-35 million people, and we cannot cope with that in Nigel's gyms or leisure centres; it is just ridiculously impossible to even consider that. We are not in trouble because we have stopped playing sport – in fact, we are increasing in our participation in sport in some sectors – it is because technology has removed activity and energy expenditure from our daily routines, and we cannot forget that.

So Fred's point is absolutely cogent here: it is the environment that has created the problem. Sport can link with transport and health in a very important way to drive forward critical change in the environment to make it safer, more accessible for walking, play and cycling, and that is where a huge percentage of the solution has to be if we are going to reach the 70% target.

Response: Sue Campbell

At the departments for health, education, and culture, media and sport, we spent some time actually trying to understand the way we use these words “physical activity” and “sport and physical education”, because we often move them around as if they are all the same word – and of course they are, quite clearly, not. I think the physical activity agenda, which is what Ken is referring to, is a much wider agenda than the sport and physical education agenda, and it is quite wrong to look to sport to deliver that physical activity agenda alone.

Sport can contribute to that physical activity agenda, and just to put that in a context, the PSA target that the two departments, DfES and DCMS, have agreed to is for two hours of high-quality physical education and sport for young people. That sits underneath the wider objective for the Department of Health, which is to ensure young people are doing much more physical activity on a daily basis than that.

We sometime confuse ourselves by using sport and physical activity as if they are absolutely interchangeable. They are very different, and they are all complementary. If we are going to drive the physical activity agenda, and achieve the ambitious target, then it must be a cross-government agenda. It will only be accomplished if all government departments recognise its value.

Indeed, in Scotland, there is some great work going on with the Scottish devolved administration, where there is someone working across the government departments now, driving a physical activity agenda of which sport and physical education deliver a part, of which transport and health deliver their part.

Then we have got a physical activity strategy, and we must not confuse the difference between that and talking about sport. Sport is one deliverable within that strategy.

Hazel Irvine

A need for joined-up thinking, partnerships, cross-cutting policies.

Derek Wyatt MP, Culture Select Committee Member

Can I just ask a question? First of all, as a parent (I have two children) – I am

hesitant about suggesting it, but it does not stop me suggesting it – I do not get anything on their end-of-term reports about their health and sport index; I get nothing at all. I am nervous about suggesting SATs when it is SAT week, but is there some way in which we could develop a national something so I could know if my children are either overweight or underfed or are not physically fit or whatever? That could go on the school report so that when you sign it off – as we do have to now; we also have to agree to homework if they do not do well in maths and English and so on – well, why not that for physical and health?

The second thing is, I was in Washington last year, and in Washington the schools open until two in the morning, and the floodlit basketball is so sensational, it is taking kids off drugs like there is no tomorrow. Will somebody tell me if there is a system in the UK anywhere where there is a managing director of a school site, and there is a director of education from eight till four, and then there is a director of education from four till two in the morning? Is anyone doing that? Because I would like to promote it.

Response: Vanessa Wiseman

I am just trying to think of the merits of trying to tell parents their son looks like Mr Blobby or something, I don't know. It is hard, isn't it? Some of it is very judgmental. How we would do it is try and talk about their participation and achievements in sport. They would have a comment around their actual curriculum time and what they had achieved, and it would be very much, I think, around what they had achieved, rather than saying they need to do masses more or they were not doing enough. I think it would be trying to encourage them.

Alongside that, we have got lots of certification, and also, for example, our young people tomorrow night will have all of the Year 11 graduating from the school. Part of the record of achievement they get will be about their sports participation, so I think there is a lot there. I would hesitate to say SATs in sports, because I am not sure that would be the great encourager for young people at the moment. I think it is trying to put things positively, talking about what they have done.

The other thing you said, about linking up, about use of sites: we do an awful

lot of work outside school – as indeed do all the sports colleges across the country – and there is a great deal of participation and interlinking between the community side and the curriculum side. I mentioned, in the work that I had done towards the document, young people who are disaffected. We have used some of the coaches and we do anger management and self-esteem raising.

So, there is a lot going on. I think you should be optimistic, because with the number of sports colleges people are talking about, with the school sports co-ordinator work that is going on, it is reaching across more and more schools, and reaching across that transition from primary to secondary. I think you will probably be pleasantly surprised in the next year-and-a-half how some of those things will change, and that you will get more information on your youngsters.

Role models

Hazel Irvine

We are going to come back to some of these issues a little later on, but I do appreciate that the 70% target is something we could keep talking about. The ways of trying to inspire people to get into sport perhaps are covered in another question, from Allison Curbishley. It is on the Sporting Champions scheme, and I guess it relates to trying to create role models and use those role models in schools.

Does the panel share Allison's view that there are huge benefits in using today's sporting professionals in schools cross-curriculum, not only with our gifted and talented pupils, but also assisting in the education of disaffected kids in schools? And if so, whose responsibility should it be to co-ordinate them? Perhaps I should ask Nigel Wallace, from the private sector, if he has any thoughts on that situation.

Response: Nigel Wallace

Yes, it is interesting that I keep being referred to as “from the private sector”. The Fitness Industry Association represents both sides, if I can call them that; I see them all as one. We represent as many local authorities, almost, as we do private, and we represent trusts, charities and the like, so we are here on behalf of the whole of the health and fitness industry.

One of the issues we are engaged with at the moment is a scheme called On the Move to 2010. Twenty million Britons are overweight – let us make it 10 million, is our hopefully achievable but still aspirational target. The first aim of this scheme is to link our facilities, FIA members', with schools.

So our first initiative, which will be announced this autumn, is all about “adopt a school”. It is to link – again, I know I am flipping back into a previous question – the facilities and activities, and expertise, that are available in the private and local-authority health club industry with schools, in order to try and educate and provide assistance, particularly in junior schools, where often the educational element and also the physical education expertise is unavailable; to link the expertise we have in our sector back with that sector, in order to try and drive up confidence. I think it is not just about access, it is about confidence, and having the core skills that are outlined within key skills of co-ordination, balance and so on.

I am not sure I have even touched on that question, but I thought I would make that point. I think that, for our industry, we are looking at a health agenda in broad terms, because most of our industry caters for the physically less active, very often, but it also does cater for the high achievers. Obviously, we have tremendous facilities now and tremendous expertise that can actually link to aspiring sporting champions.

Hazel Irvine

Brigid Simmonds – in your other incarnation, Vice-Chair of Sport England, of course.

Response: Brigid Simmonds

There are two things I would say to make this link. One is – and I would be wrong not to say this in 11 Downing Street – Nigel and I are working together on some sort of fiscal incentives that would encourage more private-sector companies to be involved in providing coaches, into going into schools. You have got a huge amount of expertise in private-sector health and fitness clubs, why do we not use – rather like we have the research-and-development tax incentive of 150% – why do you not use that for the private sector, to encourage them to go out and do more in schools and use that expertise?

Coming back to the question Allison has made about Sporting Champions: I have been involved in this from the beginning; it was a Sport England initiative, it has been worked up, and I think this is a scheme that has a win for everybody, because you can send in sporting champions. Allison, they do not all have to be well known like you are; they can actually be aspiring. It is good for their personal development to go out into their local school; the kids have somebody who they can support. I have been on a number of these visits, where they really have inspired people to participate more in the research feedback we are getting.

Sitting here at a cross-departmental discussion, what everyone has to do is buy into this. At the moment, there is only a finite pot that will support Sporting Champions, which is probably why it has not been moved further; but I think it is a fantastic scheme that has worked very well, and I think it could be developed further, and we should try and do that.

Hazel Irvine

Allison, do you have any views on who should co-ordinate it?

Allison Curbishley, Olympic Athlete

I think it is a great scheme, and I have been involved, right from back in 1996, but I just think that we do not have enough. We go in, we make an impact, and very often it is just an awards ceremony. We wear our tracksuits, the kids love you for an hour, but then there is no return. I think that there are 370-odd sporting professionals on this scheme at the moment. A lot of the schools are not aware of the scheme that I go into, or they contact me in the local area, they say, would you mind coming in voluntarily? As a sporting professional, we get asked to do that an awful lot – and, obviously, our time is precious to us.

I get an awful lot out of it, like you said, and I try to sell that to my sporting peers, but I really do believe that we can be used as mentors. We have not got teaching degrees, but we can go in and assist that, and I think it needs to be structured a lot more. We need to go in there and be able to deliver motivational work with the disaffected children, work with the anger management, because I get a lot from that, and I believe that I give a lot. I just think that going for an hour – the school has got to give you eight weeks'

notice to actually get a sportsperson – I just think the scheme needs to be really tailored to achieving a lot more. I do not think that Sport England make enough of it.

Response: Fred Coalter

Thank you for that, because I was going to express scepticism about it, and you have expressed it on my behalf, which makes me seem less aggressive. I want to build on that, and give you an example from Northern Ireland. An all-round scheme called City Sport introduced mini-Gaelic and mini-soccer into primary schools in order to compensate for the lack of physical education in schools, but these programmes were actually delivered by ex-professional footballers that these kids knew, and by high-profile Gaelic players they knew.

They were excited to meet these people, but they were also taught by them, and it was that moment of exchange that they knew these people were good, and were also giving them something, and the scheme was inordinately, exceptionally successful, and thankfully – we have not mentioned gender yet – it was most successful particularly for the young women, because they were willing to take the skill development coaching from people they already respected and knew themselves had done it. So I agree with you entirely; these schemes can work, but they have to be embedded.

Response: Sue Campbell

I have witnessed Allison in action, and she is really a very powerful communicator and did a fantastic job with a group of young people for me. But I absolutely support what she is saying: we do not use our leading sportspeople effectively enough at all. In many countries, for example, sportspeople coming out of the top of their career are fast-tracked into coaching, into sports administration, into officiating – we just say, “Thanks a lot, goodbye.” We have not used those people effectively, and the Sporting Champions scheme, or the use of sports personalities in the way that Allison is describing, is really important.

