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## *Promoting Pop: A Guide for Regional Development*

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## ***Promoting Pop: A Guide for Regional Development***

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### **Introduction**

This PASCAL report is a guide for local/regional policy makers and other interested parties in the implementation of popular music policies.<sup>1</sup> Based on a review literature and examples of previous initiatives, it is intended to provide policy makers with a series of options. In an era often seen as being dominated by the effects of economic and globalisation, it is posited on the premise that local solutions to local problems are both possible and desirable and that local policies can make an important difference (Street 1997: 102). Anglo-American popular music may be at the forefront of processes of globalisation, but local “scenes” remain the lifeblood of this artform and are also places where governmental actions can produce the most important effects.

It should be noted that the literature review suggests that local popular music policies are not something which should be undertaken lightly. The popular music industries are frequently referred to as some of the most difficult amongst the cultural/creative industries to deal with (Cohen 2007: 150). Nevertheless, local authorities are inevitably drawn into processes of popular music policy making, even if this is simply at the level of providing statutory music education and overseeing the regulation of local venues and planning developments around these venues. Thus there is an inevitability about local authorities getting involved in popular music policy making - even if only via legal obligations. This report is concerned with an examination of what follow once a decision is made to become more directly involved. It falls into four parts. Part One examines developments in the creative industries in recent years and some the characteristics of those industries. The second part examines the nature of popular music and its attendant industries. Further contextualisation is provided in Part Three which charts developments in local popular music policy in the UK. Part Four presents a range of options for local authority involvement in popular music initiatives. .

### **Part One: The Creative Industries and The New Economy**

‘The entertainment industry is increasingly central to the domestic and global economies’ (McCourt and Burkart 2003: 335)

Recent years have seen increasing emphasis on the creative (and/or cultural)<sup>2</sup> industries as economic drivers. Across the western world as heavy/manufacturing industries have declined in economic importance, the service sector has been seen as the place where employment and economic regeneration will be created in the new economy. Within this sector, the creative industries have often been seen as being particularly important players. Some accounts have gone as far as to suggest that the creative industries will be *the* major economic driver of the future (Florida 2002a, 2002b). This has led local authorities to adopt a number of measures with one commentators noting that: ‘most of the

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted here that the majority of literature that will drawn upon in this report concerns cities, rather than regions. Nevertheless many of the lessons learned at city level are applicable to regional level.

<sup>2</sup> For the implications of the shifting nomenclature see Garnham (2005)

strategies and plans are... concerned with strengthening the arts and cultural fabric, such as support of the arts and artists and the institutional infrastructure to match' (Landry 2005: 1).

In reality some of the more high-blown accounts of the economic impact of the creative industries may now be seen as somewhat hyperbolic. This is because as Hesmondhalgh (2002: 140) notes, they have always been comparative small fry in comparison to other global corporations such as financial institutions. Nevertheless, they can be significant economic players, especially at a local level.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, they are industries which across the (western) world have been seen as attractive to politicians and policy makers at a number of levels. Perhaps paramount amongst these is the glamour associated with these industries. For politicians the chance to be seen alongside "show business" celebrities can provide levels of credibility which making political speeches might struggle to attain (Street 2002, 2003). This is not to say that allying oneself with pop or film stars will automatically increase credibility, more that judicious use of such opportunities might play well with certain constituencies at given political times.<sup>4</sup> In addition the creative industries can contribute to the image of a city/region, helping to brand it as a "cool" place to visit or live or work in.

In summary, the creative industries have been seen as vital parts of the new economy and as aspects which local authorities genuinely interested in regeneration cannot afford to ignore (Florida 2002a, 2002b, Landry 2005). One response has for government at various levels to see cultural policy as being less about preserving "high art" forms which might struggle to survive in a fully marketised economy, towards using the creative industries as a key economic driver (Cloonan 2007). Few commentators would now argue that local authorities can now ignore the economic potential of the creative industries. But in order to fully realise this potential some understanding of the nature of those industries is essential.

Perhaps the most authoritative account of the nature of the creative industries has come from David Hesmondhalgh. His work is concerned with what distinguishes these industries from other ones and he characterises as having comparatively high levels of risk which engenders a number of responses such as offsetting misses against hits, concentrating production, creating false scarcity, using formatting and exercising loose control over creativity, but tight control over distribution and marketing (Hesmondhalgh 2002: 17). The creative industries are also subject to volatile audiences who are often reached by secondary companies (such as marketing companies) who connect the creative industries with their audiences (ibid: 19). It is notable that Hesmondhalgh has the music industries in mind in much of his work.