I just add one caveat to Fred’s and Allison’s comments, and that is: we cannot make assumptions that because people are good at sport that they are naturally good teachers or coaches, or, indeed, have the wonderful

communication skills that Allison has. If we are going to work with sports personalities in this way, we have to ensure we give them the training, the support and the back-up so they can do this job effectively, and that they complement what is going on, and do not just, as Allison said, feel like a Chinese meal – great at the time and an hour later you are hungry.

Because that is, essentially, what has happened in a lot of these schemes; they raise expectations which are not then met. So the use of these people must be within the context of an ongoing provision and scheme, and they themselves need the skills and expertise to do the work. I am fully supportive of what Allison was saying, and I think it is something we have grossly underused.

Response: Fred Coalter

Can I make one comment here? The City Sports scheme was constructed around the concept of child-friendly coaching, and there was a concern that some of these people, of course, would not understand the developmental needs of young primary kids, and they went through a training programme and were sustained through that training programme. So I agree with Sue entirely that there are examples – and City Sports is one – where it can work.

Nick Russell, PMP Consultancy

We run the Sporting Champions programmes on behalf of Sport England, and indeed Sport Scotland now, who have engaged with it. The simple issue is, you can do so much with the programme if you wish to put the money behind it. It really is that simple. You can use training programmes; you can take the athletes at all different levels, not just Allison's level. There are regional champions who, with respect, are actually just as good as our international athletes, because the kids aspire – they recognise local champions, and they work just as well with those.

The issue is very simple, and it has got a pound sign in front of it, and you can then encourage people. It will require all of the departments to deliver that, so if we all think something like Sporting Champions works, if we can use mentors in that way, what we have to do is use it as a springboard to then properly train and advance, and you can then keep a dialogue going between the schools and the athletes. There is already a programme whereby we liaise with the schools, let people know when, say, Allison's next competing in a

Grand Prix event, for example, so the schools she has visited can be engaged and keep a level of contact, but you have got to follow that through.

The next level of that is: we are in discussions with a number of the fitness operators from the public end of the sector at the moment about getting access to their facilities as part of a visit, so there is a very direct link. I know there is a lot of cynicism about what can follow through, but we have got to make sure we can make that connection; we need to put the money behind it. At the moment, in simple terms, it sits on Sport England to fund that. We are saying it sits with a health and an education agenda, and educational delivery. Why is it that it is just going to be Roger and his folk that are just there to deliver that?

There is one linked point, and that is, across all of this, we are all from different departments and deal with sport, education and health. The biggest single concern perhaps we would have, I would suggest, is the extent to which we are able to do cross-cutting delivery. If we are all honest about it – there are a number of civil servants here – you will know how good you are at cross-cutting. Don't answer it here because you will probably lose your job; but the reality is, if you want to get something delivered, you have to have a single focus, and it does not work unless you do that – and I am not sure we have got that at the moment.

Sport and food

Hazel Irvine

Nick, thank you very much; yet again, affirming the cross-cutting policy situation and the importance of co-operation between all departments. I am going to move this on now, because this is another subject which I think will eat across, literally, a number of departments. Paul Lincoln, Chief Executive of the National Heart Forum, asks: Are we confusing young children by linking sport and active recreation with the promotion of foods high in sugar, fat and salt, and if so, what should be done? This is going to start some fireworks, I would suggest. Would you like to start?

Response: Sue Campbell

We should not make a joke of it; it is a very serious and very important question. I think Andy said earlier that any attempt to tackle the issues around

obesity have got to be a combination of diet and physical activity. So I do not want in any way to belittle the question. Clearly, when a company – and I will use Cadbury's as the example for the obvious reasons that you have probably read a great deal about it, and as the Chief Executive of the Youth Sport Trust I know quite a bit about it!

The reality is that when a company like that comes along, of course you talk to them at great length about whether their intention to get engaged in any kind of campaign is set against an ethical framework. Having talked to them for 18 months, you might have made a different call to me. I spent a great deal of time working with them; I believe they have great integrity in what they are trying to do. I realise that you would say I am naive, and that they have a cynical approach to what they are doing, but I do not actually believe that to be true. They have a brand which can communicate with the population in a way that none of us in this room can ever aspire to do.

There are times when you have to ask the question: how well do we use these brands and these people to help us deliver our message? I am not going to try and persuade you the decision we took was right, and I am sure many of you think it was wrong, but I am still strongly convinced that over time they will drive the activity message very, very strongly into the community, and are committed to do so for a number of years. Do you see these people as the enemy, or do you work with them to make them part of the solution? We took a very clear decision that we would work with them to try to make them part of the solution.

I understand, and have had long discussions with people in schools about, the possible confusion between Cadbury's as a product and the message that they are trying to drive. I do not think the answer is to simply vilify these people, or to belittle the dietary efforts and the work the Department of Health has done around Five-a-day; it is very important work. But equally, this is a major, successful company in this country that wants to make a contribution.

Yes, you can see them with cynicism; I do not see them that way. I have spent a year talking to the President of Cadbury's, and I think they can make a contribution. I am afraid I stay firmly committed to the relationship, firmly committed to the belief that it will ultimately make a bigger difference, and

that the brand will reach people you and I cannot reach. When they start doing their adverts around *Coronation Street* about getting active, that message will reach those people that we cannot even get anywhere near. If they can drive some of that message with us then I think they become part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

Hazel Irvine

That is one perspective. Andy, you have another.

Response: Andy Ramwell

I just think there is a much wider agenda here about an investment for health, a generational investment for health, and it is about what we as individuals within society – again, it comes back to there being a government role, a society role, an individual role – about what we are actually prepared to accept. Hearing what sport can achieve, it is quite interesting.

Cadbury's got singled out, but I actually went and did background research looking at this, because I was thinking that something like this would come up. But Lucozade is held in high esteem, and yet that is just pure sugar, and it is the same as Cadbury's, effectively. We have got big problems with alcopops, and yet we have not got that wave of people coming out and vilifying the alcohol industry. I think, again, it points to the fact that – I am not saying that I agree or disagree with the Cadbury's thing here – there is a much wider agenda that we have got to tackle, because if we are saying that we want to work in partnership with private corporations, I think we have to have a real, clear understanding.

What has happened in the past is those working in public health and sport have been a little naive about the power of these companies. Certainly, if we were looking at sport and the Sporting Champions as role models, why do Pepsi buy David Beckham? Because he will sell lots of Pepsi, let us make no bones about it. Other companies are using the sports stars more effectively than we are; what is going on? Why cannot we take a lead from some of those organisations and agencies and actually start to work with them?

I think it is the same with the pharmacy industry; if we look at the interventions that the pharmaceutical industry has poured billions into, we

can actually produce better results, in certain cases, through the use of sport, physical activity and exercise; and yet, we are not selling that concept, it is not bought into, and it is not bought into by the private healthcare insurers either.

Why are we not having the serious debates to get to the nub of some of the problems? It is distracting when things like this pop up, and the tabloid headlines get a hold of it, and the message goes out; and that does do us damage if we want to tackle mass participation, because people just see a headline, and they do not choose to dig any deeper beneath it. I think we, as organisations, as people who are wanting to move this agenda forward, really have to have some serious debate about how we structure, research and gather evidence towards it, how we start to collate data on obesity, how we make the link back to dental health, so that if any of the organisations we work for get an approach to get into something which is a mass market campaign, we can actually have a potentially wider debate about the way forward on that.

Hazel Irvine

It is something I would like to ask Vanessa about – because, clearly, you work with people who are impressionable and who will be buying these products.

Response: Vanessa Wiseman

I think we have to work in the society that we are in, and if you are trying to change and do things on health, you have to accept that you have got to work with organisations and companies, to actually get them to support, and occasionally you perhaps are subverting the message a bit. We, for instance, have worked with Nike quite closely on the Girls in Sport project. It was “play well, eat well, look well”, and it has actually had a real impact on young people in our area, so you could say we are working with a multinational organisation. Those young people are going to be interested in Nike, wear Nike things, regardless of what we say, so let us use it to link it across to the message that girls can eat healthily, can enjoy food, and also can participate in sport, and all those things go together.

I think we also have to not treat young people as though they are idiots, because we all do things where we know we are being targeted by advertising; we might, to some degree, be vulnerable to it sometimes.

The last point I would want to make around food is: we cannot be food fascists with young people. People do not stop eating things or make their bodies healthier by people just ramming it down their throats, and we know that; we can see all the messages on that. I think they do it because you talk about the enjoyment of the food; you put good facilities in schools, having schemes like we have, Smartcard, where young people actually get bonus points for the healthy choice.

But banning chips – I mean, come on, there must be loads of chips recidivists in here, I am sure. I have got a bag of Rolos in my bag here, and I think we just have to be sensible about it, particularly when you have also got the obesity issue, but you have also got a lot of young women – and increasingly, young men – with issues of anorexia. So, it is having that balance – make people enjoy food, see what is healthy, but do not try and preach and do not try and do social engineering in a way that is actually not going to get anywhere on it.

Response: Sue Campbell

I absolutely support that. I think what we are trying to do is produce educated, informed consumers, that we actually create many eating disorders by the nature of the way we vilify certain foods that children eat, as opposed to helping them understand what we mean by "balanced diet". The reality is we are just like any machine; the amount of energy we expend keeps us either slim or not, depending on what we take in. My two favourite foods are chips and chocolate, and I am not particularly obese because I am very active. I am not suggesting that every child eat chips and chocolate and be active, but I am saying we have got to have some balance and perspective on these things. This is about helping people be informed consumers and educated participants.

Somehow, as Andy said earlier, we are not getting this message about activity across strongly enough to parents, children and, indeed, to the population as a whole, that activity should be a part of your normal, daily life. So, while we do continue to get the diet message over, we must also get the activity message over. It is a very, very important message and I do not think we are doing enough to change people's attitudes.

Response: Brigid Simmonds

If Chris Haskins, the Chairman of the Better Regulation Taskforce, had been

here, he would be talking about proportionality; and let us be proportional about this – we are not a nanny state. Parents have an awful lot to say about how much chocolate their children eat. Let us be proportional and say: if this is going to provide more sports equipment for schools, then we should be encouraging that sort of thing and be proportional in the way that we think it is going to change that view, and allow parents to have the right to say how much chocolate their children eat.

Response: Andy Ramwell

I think one of the things we cannot underestimate is that, if we look at the World Health Organisation report on obesity, it was blocked, and it has been blocked time and time again by the International Life Sciences Foundation. For those of you who do not know who that is, it is a pseudo ... well, it is a scientific organisation, because I do not want to get sued, but they are actually now represented on the WHO panel and they are supported wholeheartedly by the sugar industry, and they wanted to increase the amount of sugar to safe levels of up to 25% of the diet. The ramifications of that we cannot afford, and I think this is where we really have to be quite serious about the marketing of tobacco and other companies, and we underestimate them, I think.

We come from a higher ground almost, because we are pushing sport for a good agenda; there are companies who are pushing just for sheer profit, and I think that we really have to have some serious debate about that, and there has to be a much broader understanding of the health implications. It might not hit during a political term, and therefore might not be viewed as an agenda, but given the current statistics we have worldwide, we are building up issues here which are going to blow, and when they do, the ramifications are that society cannot afford it, and that, for me, has got to be a starting point for us all to start to sell our message about activity, that we cannot afford not to do anything.

Hazel Irvine

As the minister said, bit of a time bomb on the health issue.

Professor Andy Smith, Head of Department, York St John College

I am a professor from York, a city that has a fine tradition of chocolate manufacturing. Sue, I have got to be honest, I disagree with the decision that

you made, but I respect that you went through a decision-making process; it was not my decision to make. So, I do disagree, but I respect your motives for doing that. Not that you need a pat on the back from me, because I am a very small player, but I will give one pat on the back, and it goes back to what the baroness said about Playstation and football – because I think what you are trying to do, from what you have said, is connect to young people.

Let us be honest: it is a Wednesday night, it is raining, it is in York, I am on a crappy pitch and I have got 50 kids, and if you want them to sprint, do you know what you shout? You shout “left one”. If you want them to do a slide tackle, you shout “square”. If you want them to do a lob, you shout “circle”. If that does not mean anything to the policy makers in this room, then you have lost touch with the community.

Hazel Irvine

That was a bit of a square. Any more points on this, because I think we have got time for just one more question after this?

Nick Cavill, Independent Health Promotion Consultant

I think the key issue with Cadbury’s is, surely, why did the government endorse this scheme? Cadbury’s would promote this scheme anyway, and it is going to be a very, very effective marketing promotional programme for them, I am sure. I agree with some of the points that Sue made: the Cadbury’s brand will reach people and more young people will surely have basketballs or basketball nets as a result, but the government endorsement of this surely undermines the efforts that are going on in schools, particularly with Five-a-day and the school fruit scheme. We do not now, as consumers, understand what the government is saying. Is it saying eat five a day, have a free piece of school fruit, or is it saying, have a piece of chocolate? The consumer is confused, and I think this has undermined that.

Response: Richard Caborn

We did not take the decision lightly, I think, as Sue said. People may well disagree with the decision at the end of the day, but it is not like somebody just passed it to my desk and said, “Right, we endorse that.” We had a long discussion, both within the department and also with Education and others.

A lot of questions have been posed this morning about how we are going to take this agenda forward, and can I just say very briefly that we are doing that in a very systematic way. Patrick Carter and Roger Draper from Sport England are here, and they are the non-departmental public body of government, and we will be asking those to put together a strategy for sport and physical activity in the wider context. Indeed, the board of Sport England is changing to engage a much wider constituency on health and education, and on the question of social inclusion, so we will have a sports and exercise strategy that will then be going around Whitehall, and every department in Whitehall will be asked to sign up for that. We will then have a delivery mechanism into the regions.

I think the main point has been made: how do you make all this join up? How do you bring in those wider constituencies? How do you bring all that together? Well, we will do that through Sport England, who will be developing a strategy. The policy is made at government level. Every month, we meet as ministers now – Health, Education, Transport, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Home Office – we meet together either at ministerial or official level, we then ask the strategy to be developed by Sport England, of which we all buy into.

The delivery mechanism – so, that is policy, strategy, delivery – will be a regional level in England. We announce it at the sports boards, boards of about 10 or 12 people, which we have advertised for the chair; hopefully it will be announced for the last two in the next few weeks. They will then, from a very much by-the-book process, be engaging.

The people who will be on these boards are from business, health, education and sport, but it is that engagement – and I think for far too long we have put people into departments without having the debate that many people are actually calling for and having that debate, developing that strategy and then delivering it. If we do not actually acknowledge that – and we want to departmentalise all this – this is not going to move this wider agenda you are talking about here forward. We are going to make mistakes, but the person who never did anything was the only person who never made a mistake.

Hazel Irvine

I think we would agree with that. Just a couple more points on this one, because it clearly has exercised you all. Fred, first of all.

Response: Fred Coalter

It can be a mistake not to do anything, as well. I do not want to get into the debate about the morality of this, but I will just say two things. It clearly illustrates the difficulty of cross-sectoral working. The second thing I would say is a lot of claims are being made for this.

I would ask Sport England directly: do they intend monitoring the efficacy of this programme, the extent to which young people may be getting a confused message, and the extent to which it has stimulated them to participate? Because the history of media campaigns in this country promoting activity is not particularly good. Ever Followed Sport?, I remember, had no effect at all. "Ever do sport?" might have been a better message. There is a way of in part solving this and in part dealing with future dilemmas, which is actually to monitor the value of this programme.

Response: Andy Ramwell

Thinking back to some of Richard Caborn's points about how the whole policy framework is set, I think if sport wants to get into partnership with other agencies, we have got to look at what other agencies have already set as their strategies. The NHS has set out the NHS plan, and one of the things I constantly come across is people do not actually see health as a massive sector with many different organisations and many different drivers.

I think it is about beginning to understand what the educational plans are, what the health plans are, and then looking to see how sport fits, then devolving that to the regional agenda. In the North West we are actually looking at a physical activity co-ordinator and a strategic policy level, and then linking through to higher education. We are now looking at a physical centre, but we will be linking with other higher-education institutions to come up with a physical centre based in an area of regeneration which actually starts to capture some of the unique flavour, but works at a policy level – working with local delivery, supporting it with evidence, and coming out with a long-term investment into the area, and linking it back to key

drivers for the regional development agencies and for the government office. We see that, really, as the only way forward.

Sport and crime

Hazel Irvine

I know there are quite a few that want to come in on this one, but can I just take one final question, because we have covered subjects around the health of our nation. Obviously, social equity is a big part of what sport can bring to the community as well, but there is one other point that needs to be made about crime prevention, and it has been raised by Neil Watson of the Drugs Unit, Home Office. He says: What does the panel think that sport can bring to a multiagency partnership that is looking to reduce youth crime or substance misuse? I think that is something that is a very important part of what sport can do in our community. Does anyone on our panel want to come in on this? Fred.

Response: Fred Coalter

I would say two things. Someone raised the issue of the basketball leagues earlier on, and I think sport's importance to people means that you can often attract people that other people cannot into programmes, but we have to be wary why the midnight basketball leagues supposedly work. They work because they have parallel personal and social development programmes associated with them. The basketball attracts the kids in and other people do the work that is required to address the more fundamental issues, which are the nature of crime itself or drug use. So they are associated programmes. They are astonished that people like them are allowed to play in such high-quality facilities – that is the big attraction. When you get them there, you deal with the more fundamental issues of cognitive and emotional problems that these kids have; sport works in parallel, so there is a sense in which sport has an enormously powerful pull.

The second one is we have to be very careful about what we mean by sport in this context. All the evidence is that particular types of sport work with these particular types of kids. They tend not to be team-led; they tend not to be competitive; they tend to be single or partner, where the kids can actually define their own progress and set their own standards of achievement. They are sports where you do not put young people who have failed elsewhere into

a circumstance where they might fail again. So, I think you have to be quite careful about what sports work, as well. There are two levels to this, and I think that is what it brings to both programmes.

Response: Brigid Simmonds

I was only going to say, it is not the panacea, but it has a part to play. If you look, there are some wonderful schemes, there is the Summer Splash, which takes people off the streets, there is Positive Futures. It is not the only answer, but it definitely has a part to play.

Hazel Irvine

I am sorry I could not get to everybody. I know there were quite a few hands up there, but thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, for coming in. I think we have given the departments of health, education and skills, and culture, media and sport something to think about this morning. Thank you very much indeed.

Seminar 3

Achieving social inclusion: architecture and design

A seminar held on Wednesday 11 June 2003 at
11 Downing Street

BCSC
REPRESENTING THE RETAIL
PROPERTY INDUSTRY

cabe

Welcome

Wilf Stevenson

Director, Smith Institute

This is the third seminar in our series on social inclusion. We looked previously at sport and at the arts, and we are very happy to end the series with the built environment. Some common themes have been coming out of these seminars. People were honest in admitting that they had argued rather too vigorously for the contribution that their particular specialism made to the answers of all social inclusion problems – sport, in relation to solving crime and removing the drug problem; arts, by saying that if you put art in hospitals it will immediately make people much better.

There has been a gradual new realism coming in that while these things are probably right, and while they do help and provide additional support for social inclusion, they are not the full answer. There are much more complex and richer issues that have to be addressed. So, there has been a new realism about that, and while people still want to argue vigorously for the support that needs to be given to sport and to arts in support of social inclusion, there is also recognition that there is a need for more research, for better arguments, and in particular for building partnerships across the agencies that need to work together, whether they be in Whitehall or outside in the wider public sphere.

This issue has been bubbling around for the last five or 10 years, and the government seems to get the connection between civic design and social inclusion. Successive secretaries of state have supported CAGE and published material around that theme. We have had the Rogers report, the Communities white paper, and more recently the Urban Summit. Government does seem to be moving towards an understanding and recognition of the issues. At the same time, the private sector also seems to get it: we have had a good report for the BCSC from Building Design Partnership, which has given examples of where and when this has been working in practice, and we will hear a bit more today about Liverpool, Exeter, Sheffield, Manchester and other areas. So, it is happening on the ground, and that must be good.