More locally, the notion of the "creative city" has been explored in the work of Charles Landry. Landry's work is commendably restrained, while also offering a rich view of the various options which might be available to local authorities wishing to develop a creative industries strategy (see Landry, Greene *et al* 1996) and a list of fourteen criteria<sup>5</sup> for building a creative city (Landry, Bianchini *et al* 1996). However, Landry's work has relatively little to say about specific artforms, including popular music to which it is now necessary to turn.

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<sup>3</sup> To take a familiar example, consider the economic impact of Hollywood on its local economy.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, the courting of "Britpop" by senior New Labour politicians in the run up to the 1997 general election in the UK (Harris 2003).

<sup>5</sup> These are: Hard factors as a precondition to unleash creativity potential, History, the importance of individuals and open communications, networking, organisational capacity, recognition of crisis or challenge to be solved, catalyst events and organisations, creative spaces, breaking the rules, bringing in outsider opinion, attitudes towards risk and failure, approval and recognition, self-reliance and fostering endogenous creativity potential, and paradigm shifts trigger creative capacity.

## Part Two: Popular Music and Its Industries

This document is primarily concerned with *popular* music, but has not yet defined that artform. Intuitively one might think of popular music as being music which is popular – such as that which is in the music charts, available for sale in the high street (and over the internet) or performed before mass audiences at large festivals and gigs. However, this masks the fact that in simple numerical terms the majority of popular music released commercially is *unpopular* in that it sells relatively little. So low are the chances of even those acts which get recording deals with major record companies succeeding that one commentator has suggested that ‘it is reasonable to argue that the majority product of the music industry is not success but failure’ (Jones 2003: 148). Similarly many popular music gigs may be sparsely attended.

As has been noted by previous commentators, there is no widely accepted definition of the music industry. Thus Dane *et al*'s report for the UK's National Music Council noted that ‘There exist few agreed definitions of what constitutes the music sector’ (Dane *et al* 1996: 8) and a report for the UK's Department of Culture Media and Sport noted that ‘There is no consensus as to precisely what types of business are representative of the “music industry”’ (Wilson *et al* 2001: 94). One way of dealing with the complexity involved here has been to demarcate the sector into “core” and “periphery”.<sup>6</sup> While again there is no consensus on what activity should go where, “core” activities are generally held to include composing, recording, publishing, performance and manufacture of musical instruments, while peripheral activities might include radio and television use of music, education and training, management, use of music in computer games, music journalism etc.

Because of the diversity of economic activities around music, the author has recently suggested (Williamson and Cloonan 2007) that rather than use the singular term “the music industry”, the pluralistic term music industries should be adopted and this practice has been adopted here. This builds on previous work such as that of British Invisibles (1995: 6) which suggested that with regard to the music ‘it is arguable whether it is more accurate to talk of several music industries rather than a single industry’. This has also been reflected in the day workings of the music industries. As Cohen (2002 280) found: ‘Some music practitioners talked of “the music industry” when they were actually referring to activities and organisations concerned with recording rather than with live performance and clubs, while others preferred to talk, in the plural, of local music “industries” or adopted a much broader definition of the industry’. The point here is not to get hung up on definitions but to stress the breadth of the music industries. One important implication of this is that there are various ways in which regional authorities may be able to engage with the music industries – from providing broad and inclusive music education programmes through to funding social inclusion initiatives based in youth clubs and up to sponsoring major popular music events.

The nature of the music industries should also be recalled. Here a number of points are worth making. One of these is that the industries are characterised by great inequality. For every Paul McCartney or Madonna, there are millions of aspiring popular musicians struggling to gain employment. Within popular music, supply is frequently above demand. One result of this is that most music-makers are comparatively poorly off, generally earning below the average wage (Dane and Manton 2002, Johnson and Homan 2002: 4, Musicians' Benevolent Fund 2008: 4-6). Meanwhile the majority of musicians do not make a living from music (Frith *et al* 2009). Indeed the preponderance of low wages and unpaid work within the music industries has been cited by some policy-makers as a reason *not* to get involved in popular music (Cohen 2007: 152). In Seattle low wages were cited as an issue which concerned music industries personnel (Beyers *et al* 2004: 28). People within them often have multiple employers and sources of income (*ibid*: ii). In her survey of Liverpool music businesses and policy initiatives, Cohen

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<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Dane *et al* (1996) and Beyers *et al* (2004)

noted its cut-throat nature (ibid: 104) and reported on the existence of 'relations of domination and subordination' (ibid: 22) where smaller players were necessarily reluctant to offend bigger ones.