If it is working, why do we need to look at it? I suspect that is because there are still unresolved policy issues that need to be picked up, and there are also issues that are currently being done on a voluntary basis, that perhaps are not yet properly founded across the various agencies concerned. We are hoping that today we can unpick some of those issues, and can address some of the key points that come up in this policy area, and look to see if we can offer an agenda for forward development in this area.

We have been working with CAFE and with BCSC in developing this seminar, and we are very grateful to them for their support. Our first speaker is Stuart Lipton, the Chair of CAFE.

Sir Stuart Lipton

Chair, CABE

It is a good start to be in this room in 11 Downing Street, for the portraits of Disraeli and Gladstone hang here. Let us think of what they were confronting in their day, because they would have understood the discussion today. The 1850s and 1860s were a period of change: those who could afford to do so were probably leaving the industrialised major cities, whether it was the Manchester mill owners or the Londoners escaping to the stockbroker belt. In the cities themselves, there was a sharp distinction between the centre and neighbouring districts. In Leeds and Manchester the civic leaders were expressing their success and optimism by building great buildings – town halls, hospitals, museums, galleries – but at the same time the surroundings marked terrible poverty, with awful public health and social deprivation.

The other parallel is that it was an age when current shopping patterns began to emerge. The first department stores began to appear. The emerging middle classes at the time were starting to express certain values characterised by an aspirational quality of life: order, choice, consumption, safety, and social interaction. Later came the rise of the West End of London, the golden age of the provincial department store, and the transformation of our cathedral towns into shopping emporiums.

Suddenly, all that changed. In the late 20th century, we lost our way. We lost our optimism, our nerve, and our faith. We took our retail offer out to the motorised masses; we bought into the American dream: our shopping malls all seemingly the same – no character, no local links. The shopper may have got most of what they wanted: more choice, convenience, comfort, security, unlimited car parking. It is wonderful for us all, so easy, but what has it done? The cost to our centres has been enormous: lost jobs, under-utilised public transport, derelict land and buildings, insufficient people to create safe environments.

Yet, as early as the 1960s, we knew shopping centres were coming. The first American centre, opened in 1951, should have been a clue. It was followed by an explosion of others. It should have been a warning that we should be proactive in our planning system rather than reactive. But we did not listen;

we did not really think about what would happen to our streets, how they might decay, how town centres would be socially deprived, how the character of those places would change.

Contemporary best practice

However, we have seen things start to turn: better informed planners, enthusiastic developers all working in tandem to direct retail investments back into our towns and cities. There are some great success stories: Leeds with over two miles of pedestrianised shopping; Manchester rising like a phoenix from the ashes of the IRA bomb; Nottingham using its historic fabric to become the third-most successful shopping centre in the UK; Reading, Southampton and Chester are all exemplars. And they are all matched by one other ingredient – leadership which is enthusiastic, knowledgeable, skilful. They have a real focus: they are trying to make their towns socially inclusive, lively, fun and profitable.

But, at the same time, have we really ensured that we have built quality civic buildings, quality retail and residential spaces that really represent the needs of the community? A civilised environment makes most people feel and behave in a more caring and responsible way, so civility implies less crime, less vandalism, more humanity. It is not just intuition; all the empirical evidence backs this up. We must have the civic going with the commercial; retail with the life of the community. We know that cathedral towns, for instance, have always brought social cohesion with a variety of high-quality spaces, places and mixed uses. These are the places which may be centuries old but which we still enjoy today.

How can we replicate these? I hope we are going to hear more on that later. We need their mixed use, their diversity of style, and their higher density, which is an area of great sensitivity today. Those cathedral towns always appear more dense, yet you would not think of them as having tower blocks. You would not think of Bath as a high-density area, but Georgian Victorian towns have very high density, and there are more success stories to come.

The urban renaissance which this country is contributing to could lead to great new shopping environments in Sheffield, Liverpool and Exeter – all schemes which CABE has seen recently in its design review function, all of

which are very different in their perception. Every centre has its social needs, which at CABE we know has business benefits. Centres which follow on from those Victorian arcades and are part-covered, part-open, permeable to everyone, a part of the town, integrated into the civic and social framework. Such centres encourage access and social inclusion

Retail, community and the environment

Shopping is leisure, for many. It must be part of the community, enhance regeneration, enliven, uplift morale, generate jobs, and – as I will keep saying – be profitable. For development to be successful it must be profitable, and with profits we can invest, and with good investment we get high-quality architecture. There is a virtuous circle. All the centres that I am speaking of, and others, are part of a revival which runs to a pattern. They are either in the top 30 retail environments, or they have the obvious potential to be so.

So, on one hand, we have got real focus coming to those centres. On the other, we have a real problem with secondary shopping areas. They are desperately trying to reverse their fortunes, to recruit and retain anchor occupiers. They are marked by economic, social, physical decline – places such as Oldham, Bradford, West Bromwich, Hartlepool; or in London you have Streatham, Barking and Edmonton. These are areas which many retail investors and occupiers have shied away from, the pervading values deemed too low, the complexities of land ownership and infrastructure too great. These are all the places where people urgently need jobs and opportunity and training, and older people need access to goods and services.

The emphasis should be on making liveable, safe neighbourhoods, places with clean, safe streets, good leisure facilities, schools, shops, transport, easy access to work and affordable housing – holistic communities. It has been done before, and it is beginning to emerge. Centres are changing and they must change. We must mix residential with prime retail; we must bring leisure and all these activities together. We all know that, but there is still some reluctance to do it.

The retail industry has the potential to contribute, and I want to consider how this could happen, and how the government could help. The Urban Task Force stated: “Well-designed buildings, streets, neighbourhoods and districts

are essential for successful social, economic and environmental regeneration.” We have been hearing that message for two years, and it is beginning to get through. Government has made a first step.

However, for every successful Birmingham Bullring development, there is a contrasting Wolverhampton. For every Manchester city centre, there is a Stockport. For every Southampton, there is an Eastley. Among those present today we have represented all those opportunities and contrasts. To us, the key is the quality of the environment. The challenge is to build in quality, putting the aspiration, pride and respect back into communities that have had the stuffing knocked out of them. The civic landscape is at the roots of our society and is part of our humanity. It is both a real and a symbolic space, where we reflect and exercise our civic liberty.

Policy proposals

Turning to the policy makers, I would suggest they focus on a number of issues to allow the retail developers to make progress. Firstly, every town and city should be required to produce an audit of its streets and spaces, so that appropriate investment is made in renewing amenities, to upgrade the environment sufficiently to entice people back. A particular plea about streets: no one owns streets anymore; they are full of kiosks, cable boxes, traffic light boxes, competing telephone boxes – they are owned by no one. The first thing to do is bring back order to our streets. Particular praise is due for Kensington, where the borough has stripped the streets of all the paraphernalia, and it looks transformed. Some of this is quite simple to do.

Turning, however, to planning, *Planning Policy Guidance 6* has turned out to be inspired policy, but the warm words of encouragement to planning authorities need to be reviewed. We should be looking for a more proactive strategy, one that includes the use of compulsory purchase order powers to assemble sites and make things happen. Retail currently appears to be the poor relation of planning. With low priority in local strategy, because retailing is a strong sector, the assumption often appears to be that it will look after itself.

However, the challenge is not how to resist unwelcome retail development, but how to harness the potential to create and regenerate urban centres,

and we have got to do it in a way that makes piecemeal out-of-centre developments unnecessary. Of course, change in the retail area is complex: it requires land assembly to create critical mass, as well as problem-solving the transport issues. Positive actions and incentives are necessary in order to unlock the potential at the heart of many of our communities. But this should not be impossible, and we can, I am sure, produce some fairly quick results. Indeed, it is already happening.

Conclusion

So, in short, please, let us review PPG 6 to make it more dynamic and proactive; let us use compulsory purchase order powers to encourage regeneration, making out-of-town development unnecessary; let us remove the motorways planted in our towns and cities; let us encourage the Treasury to think about incentives to persuade investors to take a risk on secondary locations; and let us incentivise landowners to become involved with regeneration, with the government perhaps matching funds. It has been done before; it can be done again. We have the skills; we have the financial resources; and at CABI we have faith in the retail industry and its developers. Regeneration is proving very imaginative in style. It is part of our life; it is part of our fun – and we think there is great potential to make an even better future of it.

Andrew Ogg

Vice-president, BCSC

If anything underlines the changed approach to quality and commitment to architecture from the retail sector in our town centres, it is the building already referred to, which is the new Selfridges in Birmingham. We are in a process of regenerating and repairing our towns. There is now more town-centre development proceeding at this time than ever before. Over £7 billion of private-sector investment is leading this urban renaissance; and there are more town and city developments than ever before.

Why is this happening now? Stuart has already alluded to a number of these issues. PPG 6 has probably been one of the most successful planning policies ever in focusing development in our town centres. The government has set the background with the urban renaissance and “positive” planning. A doubling of consumer expenditure is forecast between now and 2020, while over £35 billion of additional expenditure in London alone is forecast between now and 2016. The fourth reason is the great building boom in the early 1960s, which created a stock of building which is now really coming to the end of its useful life and creating opportunity for us to repeat the process, hopefully correcting the mistakes that were made at that time.

The urban agenda

We now have an urban agenda, which is forming the framework of our approach to these developments. We are thinking about making places rather than shopping centres, creating better quality of life, and less reason to travel, and there is a new focus on cities. I believe this is a worldwide phenomenon. Retail is absolutely fundamental to catalysing this process: it brings vitality, sustainability, and it creates the value which enables the process to take place.

We are taking a new approach to retail design. There is the urban design agenda and the research that BCSC carried out some 18 months ago, working closely with CABE and English Heritage, in establishing both the brief for new shopping and town centres, and also a brief for planners, in the way that they should be assessing and reviewing proposals.

We are no longer talking about shopping centres: we are talking about

retail-led regeneration on clear urban design principles. These principles are now well documented, well rehearsed, and build on the existing character of our towns while adding positive new character to them. The principles create continuity and enclosure, rather than internalised shopping environments, and they add quality to the public realm. They develop places that we can move to easily, that are legible, adaptable, diverse, with a mix of uses, sustainable, and balanced with nature.

Retail town-centre developments are probably one of the most socially inclusive forms of development. They have to be accessible to everybody, and you do not necessarily need to shop to enjoy the benefits of the environment that is created. What we successfully added to this debate during the process of our discussions was the recognition – and Stuart has already used the word “profit” – that creating value needs to be given equal importance to the other urban design issues, if we are to be successful in this endeavour.

There are now examples of best practice being brought forward. It is still a long process: we are talking about 10 years as a minimum. We would like to see that brought down to six or seven years, but we are at least at the planning stage with some key new projects.

These include a new retail quarter in Sheffield; Paradise Street in Liverpool, which was probably one of the first local authority briefs based on extending city blocks in the existing street pattern; Victoria Square in Belfast, linking the high street to the Lagan side; Eastgate Quarter in Leeds – Stuart has referred to extending the pedestrianisation of that city, taking the traffic out of the town centre and introducing trams and trees; Broadmead in Bristol – again, a similar approach of extending the street pattern and building new blocks. There are well-advanced proposals for the historic towns of Exeter, Canterbury, and Chester.

In London there are not too many examples, but there is at least a suburban example which John might like to talk about during his question period: at Cricklewood we are extending an existing retail centre, using that as a catalyst for an extension with mixed use and 4,000 new houses. In Stratford we are adopting a similar approach.

Many factors have brought social responsibility to the forefront of developers' thinking. These include government planning legislation, European influence, community awareness, environmental issues, and human rights.

So far, the examples of best practice are confined to the major cities and towns with the top high-street rental levels. The question is: is this process about to stall? Are we able to continue the process into the market towns, the small towns, the suburbs, London per se, the high streets with sub-£100 zone A rental?

Retail-led regeneration

In putting together masterplans, it is important that we understand how retail works. Urban designers in particular need to understand how retail works and how retail delivers value in creating opportunities for anchor tenants. Masterplans need to promise visibility, the footplates that retailers expect, a critical mass of retailers, and foot flow. Foot flow is an interesting science. Why do people shop in certain locations, and not in others? It is not as simple as drawing streets and squares on a plan. To create retail-led regeneration, we need to be considering all of these issues. Stuart has mentioned the issue of site assembly and compulsory purchase, and that process needing to be approached positively.

The process is key here. I think we should see an end to the two-stage planning strategies, where local authorities create masterplans without input from the commercial sector at day one. Currently, designers are appointed to design policy, create policy, consult the community, and then go to the commercial sector, who advise that the plans need to be significantly changed, and we start again after a two- or three-year period.

A better process is to appoint the developer on day one, have that private-sector partner consult with key tenants, then move towards a strategic plan, which is consulted on and then becomes policy and goes through the planning process. The public sector still needs to approach this issue of trust more positively. The Urban Summit was fascinating in that none of the private sector was really entrusted to deliver any of the key sessions during the preliminary debate.

The public sector should also accept open book accounting. We must identify and guarantee a critical mass of development in the smaller towns, and looking at it on a mixed-use basis clearly offers the opportunity to do that. We also reduce the risk by delivering certainty of timescale, and clearly we need to be realistic still in approaching section 106 requirements. Private-sector management of public space is something we need to embrace positively. The business improvement districts pilot process is clearly under way, and we want to see the benefits of the shopping centres being brought to towns. The mandatory contributions need to be considered a service charge, not a tax, and all who benefit should contribute. It is common sense that that should include the landlords.

A final point before opening up the debate: integrated transport. Where are we up to on the transport agenda? If we are to deliver the benefits of urban design, we have to give the same focus and impetus to the transport agenda. Timescales for delivering transport are even longer than for delivering development – frequently 15 years. We need to continue to change people’s attitudes, because accessibility is absolutely key to the success of these initiatives. Transport needs to be considered on a regional basis, and not a single town basis, because of the issues of competitive disadvantage. How should we approach that? We need somebody who has the same impetus and innovation and thought process of CABA – a CABA for transport, shall we say? – who can really focus the debate on transport and make that agenda move forward.

Conclusion

My key messages are that the retail property sector is delivering an urban renaissance, one that is delivering social inclusion. Successful retail is the key to vitality, sustainability and value creation. The private sector must be involved in masterplanning strategies from day one. And the public sector needs new focus if we are to continue this agenda into the small towns.

Panel discussion

Chaired by Nadine Dereza, Broadcaster

Panel

Peter Drummond, Chairman, BDP

Alison Nimmo, Chief Executive, Sheffield One

John Richards, Chief Executive, Hammerson

Peter Williams, Chief Executive, Selfridges & Co

Nadine Dereza

This question-time session will look at the way architecture and design can contribute towards social inclusion for the economic and social well-being of this country. Obviously, we are making particular reference to the retail sector, which is reflected by the panellists we have here.

Peter Drummond is the London Office Chairman of Building Design Partnership. BDP is one of the largest architecture, engineering and design firms in Europe, working across all types of buildings, including sports, education, offices, major cultural events and urban spaces.

Alison Nimmo is Chief Executive of Sheffield One. Alison is a town planner and chartered surveyor with over 15 years' experience in developing major urban regeneration projects in the UK. Sheffield One is a pilot urban regeneration company, and it was established in January 2000 to spearhead the regeneration of Sheffield city centre. It is a £1 billion programme and it is there to deliver an urban renaissance and turn around many decades of under-investment. Prior to Sheffield One, Alison was involved as Project Director of Manchester Millennium, and that was the public-private task force set up following the June 1996 terrorist bomb. She played a lead role in rebuilding Manchester city centre.

Peter Williams is Chief Executive of Selfridges, appointed in February 2003. He originally joined Selfridges in 1991 as Finance Director, and is now a member of both the plc board and the executive board. In his prior role as Finance Director, I believe he worked very closely with the former Chief Executive, Vittorio, in helping with the plans for Manchester, Birmingham and Glasgow, as well as overseeing the strategy, store development, IT, and

generally everything involved in the programmes. Selfridges is fundamentally a house of brands, and their strategies remain at the forefront of retail. Peter is also a member of the business advisory group for Comic Relief and also the finance committee, and a member of the management board for the British Retail Consortium.

John Richards is Chief Executive of Hammerson and is a chartered surveyor. He joined Hammerson in 1981 as a development surveyor. From 1993 to 1998 he was responsible for UK operations and subsequently took over international concerns as well, and in 1991 was appointed Chief Executive. He is also Director and President of BCSC, the British council of shopping centres. Hammerson's main objective is to generate attractive returns for shareholders by creating value from property investment and development, and by active management of its capital.

Before we get onto the first questions, I thought it would be worthwhile to have a soundbite from each of the panel members as to why they think today's seminar is important, and how a meeting of different minds can work for the good of social inclusion, and for the economic and social well-being of this country.

Peter Drummond

Those who have heard me speak at events like this before know that we are on a bit of a mission from BCSC, the retail industry, and the development industry to become more collaborative, more open, and communicate better with the public sector and policy makers. I see this event as being an extension of that. First, a note of caution: I think we are at the cusp in town and city centres. I get very worried when people say things like, "It's all done."

Southampton and Reading schemes were late arrivals of 1980s schemes; Manchester was a fantastic response to a bomb; and Birmingham was undoing and unstitching mistakes of the 1960s and 1970s. All the other schemes that Andrew has mentioned are still yet to be done, and in the course of doing those over the next 10 years, we are going to have to learn a lot more about communication with the public sector, communication with the housing industry, and the needs of the affordable housing industry. So anything we can do to discuss and debate these things in open forum will take us further forward.

Alison Nimmo

I have always been passionate about city centres; and I think we are all signed up to the agenda about the importance of the quality urban environment creating very vibrant and successful city centres. The inclusion and the prosperity agenda go hand in hand; one does not happen without the other.

When it comes to retail and the role it plays, we need to try and get people out of the mindset of “posh shops for posh people”, and talk about retail development in the same breath as the urban renaissance and the physical agenda. We need to integrate the retail approach into the whole city centre, and into the whole economic competitiveness agenda for our cities, because they have a huge economic impact, either negatively or positively, in city centres. Perhaps part of the trick in getting retail back on the agenda, and getting a more proactive approach from the public sector, is about looking at the economic impact of these developments.

I would echo what Peter says about a lot of these schemes, including Sheffield, being very much on the drawing board at the moment. What we are looking at is a retail revolution in our city centres, and it will not happen just by turning the tap off on out-of-town development. We need a very proactive approach from the public and private sector in the city centres, and a lot of help in terms of site assembly, a positive planning environment which seeks to integrate these schemes into the wider city centre. So we need a joint approach, but the economic impact of retail in our city centres is just as important as the physical impact.

Nadine Dereza

Years ago, Gordon Selfridge described Selfridges as not a department store but a community centre. Does that view still hold today, Peter?

Peter Williams

Yes, very much so. Retail is very much about the place; it is not necessarily about the product. Obviously, we all have to do a supermarket shop, but we can do that via the internet. When we got dressed this morning to come out, there were no empty shelves, no empty places on the racks for our clothes, but at some time we will buy more stuff, so why do we do that? Because it gives us pleasure and all the rest of it, and it is therefore vital that the environment in

which people get to do that is an interesting one, and an accommodating one.

As Nadine rightly says, Selfridges was founded on this point about being inclusive. There are no admission fees in retail establishments; everyone is welcome. I guess our frustration within Selfridges is that we are trying to do as much as we can with the architecture on our buildings, both on the external facade, as you saw earlier with Birmingham, and also internally, but our frustrations are very often about the environment that is immediately outside our doors. Strangely enough, you get better quality generally in the shopping centres, and it is easier to control than it is in public high streets.

My second point is that the greatest future barrier for us, particularly at somewhere like Selfridges on Oxford Street, will be the confidence people have in the transport system. So the point Andrew was making about a CABE for transport is really important, because people will want to travel less distance as time goes on. They want a better class of vehicle or train, or whatever it happens to be, and it is absolutely vital that those essential arteries are improved.