Without being unduly pessimistic, it is reasonable to suggest that local authorities considering entering into popular music policies need to consider the nature of the industries they may be interacting with. It is particularly noteworthy that the popular music industries have frequently been characterised as intensely competitive. One result of this has been a tendency to view the industries as fragmented, conflict-ridden and lacking leadership. Thus Cohen (2007: 150) found that: 'many of the music- and policy-makers we spoke to in Liverpool, and also in Sheffield and Manchester, argued that the music industry was fundamentally incompatible with civic policy-making because they perceived it as being uniquely competitive and divided'. Policy-makers reported the music industries as: 'fragmented, divided and lacking in organization and leadership, and as the most difficult of all the arts and cultural sub-sectors to monitor and regulate' (ibid: 224). Cohen noted both reports of "messiness" and "fragmentation" (ibid: 152) and made her observations of collectivism and cliquey-ness in Liverpool. Given the low wages and scarce resources which often characterised local music scenes, such cliquey-ness was likely to be exacerbated if resources were made available (ibid: 114). Overall:

'The local music business was creative and collaborative but also competitive and divided. It offered those involved a sense of autonomy and the possibility of creative and commercial success, and it encouraged collaboration. Yet at the same time the risks and costs of the business encouraged competitiveness and division and produced a common day-to-day struggle for survival and a sense of frustration and dependency' (ibid: 123).

The industries have also been regarded in some circles as being a free market form par excellence. For example Miles Copeland, owner of IRS records, called pop 'free enterprise at its best' (cited Denselow 1989: 223) following a speech to the Conservative Party conference in 1985. Such attitudes has led to a certain anti-state worldview amongst music entrepreneurs who are often suspicious that local policy makers don't understand the music industries or want simply to use them for political ends or for the imposition of red tape. The worldview of those working in the creative industries should also be borne mind and it has been noted that there is a certain irony about talking about the creative industries when many working within popular music would reject the idea that they work in an "industry" (Haslam 1999: 268).

Meanwhile as part of the leisure industries, popular music is also vulnerable to economic upturns and downturns (Cohen 2007: 224) As belts tighten, spending on leisure *may* be one of the first things to go. It should also be borne in mind that the popular music scene is very fast moving and snapshots such as that of NewcastleGateshead (Mean and Tims 2005) run the risk of quickly being out of date. Further militating against local initiatives is the fact that popular music has been seen as the most global part of the global village (Burnett 1996: 1). However, it is important not to overplay this as Cohen (2007: 1) reports that the music businesses she observed 'operated across commercial, public and voluntary sectors'.

Meanwhile the importance of local music-making should not be lost. In her masterful summary of music-making in one town, Finnegan (2007) notes the importance of amateur music making of all sorts from jazz to opera and from musical theatre. She also notes that here the dividing line between amateur and professional becomes increasingly hazy (ibid: 13). As Cohen (2007: 101) notes: 'it is important to emphasize that a vast amount of local music-making was not aimed at the commercial marketplace'. Importantly researchers from Demos have noted that music-making is above all about civic participation, not purely economic growth. Thus, they say, it is important for local authorities to remember that *every* musician counts and that musical innovation often comes from informality (Mean and Tims 2005: 27-28). In sum while it is the more commercially-orientated forms of music-making

which has received the bulk of attention, the vital non-commercial areas must not be overlooked. Indeed, it might be suggested that it is incumbent upon local authorities with an interest in the cultural life of their jurisdictions to take the needs of amateur music-makers into serious consideration.

It is also important to note that places has a significance within popular music which arguably is not true of other forms of music. Towns such as Liverpool (Merseybeat), Chicago (blues), Nashville (country), Detroit (Motown) Seattle (grunge), Bristol (trip hop) have become heavily associated with forms of popular music. In addition at the same time as interest in the cultural industries as agents of economic growth was growing, within academia Popular Music Studies was continuing to grow (Cloonan 2005). As it grew, it also became more interested in examining local scenes. One result was that a growing number of academics became interested in the political economy of such scenes. This interest included becoming involved in various local initiatives (Cohen 2007).