John Richards

The message I hope we achieve is that while effective partnering requires understanding, understanding and working with partners has a time component. I do not think any side thinks they will benefit by steamrolling their views quickly through the other stakeholders, but time is money. Private-sector developers do not have this money to themselves. Companies like Hammerson are financed by our shareholders, bondholders, and by banks, and that means the whole community – it is all of our money.

Our job is to provide a commercial return for the people who provide capital to us. Those investors have other choices, and unless they see an appropriate return for the risk, then they will not invest in the companies that channel that investment into our town centres. Risk and return are intricately linked, and it brings me back to time, because a lot of the problems in driving this forward are to do with time delays. Quite simply, money spent on interest costs, and money spent a second time on designers' fees because the first attempt did not work, as Andrew referred to, is money that is not available for civic purposes, social gain, or to fund social inclusion. So, we have to work

together, but we have to work faster, and be more efficient about it.

Improving cities

Dr Nicholas Falk, Director, Urban & Economic Development Group

Most people think cities are getting worse and want to leave, according to MORI research. What should be the priorities in order to change attitudes, and how can the quality of the public realm be given the weight it deserves?

Response: Peter Drummond

It will not be the first time, but I disagree with MORI. I do not believe cities are getting worse. They have got problems, but we have a trend towards city living, a trend towards improvement, and the biggest investment programme ever. Sure, it has got to be delivered, but there are things which are changing and improving. More people are living in our city centres than ever before, which says that something has got to be going right, though there is a lot more to be done.

It is wrong to then lurch into saying, "It's the public realm." The public realm is fundamentally important, and we have clients, like John Richards, spending huge amounts of money on the public realm only for it to be dug up by utilities and the bus operators and so on. While that is important, the key issues in helping to improve city centres are to do with safety, crime, drugs and drunks. The gentrified city of Chester is heave-ho on a Saturday night; and if anything is socially exclusive, it is Chester on a Saturday night. So it is not just the physical issues which need attention.

Dr Nicholas Falk

I absolutely agree that order is critical. When we had focus group discussions as part of work for *Partners in Urban Renaissance*, we found that people were most concerned about the small things that made a difference, and it was particularly the state of the streets that concerned them. So, though they were impressed by grand projects, for example in Newcastle Quayside, that was no good if they went home to places that looked like slums. It was not their own homes that were the problem any longer, it was the streets outside. I do feel there is a priority in getting more expenditure on maintenance, and I very much agree with more efforts to improve order.

And there is a place for incentives, taking up Stuart Lipton's point, to encourage the smaller owners, who tend to dominate the smaller centres which are closer to people's homes, to get their spaces back into use. I suspect these uses are no longer going to be retailing, but are going to be other uses, particularly conversion into housing and workspaces for small businesses. Finding new roles for local centres that are closer to where ordinary people live is, I believe, going to be a priority in the years ahead.

Nadine Dereza

John, we have heard Stuart mention that for every Bullring development there is a Wolverhampton; for every Manchester city centre, there is a Stockport; for every Southampton there is an Eastley. Is there an incentive for you to go to places like this?

Response: John Richards

There is a hierarchy, and we cannot go everywhere. The question Nicholas posed is germane to this debate, and that is to do with finding alternative uses that are efficient economic uses, in the light of changes. There is no doubt – notwithstanding the issues of transport, notwithstanding an ambition to reduce people's dependency on travelling long distances – that retail spending is slowly coalescing into the larger cities when it comes to people's discretionary spend.

Peter's house of brands is immensely attractive; it is not going to be where people want to travel every week to shop, but they are going to make it a quarterly or monthly visit, or whatever. I think it is important to recognise that, and where that money is no longer being spent locally, we need to find alternative and appropriate use for Pratt's of Streatham. I do not think there is a way to encourage Selfridges or the John Lewis Partnership to reopen in Streatham; what we need to find is an appropriate use for that shop or that site.

Response: Alison Nimmo

What we did in Manchester, and are repeating in Sheffield, is taking a masterplan approach. We are looking at the city as a whole, and examining the real strengths and weaknesses in the city, and the real problems and real frustrations of people about what they want doing, and in what order. It is

about taking a very joined-up approach because you could have a fantastic home, but if the city centre is horrible and there are not the right jobs there, or it is not the right retail offer, you vote with your feet and go out of town or elsewhere.

It is not just about shops, jobs or homes: it is about how you mix all of those things up together and create a sense of place and a liveable and vibrant city centre. You cannot force people to come in or live in the city centre. People can choose; they have to want to be there. Then the trick is keeping them there. It is all very well living in a penthouse in the middle of Manchester when you are young, free and single, but how do you then turn that into a long-term, sustainable community?

The partnership approach is absolutely fundamental, and I think the public sector needs to show leadership and help the private sector. We cannot just leave all of this to the private sector because it just will not get done, or not in a way that mixes the community benefits and the wider public, civic agenda with the bottom line of the private sector. That is what we have achieved in Manchester by setting up the task force. We tried to take the best skills and expertise of the public and private sectors and get people's heads together to rebuild the city centre against a very tight deadline. We were helped by some fantastic civic leadership.

Part of the learning and sharing of best practice is how you replicate that elsewhere. If you look at who is behind what is happening in the successful cities discussed earlier, you will find it is often about two or three really strong individuals that are really championing their city. It is that sense of leadership and determination to deliver which gives the confidence to the private sector to invest, knowing that they are going to be part of a much bigger and more ambitious picture. So, there is no quick fix; this is a long-term strategy. We cannot just look at these sectors individually; it needs to be a joined-up, collaborative approach.

Nadine Dereza

Leeds was mentioned as a city that has possibly got it right in terms of the mix of tenants and the amount of shopping and pedestrian areas, but what is wrong about London? *The Evening Standard* wrote last week about the

majority of Londoners wanting to get out and live out of the city. How does that bear for Selfridges in London?

Response: Peter Williams

On my way to this seminar the cab driver was inevitably complaining about Trafalgar Square, which is a fantastic thing to have been done, but it is amazing that we did not start with Oxford Street. Oxford Street is the most visited, the most popular place in the whole of London, arguably in the whole of the country, and it would send such a fantastic message to everyone if that was pedestrianised, if that was made an attractive environment. I do realise that would be difficult.

The number one reason that people complain about Oxford Street is not because of the shops, it is just the traffic congestion. People do not feel safe and secure. It is a terrible environment. Consumers now make their comparisons on an international basis. They do not necessarily go to New York to do their Christmas shopping, but they either read about it or know somebody who does. Oxford Street does not compare favourably to Fifth Avenue or the famous shopping streets in other international cities, and we really need to raise the bar.

Inclusion in shopping centres

Paul Morrell, Senior Partner, Davis, Langdon & Everest

Given that major retail developments have the potential for social exclusion, displacement of existing occupiers, reduction of town and city, closure at night etc, what positive steps can be taken to ensure that the net effect is social inclusion, or is this not an objective?

Response: Alison Nimmo

It is very difficult to see how a lot of out-of-town development, particularly the crinkly-tin-with-lots-of-cars-around-it type, can be socially inclusive. One of the things we have really been trying to champion is bringing that vitality and investment back into the city centre, because at least if it is there, you have got an opportunity to really link deprived communities with the investment in new development, and then you can start to make the connections in a number of ways, from how you design and build these things to local employment charters and historic investment in infrastructure.

There are some very successful examples in Southampton and Reading of how you can achieve targeted training and recruitment to get local people job-ready. There are lots of jobs in retail, both good and bad, and equipping local people with the skills to secure these jobs is critical for long-term benefit and sustainability. A lot of retailers want local people to be working and serving in their shops. There is a whole number of things you can do in terms of putting retail offer right in the heart of the city centre, and using it to generate employment.

What we are trying to do in some out-of-town developments, for example in Meadowhall in Sheffield, is to try to join that economic opportunity up with some very deprived communities that literally sit on its doorstep. We have just opened a new training centre there, and there is the tram etc. There are lots of things you can do existing out-of-town retail to make it feel a bit more socially inclusive, though I think we are fighting a bit of a losing battle.

We have got to have retail and investment in the city centre, where people can get to the jobs and shops easily and it is properly linked to transport nodes and other complementary mixes of uses. If you look at what they are doing in places like Barnsley, the Will Alsop masterplan is all about the market being the heart of the town, and a lot of Northern towns are like that. What matters is how you create a new sense of place for Barnsley, because Selfridges are not going to go to Barnsley, and how you use the market in the existing retail offer, which is the core of the community, to really drive forward the regeneration.

Nadine Dereza

Peter Drummond, adaptability is one of the key areas when you are thinking about design. The Grosvenor report for BCSC and Future Foundation said that if you want to make shopping places attractive – whether they be out-of-town or city-centre places – then you have to think about adapting to the new demographics, because you are looking ahead at 10 to 20 years' time, when the grey pound will be king. Is adaptability a key thing for you in this area?

Response: Peter Drummond

The BCSC report talks about a lot of things to do with adaptability, and also a number of things to try and promote if not social inclusion, then certainly

social cohesion. The adaptability issue was really to do with investment, lifespans of buildings, and the fact that shopping centres are possibly the most inflexible building form you could imagine, bar a multistorey car park. Breaking that significant critical mass of new investment into dividable parts has been very much a theme of a whole number of the projects which are now on the drawing board.

Paul asked what steps can be taken towards social inclusion. Looking at the town and city centre as a whole is the critical thing, to understand how that city will work once that major incursion has happened, as is embodying all the principles to do with mixed use and more housing. Displacement in gentrified housing areas is an issue for the housing industry, and the affordable housing question, and displacement of secondary or tertiary shopping as an area change is also a critical issue – and that, again, says you have to look at the town/city centre as a whole. I doubt whether it is being looked at enough at the moment.

Gordon Morris, Countryside Agency

I work on small country-town policy and the rural agenda. I would like to pick up the point on displacement and hear the panel's views about whether there is a danger we will end up with large developers concentrating on large sites in the, say, top 150 large centres, to the detriment of the smaller town, which will increase social exclusion by increasing the amount of already displaced trade from the small to the larger centre.

Response: John Richards

This is not an area which I am actually particularly skilled to answer because I would accept characterisation as that large developer. I think there is a risk, and it is one of scale, but this is not a question that is going to be solved by urban design. I am afraid we are all guilty of wanting to see the local butcher and baker prosper, and we even sign petitions to demand that they should prosper, then we promptly go to and drive to Tesco. We are absolutely all guilty of this, and I do not have a quick answer that comes from my business, but I think there are people in this audience who might make a contribution.

Role of housing

Dickon Robinson, CABE Commissioner/Development and Technical Director, Peabody Trust

I wanted to comment on how little we have talked about housing, and I want to question the whole concept of dumping major retail developments – rather exclusive ones – in our city centres. As a reasonably regular visitor to CABE's design review, I see that for every good proposal there are probably two poor ones. It is interesting to me that probably the most dynamic retail development in London is Covent Garden, which is where I live, along with 5,000 to 6,000 other people. I think it is really time for us to reconceptualise retail centres as something which are fundamentally far more mixed in terms of public uses.

Response: Peter Drummond

I would seriously object to the phrase “dumping”. Anything that takes 15-17 years is a very slow dump, and the way the schemes are currently happening, retail has to go somewhere. Retail is being channelled very successfully through PPG 6 into the places where it is doing an enormous amount of good, not just for its own sake but for the public realm and for other uses. I agree fundamentally that mixed use is an important part of that, and the development industry, by and large, has accepted and embraced that.

The dialogue that needs to exist between retail and development and registered social landlords is a very important one and has barely begun, and only a few RSLs are starting to do that. But you have got to accept that if the tenets of PPG 6 were right – which are that major retail goes in our town and city centres – then that is where they should go.

In a similar vein, on the question of smaller towns and smaller town centres, PPG 6 could be extended in many kinds of ways to channel surplus retail development demand into those town centres over a period of time, but it will be over a significant period of time, something like another 10 to 15 years. Again, mixed use should be an important and fundamental part of that.

Nadine Dereza

There is a perception that the key to a successful town centre is dependency on a large residential element. Would you go along with that?

Response: Peter Drummond

Retail development does not survive on the 200 apartments that happen to be nearby. The important point is the contribution it makes to the city and town life as a whole. If you look, for example, at schemes that we are doing for Grosvenor in Liverpool, there are more than 400 residential units attached to that. What we are trying to do at Brent Cross is that there is a significant amount of residential housing, along with the Cricklewood regeneration which we are doing with Hammerson. We are moving very much more away from the pancake retail schemes that we used to talk about, which maybe had a token social housing block on the corner. We are now integrating it far more, and the contribution is far greater.

Nadine Dereza

So, really, people are looking back at the poor, historical perceptions of retail schemes, rather than looking ahead at what you are doing now?

Response: Peter Drummond

Inevitably, we are tarred with a certain brush. We have to accept that; and the BCSC report, and the people who instigated that, accepted that of what we did in the 1980s, some was good. Local authorities were sponsoring all kinds of competitions saying, "We want this," so the retail industry cannot be held to blame for that because the local authorities played their part. Certainly, people look back at that and say, "We have learned from that, and perhaps we will do it slightly differently next time around."

Nadine Dereza

Peter Williams, is it right to have an emphasis on housing?

Response: Peter Williams

We all like to live in places where we feel comfortable, and particularly if the retail environment is a nice place to go. Covent Garden is a fantastic place, and I fully understand why people enjoy living and going to shop there.

In response to several comments, there are one or two things we have to respect. We talk about retail in general, but it is a huge spectrum: at one end you have Selfridges on Oxford Street on over half a million square feet, and then you have got much smaller shops which only occupy a few hundred feet.

At the moment there are quite a number of the major retailers, like Next and HMV, wanting larger space stores. Since a lot of these smaller cities or towns are not going to be able to afford the economics of a Bullring, a Next will not go there because they cannot get the appropriate sized unit. We just have to be realistic about that.

That is not to say that Eastley, for example, cannot reinvent itself in some other form, but, as time goes on, consumers are tending to polarise: they are tending to shop more in the bigger locations, although they will shop locally for some of their more everyday things, like butchers and the bakers and the rest of it. I think that is fine; that gives part of the variety that is so wonderful about our towns and cities.

Response: John Richards

Some of the developments that we were involved in, looking back 20 years, were wrong. Given the gestation period, the planning for those probably started before either Peter or I were in this business.

Going back to Paul Morrell's point about social exclusion, that comes back to scale. I imagine Paul locks his door at night and he does not regard that as being socially exclusive, just sensible security, and that is the same way with retailers. But if you have an inward-looking shopping centre, which locks its doors at night and effectively provides half a square mile of exclusion, then that certainly damages the workings of our city centres.

When you produce a quality of architecture which has permeability, that respects those street patterns, that is of a scale which works in human terms, where one of the more useful forms of public transport is actually walking, and the adjacencies in terms of leisure, housing and retail do promote at least some people to be able to walk, then I think we begin to find the answer. I do believe that in our larger cities, architecture is the answer, and I do believe that we are beginning to think in the right direction. CABE and others have made an enormous contribution to that discussion.

Peter's point on the smaller centres is absolutely true: I am afraid that the financial efficiencies of a number of our most successful retail brands, where people want to shop, are such that they require larger units, and that is

incompatible with the scale and the economies of smaller towns. I do think we have a challenge that I do not know the answer to, as to how we address the regeneration of our smaller towns.

Response: Peter Williams

A shining example is Oxford Street. You have got Oxford Street west, which is where Selfridges is, which generally has larger units; and you have Oxford Street east, which has a succession of very small units. The two could not be more different, and the environment in Oxford Street east is pretty grim.

On the other hand, Wimbledon Village is very nice because they have done something about the environment, and there are some nice boutique shops there. It is different to, say, Putney High Street, where all of the retailers have moved out, and it has become much more of a leisure place. I think that is fine: variety is fantastic.

Response: Peter Drummond

Department stores and retail units are fine in an inner-city context; they are deeper and taller than perhaps they used to be, but they are not necessarily wider, so they do not really change or damage the rhythm in the context of a street townscape. So, that is okay for large towns and cities. I think we do have problem in other places, such as historic towns, but that is just a question of control, and if a retailer does not like it then he will not go there. That is to do with the power of English Heritage and local authorities.

The thing we need to harness is the contribution of food stores, who are moving. They know they cannot just put a large, single-format, single-use store out of town anymore; they are looking at town centres and smaller town centres. I notice there is a big fuss in Wallingford at the moment about Waitrose. They have a certain scale of format, but they are looking at mixed-use schemes; they are talking about putting residential on top of Tesco stores. That points in the right direction. I do not think it overcomes the problem, but in some places they are the only game in town, in terms of a major investment element, that can force change. So there is work to be done there.

Commercial constraints

Andrew J Martin, Director of Retail Group, Hermes Property Asset Management

To be successful in retail terms, a town or project must permit shoppers to have easy access at low cost, retailers to make a profit, and investors to make a satisfactory return. Could you comment on the challenges facing architects and designers when they have to reconcile commercial needs with the requirements of consultative bodies like CABE, English Heritage, planning guidance, affordable housing, section 106 agreements, and evolving transport policies?

Response: Alison Nimmo

The weak-hearted developer gives up and tries to develop at a motorway location, and of course that cannot happen any more. I hope that the government retains a long-term commitment to keeping that out-of-town retail development tap turned off, because I suspect the more faint-hearted developers are still waiting in the wings, hoping that the tap will be turned back on again, and it is very important that does not happen. Delivering the kinds of things we were talking of earlier is an incredible challenge in our city centres, and I am not sure people have fully understood the extent of that challenge.

What we are trying to do in Sheffield is to regenerate and redevelop 20 acres of the city centre, and it is not about imposing something in as a single building, it is about developing a whole new, mixed-use quarter in the city centre, with new, quality public streets and squares. It is retail-led, but it is about residential, and it is about leisure and commercial. It is about creating a whole new neighbourhood in the city centre that happens to be retail-led and, in a creative way, is trying to fit some pretty big retail boxes into a cohesive urban framework, and that is a challenge when you have got to work with the grain around some listed buildings and existing street patterns. To tie all that in you need a very strong partnership approach, so that everybody is giving a little bit of ground to achieve something of lasting quality.

In Sheffield we would not have got as far as we have got if we did not have an enlightened developer that we gave a very challenging brief to, and we brought them on very early on in the process. We wanted a partner, not a scheme, and we choose a partner to work through the scheme with, and that

is a very important part of the process. We have English Partnerships, who have been tremendous in helping work with us to assemble the site, because there are huge risks in all of this, what with 10-year timescales and massive up-front site assembly cost and risk.

If the public sector and government is really committed to delivering on this agenda, we need that kind of proactive approach; we cannot leave it to the developer. You need somebody like a local authority or an urban regeneration company to champion the cause for the developer, help win some of these battles, and get compromises from the various agencies.

Just to comment on mixed use, it is a personal view that people get too hung up about mixed-use buildings as opposed to mixed-use quarters. We had a long debate in Manchester, trying to get the Prudential to put residential into the Shambles West development, and they would not layer residential above retail, for all sorts of reasons. What we then did was carve out a bit of the site and delivered Number One Deansgate through a specialist residential developer. So, if you like, Prudential got its way with Harvey Nichols and the retail scheme; and we got a stunning residential scheme out of it.

When you are looking at city centres and the scale of city centres, what matters is the juxtaposition of buildings and the mix of uses. If you look at the Arndale Centre in Manchester, it is a classic example of how not to do it: there are about 25 social housing units on the top of the Arndale Centre, and it is like one of those floating reed islands in South America. An anthropologist would probably have a field day! But just putting it there for the sake of it does not work, for the retailers or the people that live there. A more intelligent approach to mixed-use is needed, where you have different types of buildings next door to each other, as opposed to being hung up on every single building needing to be mixed-use.