Of some importance here is the fact that, as Stahl (2007) notes, cities (and regions) exist both materially and symbolically. Places can be visited and physically touched, but they can only ever be envisaged as a whole place in one's head - that is symbolically. Moreover that symbolism can be altered – we may change our minds about a place. Amongst other things this means that cities and regions can be re-symbolised or re-imagined. The image of a town, city or region can alter via a combination of real events, material changes and “branding” (Garcia 2005, Reid 2007). This has important implications for local music making. For example, in 2008 Glasgow successfully applied to become a UNESCO City of Music. At the time of writing the actual impact of this is unclear, but it may easily be speculated that it forms part of a broader process of branding Glasgow as a cultural centre (Scotland With Style as its latest promotion has it). If more tourists are attracted by such assignments, then places of entertainment, including music venues, may well benefit. However, whether the (cultural) “scene” will benefit is more intangible. Overall such initiatives do provide potential for serious engagement with the creative industries and for developments in areas such as social inclusion, cultural policy and economic development. In order to illustrate this, it is useful to provide an overview of developments in the UK.

### **Part Three: Historical Developments in the UK**

The development of popular music policies in the UK can be seen as encompassing a move from local initiatives to national ones. They can also be seen as having their origins in social policy around the needs of young people and moving more towards economic policies which major corporations wish the government to pursue (Cloonan 2007). At national level governments can legislate and negotiate international treaties in key areas such as copyright in sound recordings, broadcasting, free trade agreements, education policy, etc etc. While more constrained local level there has been an international trend towards use the arts in regeneration projects (Landry, Greene *et al* 1996: 29-31, Landry 2005: 5).

In the UK local authorities have long been concerned with the *regulation* of popular music in places such as pubs, clubs, concert halls, public parks and other venues their involvement in the promotion of popular music has been more recent, although the lineage of providing publicly funded entertainment can be traced back at least the Victorian era and the provision of band concerts for the general public. More recently it is possible to trace the roots of local popular music policies back to the mid 1980s. During this time youth unemployment was a major concern and many local authorities were alienated from a central government which was at this time seeking to exert more and more control on public spending.

Local government was also the site of some resistance to this with councils such as those such as the Greater London Council (GLC) and Liverpool mounting high profile political campaigns against the Conservative central government. The GLC came to be at the forefront of moves to use popular culture

initiatives as part of a broader battleground of ideas. Under Ken Livingstone's leadership, it set up an Arts and Recreation Committee in November 1981 and used the arts in campaigns such as the Peace Year (1983), London Against Racism (84) and Jobs Year (85). It also increased arts funding for ethnic minority projects from £400,000 in 1982-3 to £2M in 1985-6 (Hewison 1995: 238/9). The GLC set up a cultural industries unit (Landry 2005: 7) which importantly sought to work through, not against the market, seeing itself as investing rather than subsidising (Hewison 1995: 240). Thus it 'pioneered an arts and cultural industries strategy that, for the first time in Britain, linked culture firmly with economic development and economic policy' (Cohen 2002: 265). But this did not mean that broader social aims were ignored. As Street (1997: 108) notes at the GLC: 'Support for popular music was treated as part of a general desire to provide job training and to boost the local economy, as well as serving its commitment to multiculturalism'.<sup>7</sup>

While the GLC was probably the most adventurous council, a number of Labour-controlled councils which had big inner city areas also began to see the potential to use popular culture for what was more often than not a social agenda, in this instance trying to build the local economy as well as support multiculturalism (Street 1997: 108). Thus cities such as Liverpool, Sheffield and Norwich began to provide support for popular music initiatives. These included public support for venues (The Picket in Liverpool, the Leadmill in Sheffield, the Waterfront in Norwich and the Riverside in Newcastle) and recording studios (such as Red Tape in Sheffield<sup>8</sup> and The Picket in Liverpool). Red Tape also included another key resource for musicians – a rehearsal space (Street 1997: 104), as did the council-supported Fallover studios in Hulme, Manchester (Brown 1998: 9). Indeed the provision of rehearsal space is vital for bands and the lack of such facilities seriously hinders the chances of success (Frith 1994: 178). Providing such spaces this is something that local authorities may still be able to do relatively cheaply, having taken existing provision and the need not to undermine commercial operations into account. Certainly the loss of local rehearsal spaces can be keenly felt by local music makers (Cohen 2007: 203).

In general local authorities got involved in areas such as provision of recording studios, helping to provide live venues, concert promotion and various music training/education schemes (Street 1997: 104). The motivation was often the loss of jobs in previously vital sectors such as textiles in Manchester and steel in Sheffield (Brown 1998: 3 and 6) which coincided in some cases with commercial success for local acts. In general it was Labour local councils which got involved, primarily, suggests Street (1997: 110) as it was such councils that tended to be in control of the large urban conurbations. However it is also clear that a generation of politicians who had gone through the 1960s and seen the effects of its counterculture were relatively relaxed about using public money to support popular music projects as they realised that popular music could be politically significant (Street 1997: 109).

The legacy of such projects is inevitably mixed. However despite the fact that very few formal evaluations of such initiatives exist<sup>9</sup> the various initiatives do provide a number of lessons. The first is that, for a number of reasons, such projects are seldom long term. The reasons include political, economic and industrial change. Thus, for example, changes in studio technology combined with changes in the economy mean that local authorities are less likely to invest in recording studios than they once were. Another lesson is that investment in one sector may serve to undermine existing businesses in that sector. Recording studios are again an example of this as the supply of local government-subsidised recording studios may serve to draw business away existing studios, thus damaging what may already be a fragile local music economy. In addition unless such facilities are of

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<sup>7</sup> For an overview of the GLC see Bianchini (1987).

<sup>8</sup> See Brown (1996: 3-6).

<sup>9</sup> See, however, Brown (1998) and Brown *et al* (1998)

“industry-standard” (which can be expensive) then they may well not be used by professional musicians of the sort whose cultural capital is likely to attract more musicians to use the facilities (Brown 1998: 9).

More broadly it can be seen that what started out as primarily social inclusion projects in the 1980s had twenty years later turned into projects which were much more driven by economic concerns (Cohen 2007: 192). By the late 1980s the Association of District Councils was noting that: ‘It has increasingly recognized that the arts in general are an important *industry* employing large numbers of people, generating a lot of income, attracting many tourists, earning foreign currency, and that it is quite wrong to see them only as a burden on the rate payer, a minority, elitist activity of marginal relevance to the mainstream of the economy and society’ (cited Street 1997: 113, its emphasis). Street (ibid: 106) has also noted that the first reason that local authorities are interested in supporting popular culture is ‘that it makes economic sense’.<sup>10</sup>

Overall it can be seen that local music policies which were once characterised by their opposition to a free-market inclined central government were increasingly replaced by partnerships with the private sector (Seyd 1990, Brown 1998). This does not mean that cultural and political aspects are absent. As Cohen (2002: 263/4) has noted with regards to Liverpool: ‘although Liverpool’s music industry policy initiatives have tended to be strictly concerned with economics and with music’s economic impact on the city, they have also been very much about culture and politics, representing a political battlefield in which different groups have struggled to control connection between the music industry and the city, promoting a contested discourse that connects the music industry with city identity’. Overall she suggests that Liverpool’s popular music initiatives raised ‘conflict and debate over what popular music and the music industry are, and over their respective connections with the city and with local identity’ (ibid: 290).

More generally the motivations of policy-makers need to be taken into account. There is a great deal of difference between subsidising the local production of music in order to allow local musicians to make music which they then may be able to sell in what is in essence a bottom up approach, and using public resources to attract mega events such as the MTV Europe Awards to a city in order to fill hotel rooms and enhance a city’s image for tourists. One may allow musicians to develop their social capital, another is more rooted in the exploitation of economic capital. Moreover, Cohen (2007: 219) notes that in some instances publicly-financed regeneration projects, including those involving popular music, can result in the privatisation of what were previously public spaces.

In part the role played by the regional authority will be determined by the location of that region’s popular music industry within the broader global music industries. Thus well-known popular music cities such as Nashville or London may adopt different policies from cities which are less well known for music. In some cases the policy may reflect a desire to preserve current competitive advantage, in others it will be shaped by a desire to overcome competitive disadvantage. Here a mixture of the contemporary scene and the historical legacy will be in play and decisions will need to be made about whether the region is to be represented (or “branded”) as somewhere which has an important musical legacy or a vibrant contemporary scene or, hopefully, a mixture of both. The demography of a region – such as whether it has significant ethnic minority populations – is also a key concern. Such considerations lead into thoughts about what options might be possible.

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<sup>10</sup> He goes on to suggest that the second major reason is that of courting political popularity and a third is to use cultural provision as a form of social control (Street 1997: 107).



## Part Four: Options for Developing Popular Music Policies

As has already been noted, regional authorities will be drawn into making policies with impact upon popular music. For example education and licencing policies will impact on local popular music scenes regardless of regional authority desires. The question is therefore the extent to which the authority wishes to engage with popular music beyond what is necessary. If a decision is taken to engage or, more likely, if opportunities, invitations or demands to engage occur then local authorities can decide if their basic approach is to think about subsidising popular music or, more positively, to see this as cultural investment.