I would like to reiterate the point that this whole agenda of city centres is at an early stage, and we need the regional development agencies and the public sector to be real champions. A lot of local authorities do not have the skills; the chief planning officer in Blackburn, or wherever, has probably never dealt with this kind of scale of change in retailing before, or with all the challenges in getting the design right. Some of these developers and retailers can be very

persistent and very hard to negotiate against to get the greater good, and that is why I think CABE's involvement and their specialist support teams are doing a fantastic job in putting some of that resource into local authorities, to help them and help us do our job better.

Privatisation of streets

Dr David Lock, Chairman and Managing Director, David Lock Associates

There is a false impression being given here. A key issue about social inclusion in this sector is the privatisation of streets. It does not matter what words of comfort you have heard this morning, the fact is, with a couple of exceptions, most retail developers, and most of the big tenants and the agents that advise them, start from the objective of having a mall which they control and own. They police this mall with men dressed up as policemen, and exclude blacks and young people hanging around, and anybody who does not want to use it as a shopping machine. A lot of the central areas of our towns and cities are being put into private ownership, and this is done in the name of social inclusion.

The words are being said correctly, but the schemes are not turning out like that on the ground. The Bullring, for example, will have private streets which will be controlled, policed, managed, shut, locked and cleaned by private companies in pursuit of the shopping activity. If you keep out the kids and the blacks and old people who just want to sit and watch the world go by, the community loses possession of the street, the quality of the street is diminished, the quality of the town centre is diminished, and there is a serious social inclusion issue. So, press the panel further on that. Alison is going in the right direction; it is a piece of town she is pursuing, not a fortress mall surrounded by bunkers, which is what we have seen pictures of this morning.

Nadine Dereza

Alison, one of the remits for the urban regeneration companies is that you have to have effective stakeholder involvement, and also get local ownership of the strategy. How are you getting communities involved? If you do not, 20 years down the line all these places that may be attractive to those segmented few, rather than other groups, will become unattractive to everyone.

Response: Alison Nimmo

We have done a huge amount of consultation. We had a massive exhibition at the end of last year, and the retail quarter has come out time and time again as the scheme people in Sheffield really want to see happen. A lot of why they love it is because it is stitched into existing buildings, and around listed buildings, and it makes the most of what we have got. It brings in new public squares which will not be locked up at night, and it brings in new streets that will not be locked up. It is a city-block approach to urban planning.

That said, there needs to be a sense of realism about how we manage our streets. We need to combine the best of out-of-town shopping mall type city-centre management with what we do in our city centres. What we are trying to do in Sheffield is get the best of both worlds, that these streets are open 24 hours and they are part of the public realm, but there is a very strict management regime, with the public and private sector working together, because that is what pulls the punters in at the end of the day. That is the kind of development that people want to see.

If you look again at the Arndale Centre in Manchester and the Eldon Squares in Newcastle, they are phenomenally successful commercial shopping centres; whether or not they are architecturally attractive, they are commercially very successful. Part of the challenge there is how you start to break them down back into their constituent parts, as opposed to the temptation there will be to develop them again, and still have a 20-acre shopping centre that is one single use and monoculture and all locked up at night.

Nadine Dereza

The Future Foundation looked at adaptability in 20 years' time and argued that segmentation is the key, and yet that obviously flies in the face of social exclusion. John, how can segmentation work so you satisfy your stakeholders, people that want value from your investments, but also satisfy the community as well?

Response: John Richards

There are good examples in Europe of a combination of civic, commercial and residential spaces that are open 24 hours a day. We do not have as many good examples in the UK as we would like to have, one of the reasons being

the 10 years' gestation. A lot of the points raised as to where we failed are, as Peter pointed out, on schemes that were designed and produced on a 1980s model. The schemes that Andrew talked about are the first of a new generation, and some of the criticisms we have heard today, which are totally valid, are what we have to pick up in those new schemes.

We currently have a regime where the British have reduced filibuster to its ultimate art form. We are not just talking about the planning enquiry on Terminal 5, although the timeframe for that was ludicrous – but at least you can understand that, since it is an enormous design. But we are embarked upon planning and site assembly that goes well beyond its natural life, and where in order to achieve fairness, people are forced to frustrate it.

The way that we run a CPO in this country means that you cannot assemble a site with people being incentivised to co-operate with the greater good. The way in which people get their rightful dues is to embark upon maximum frustration. If you then add single issue groups and other people who are implacably opposed, and have no interest in the greater good, being able to add some more delay, then it costs more and more. Money spent on that programme is money that is not available for subsidising social housing or art or anything which could be described as civic. We need to look at the legislation and the planning process and speed it up. I am not talking about steamrolling the mistakes of the past; I am talking about producing the results for the future.

Nadine Dereza

Peter, surely it makes good business sense to encourage the community to own their area, their places where they live, shop, work, whatever. In that way, those neighbourhoods which were once undesirable would become desirable once more.

Response: Peter Drummond

I will answer that, but I will respond to David Locke first. If David had said what he said five years ago, I would have probably agreed with him. But now I thoroughly disagree with David, because we have moved considerably. As John has said, the Birmingham scheme which he highlights is probably the ultimate in a shopping centre design that is trying very hard. It is not going

that next step, but that was designed eight, 10 years ago, with certain constraints on board. They were dealing with a live site, a live investment, and trying to change something that was really very difficult to change, so to just attack that is wrong.

If you saw the schemes that I know are in my office, or Andrew's, or Nigel Warner's, or Terry Fowler's office, you would see a completely different kind of scheme where they are trying very hard for the public spaces and the public realm to be open to all. That does bring with it a massive issue of who looks after and manages that space in which the investor has invested. The jury is out as to whether the local authorities are up to it, up to a management regime, or whether the investor, the institution, is up to managing it in a way in which it can still feel like a civic place that is owned by the city and is for the community, and I think the jury is out on that. But we are moving.

Outgrowing small towns

Vincent Goodstart, President, Royal Town Planning Institute

I think that this seminar has been very complacent about the real tensions that exist between achieving not just social inclusion but the transport agenda, and a whole range of other things that the retail industry has a major impact on. Part of that is because we are looking retrospectively. The prospect I see for what is going to be done in the next 10 years is an increase in concentration on a few towns; we are going to leave the small towns behind. There will be major developments which cannot fit into town centres, and we have talked about Next and where it is going, although it may not even get into the major town centres. We need to face up to this tension that exists between the demands of the industry, and I do not think we have fleshed that out in this seminar.

Lester Hampson, Managing Director, Centros Miller

We are a development company and we do quite a lot of work in market towns. The same agenda applies there for a lot of what has been talked about today, as regards picking partners and working in consultation. Following up on the comment about Next, we are building a small scheme with BDP and Boston, and Next have come back to us and asked if they can take an extra floor. They want to take three floors: 12,000 square feet. They are not taking 120,000 square feet as they are doing in Manchester, but where there is

demand because there is consumer expenditure, retailers will follow. Our job is to actually create the environment and to get the setting right, and to enhance our market towns, not destroy them.

Response: Peter Williams

There is a lot of debate today about new projects, new developments; and yet there is so much to be done with our existing projects. It goes partly back to what we were talking about earlier: Who really does own the streets? I could say from our point of view, we would love to have control over the environment in front of us on Oxford Street, and we would spend the money and make sure it is fantastic, but we cannot and we are not allowed to, which is a great tragedy. We have vested commercial interest in making it happen, and the local authorities, with the best will in the world, very often do not have the same commercial pressures as, obviously, we do. Very often, getting people to face this issue is just so far down their agenda, yet for us it is number one. Before you get in the store, you want to be in a nice place; if you are in a bad place you will not even get into the store, because you will not go there to begin with.

The bigger picture

Andrew J Martin

I have had a very successful dialogue with CABE at Milton Keynes, and it was very constructive, but my point was there are all these multifarious bodies that developers and investors have to satisfy with all their various demands and requirements and different perspectives. At the end of the day, if a scheme or a town is going to be successful from the retail perspective, people have to go there and be comfortable about getting in and out at a reasonable cost. Retailers have to make money and investors have to make a return, which is what John said earlier.

My point is that there are all these multifarious bodies and demands and section 106 and all these things, and it takes years and it costs money, and sometimes I wonder whether those people getting their twopenn'orth in have the vision to look at the bigger picture. As Alison pointed out, strong leadership is required. If that happens, as in Sheffield – and from John's and my perspective, it is beginning to happen in Leicester – then we will see positive results. But there are too many people contributing to the debate who

are looking at it from a rather narrow perspective; I would urge everybody to try and look at the bigger picture, and look at the success that can be achieved by working together.

Nadine Dereza

John, how do we get a win-win situation with agreement between professional advisers and the industry, and what does the government need to do on issues like planning, tax, local government and land acquisitions, so architecture and design can be inclusive? Also, what does the industry have to do?

Response: John Richards

We have to keep talking and work together, and not carry on self-flagellating for the errors and omissions of the past. We have got to buy into a new vision to work better together going forwards, and if the government listens to my point on timing, and works out how we can have planning much quicker, and, where we need site assembly, if we could have that with speed and certainty, then that would be a tremendous step forward in regenerating our towns and cities. I do believe all the stakeholders are pursuing an agenda which targets social inclusion at the very top of the list, and we can deliver that if we can make things happen.

Response: Peter Williams

There is a lot we could do to what we have at the moment, notwithstanding the fantastic new projects that we saw earlier. I also think that a lot more has to happen with transport, because it is not good at all, particularly in London.

Response: Alison Nimmo

Retail is critical to our urban renaissance, both physically and economically, and we have to take a much more proactive approach in the public sector if we are going to deliver the transformation of our city centres in a sustainable way. We need to take a very hard look at resourcing the local authority input in terms of skills, site assembly etc, because this is such an important agenda. If we fail to deliver it then the tap will get turned back on again on out-of-town development, and we just cannot afford for that to happen ever again.

Response: Peter Drummond

The biggest frustration is transport. To respond to Vincent's point, it is one of the key issues for the retail sector. The retail sector cannot change the transport system, and transport does have a complete degree of unreality to it, to most of us that deal with it. There is no investment; there are unrealistic targets; the bus operators have all the power; there is no single responsibility; and local politicians cannot get hold of it because they do not understand the techno-babble of the highway engineers. Planning let transport go 15 or 20 years ago; it needs to get it back.