Brown *et al* (1998: 259) suggest that there are essentially two approaches which local authorities can do, adopt a hands-off approach or commission “inspirational” projects around buildings, public spaces and festivals. They caution that this needs profound thinking, rather than seeing popular music as a quick fix for a range of problems (ibid: 260). This may involve ‘widening the scope from “music industry” to include all those elements that contribute to the emergence and sustainability of a vibrant local music scene’. Hence the importance of considering indirect as well as direct intervention. In fact Frith *et al* (2009) suggest that rather than local authorities seeking to develop creative industries clusters, they should look at how the state of the existing musical community and seek to improve things via indirect policies such as licensing and planning laws, housing, education and employment laws - all of which can have major indirect impacts.

Street (1993: 44/45) suggests that there are at least 4 ways in which local government can intervene in popular music – regulation, finance (e.g. setting rates), cultural policy and industrial/economic policy. Some idea of the range of local authority initiatives can be gained by the work of Sara Cohen (2007: 130-135) on Liverpool which she notes public funding of a new higher education institution for the arts (Liverpool Institute of the Performing Arts), reports on the local industries (Music City, City Beat) and EU funding for the Merseyside Music Development Agency (MMDA) as well as being lobbied by the Merseyside Music Industry Association (MMIA). Importantly Cohen (2002: 290) has noted that the conflict that can be engendered in such situations. One of these is the tension which arises when those advocating music policies generally want to keep jobs in a local area (ibid: 283), whereas a lot of popular music and a lot of popular music practice is actually about *escaping* the local. She has noted that local music ‘policy-making was... by no means straightforward or consensual but was a politicized and contested process’ (Cohen 2007: 139) which in the same work she describes as ‘a battlefield involving groups with conflicting interests in music’ (ibid: 126). Brown *et al* (1998: 253) have noted that often those within the industries wanted a “hands-off” approach and simply to be allowed to be creative, a founding also backed by Cohen (2007: 137).

Such wishful thinking is unlikely in the current climate where the creative industries remain a key focus for both local and national politicians. So what follows next is a range of options is possible and what follows is an attempt to map some of the broad areas which regional authorities may consider getting involved in. The list is intended to be illustrative rather than instructive and should not be considered to be exhaustive. As the structure of the music industries constantly changes, so do the challenges and opportunities they present to local authorities. But it should also be borne in mind that the motivation behind any policy remains a key factor and can range from a desire for more social inclusion through to a desire for political popularity. Here the policies adopted in setting up a community recording studio in Derwentside, northern England, offer inspiration as it was reported that: ‘The criterion for success was to be the extent to which people were empowered, enabled to carry through their own projects and assert their own identities’ (Hudson 1995: 470).

## Mapping

Perhaps the first issue confronting local authorities wishing to determine what popular music policies is the nature and extent of the music industries within their borders. So local authorities may well be advised to undertake an economic mapping of the local industries. The methodology adopted will be crucial and presumably it is differing methodologies which account for the fact that while in 2005 Demos was reporting 25 record labels in Glasgow (Mean and Tims 2005: 5), a mere four years the bid which went in to back the city's bid to become a UNESCO City of Music claimed that there were 91 labels within the city (Glasgow City of Music 2008: 30). While this might appear to be a flippant example, the fact is that direct comparison between reports is often hampered by differing definitions of the music industry and different methodologies. Thus difficulties include which parts to include, how to calculate economic value, the policy implications of the findings and the antagonism from some sectors which such reports seem destined to engender.

It is also worth considering the fact that nearly every report on the value of the music industries has come with various health warnings about the robustness of the figures produced. For example Beyers *et al*'s report on music Seattle noted that 'music industry components.. do not fit neatly into industrial categories' (Beyers *et al* 2004: 6), while in the UK Dane *et al* (1996: 7) lamented a 'general absence of comprehensive data on the industry'. In addition nearly every report adopts a different definition and methodology, meaning that comparisons between sets of statistics verge on the insidious. Reflecting on her experience of seeing reports produced on the Liverpool music industries Cohen (2007: 135) reports that: 'The quality and reliability of such studies was variable, partly because the economic impact of cultural activity was notoriously difficult to assess, measurement criteria varied and those working in the arts and cultural industries had little experience of justifying their work in terms of economic development'.

However, such reports will at least provide some evidence of the relative strength of each sector and can suggest new policy initiatives. They will also prevent local authorities from developing policies which do not take the wider context into account. Certainly a number of them become influential (Cohen 2002: 264) and numerous have been produced.<sup>11</sup> They can help to identify key issues for an area,<sup>12</sup> as well as outlining its strengths (Beyers *et al* 2004: 25). Mean and Tims 2005: 7) which can include a critical mass of musicians (Beyers *et al* 2004: 26) and be measured in terms of production by local artists and labels and consumption by tourists and others (Texas Perspectives 2001: 4). Opportunities open to local businesses can also be gauged (Beyers *et al* 2004: 21), but supply of musicians can often exceed demand (Texas Perspectives 2001: ii), in a context where regeneration has tended to have a mixed impact on musicians (ibid: 26-27).

Personal experience<sup>13</sup> suggests that the publishing of such reports is unlikely to be uncontroversial (Cloonan *et al* 2004). As Cohen (2007: 141) found, when such reports are often published in a context where there are 'competing claims to knowledge about the music industry and competing efforts to influence its development'. In part this is a reflection of differing concerns. While it may be too crude to suggest that academic accounts stressed the cultural value of popular music, while consultants stressed the economic, it may safely be said that different emphases were in place. Academics were often interested in local music *scenes*, economic development agencies in local music *business*.<sup>14</sup> In reality this crude dichotomy masks a great deal of overlapping interest.

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<sup>11</sup> See, for example, those listed by Brown (1998: 6, 17 and 25-26) and in Cohen (2007).

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Beyers *et al* (2004: iii and 20) and Texas Perspectives (2001: ii-iv).

<sup>13</sup> See Williamson *et al* (2002)

<sup>14</sup> See Cohen 2007.

The political context is important here and may mean that the writers of such reports are attacked for how they define the industries, what they include as economically relevant and for being either unduly pessimistic (Frith *et al* 2009). However at a minimum they will often include recommendations about what should or could be done<sup>15</sup> and this is perhaps their key strength. It is thus recommended that local policy makers review previous reports from other localities and seriously considering undertaking mapping and consultation exercises before implanting new policies.

## Choosing Partners

One issue that local authorities will face when deciding about whether to get involved in popular music policy will be that of choosing partners. It has been suggested that if initiatives are to work there needs to be 'a degree of sympathy between lobbyists and politicians, a sense of shared culture' (Street 1997: 111) and Shank (1994: 215) has shown that music policy initiatives in Austin, Texas, benefited from a strong collaboration between music-makers and the local business community. Links between local authorities and music-makers/entrepreneurs can be hard to establish especially as the latter may be immediately suspicious of a "council thing" (Brown *et al* 1998: 255). It has also been noted that some policy makers can see popular music as disreputable, while those working in it saw themselves as rebels (Cohen 2007: 276). In addition it is often the case that musicians are at the forefront of campaigns *against* forms of regeneration (ibid: 221).

The role of key individuals can also be important. Thus, for example, the entrepreneur Tony Wilson, owner of Factory Records and part owner of the Hacienda night club, was frequently represented as Mr Manchester (Morely 2007, Ward 2007). There are dangers here as Brown (1998: 20) notes that in Manchester 'a few prominent individuals may have been seen as representing Manchester's music industry' despite the fact that a multitude of varying viewpoints were in existence. Nevertheless personal experience and the literature suggests that most cities and regions will have key players whose views it will be necessary to at least consider if popular music initiatives are to take place. There may also be key lobbying/interest groups or activists whose campaigns will need to be considered and there are examples of this stretching from East Anglia (Street 1997: 111) to New South Wales (Panichi 2008).

Ideally a broad range of the local industries will be involved as what may otherwise emerge is reliance on a small cohort which may result in the entrenchment of political and business rivalries (Cohen 2007: 140). It is impossible to offer a panacea for the issues that choosing partners presents. Nevertheless Mean and Tim (2005: 2) rightly note that initiatives must 'work with the grain of passion for music' in a given area which 'means creating and maintaining the environmental conditions for making and listening music to thrive – starting from the bottom up'. Some initiatives have developed above the heads of local music industries, leading to resentment (Reid 2007), whereas the apparent commercial success of other local scenes has seen calls for it to simply be left alone (Brown 1998: 7). The breadth of the music industries also needs to be borne in mind and local authorities will need to prioritise those areas with which it wants to engage. In each case choosing key partners is likely to be crucial.

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<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Beyers *et al* (2004: 30-31) and Texas Perspectives (2001: iv). In the former case many of the issues were indirect and related to things such as business tax and transport policies. Perhaps the best example of a direct impact on policy is the report by Johnson and Homan (2003) which eventually helped lead to legislative changes in the New South Wales Parliament (Panichi 2008).

## Recording and Rehearsal

As noted above, the provision of recording studios and of rehearsal space (often in the same building) was once at the forefront of local authority popular music policy in the UK. As Brown *et al* (1998: 254) note: 'Recording studios were seized on by a number of councils as a straight forward (sic) solution to a music industry and/or "community arts" policy'. This is understandable as both activities can be seen as basic to music-making and any artist wishing to "make-it" will soon move from writing and rehearsing to recording. However, the problem was that too often the actual *needs* of local music-makers were ignored and so they remained distanced from the local authority (ibid: 255). Nevertheless there may still be a place for local authorities here, especially in opening up access to such spaces to disadvantaged groups, something which has been done relatively successfully (Hudson 1995). It might also include providing small loans or grants to local studios and/or labels (Mean and Times 2005: 25).

However it has been pointed out that if facilities are provided, then the question becomes one of who is to get access to them. In many ways this question of allowing access to resources can be considered analogous to what record companies have traditionally undertaken (Brown *et al* 1998: 258). Nevertheless local recording and rehearsal venues could be considered if such initiatives are planned as it may be possible to work in partnership rather than running the risk of alienating local businesses through competition. Certainly evidence from Derwentside in northern England suggests that there can be many benefits of publicly funded recording studios being available for the wider community (Hudson 1995).

## Promotion/Development agencies

A number of local authorities have funded popular music development agencies of various sorts. An example of this comes from Australia where state governments have funded agencies such as Music New South Wales, Q Music (Queensland) and West Australia Music Industry (WAMi). In Scotland the New Music In Scotland (NEMIS) organisation was funded by a mixture of central (Scottish Arts Council) and local (Scottish Enterprise Glasgow) funding and a mixture of Scottish Arts Council and the Enterprise agency money will support the establishment of the Scottish Music Industry Association.

Based primarily on the Australian experience, a number of observations can be made about such organisations. The first is that these organisations are generally rather small, consisting of around two full time employees at most. Not surprisingly the bigger the organisation, the more it is possible to do. Thus in Australia by far the most active organisation was WAMi which had by far the most employees. The organisations concerned were involved in a number of activities such as providing advice, helping with tours, helping acts travel to music industry events, working with indigenous musicians and helping to retain and attract talent..

Some of the agencies may take on advocacy roles whereby they try to represent the views of "the music industry" to government. However, experience suggests that such bodies may become subject to sectoral bias. Consensus across volatile industries where small business are often in direct competition is unlikely. As Brown (1998: 20) noted in the case of Manchester 'a variety of distinct opinions, networks and viewpoints exist within the local industry and to seek a "representative" body or view is difficult if not impossible'. Thus local authorities may seek to establish bodies which are more directly advocacy-based rather than attempting the difficult task of establishing organisations which are genuinely representative of what is generally agreed to be a fragmented and highly competitive set of industries.

The case of Liverpool, where the local industries formed the Merseyside Music Industry Association (MMIA) only to be dwarfed by the publicly-funded Merseyside Music Development Agency (MMDA) shows that there is likely to be fierce criticism if publicly-funded agencies come to supersede voluntary

music industries bodies but are perceived as being less effective. The structure of such organisations is also important. This Cohen (2007: 142) suggests that when the MMIA tried to be democ it was accused of not being effective. However a more pressing problem is likely to be a lack of focussed support the music industries – as has been reported in Austin, Texas - (Texas Perspectives 2001: iii), which may result in a diverse range of initiatives rather than a cohesive policy (ibid: 30). Across the Atlantic this has lead to calls for a publicly funded network in NewcastleGateshead (Mean and Tims 2005: 24) and certainly the idea of a publicly-funded “one-stop-shop” for musicians and music industries personnel remains attractive. Thus the scope for regional authorities to become involved in music industries organisations involved in developmental and advocacy work remains an important one.

## Education

Here it is important to think of education in its broadest sense from private tuition lessons to music in schools and from training schemes to higher education. One major consideration is the provision of music tuition. This is not likely to grab newspaper headlines, but is obviously vital to local musical health. It goes beyond what is statutorily required in schools to broader community and tertiary education and the provision of broad music tuition. Certainly publicly funded venues have an important role to play in the provision of music tuition as Gateshead’s Sage venue has shown (Mean and Tims 2005: 11, Holden and Jones 2006).

It should also be noted that the health of local music scenes and of tertiary education and intertwined and can be conceived if as mutually reinforcing. Educational institutions provide a number of things which successful music scenes need – such as audiences, musicians and local entrepreneurs. It may not be the case that the provision of tertiary education will automatically lead to a healthier music scene, but it is also hard to think of a successful contemporary scene where tertiary education has been absent. An example of how music can influence education is shown by Brown *et al* (1998: 251/2) who reports that the “Madchester” scene of the late 1980s coincided with a 25% increase in applications to Manchester’s three universities. Meanwhile Frith *et al* report that the strength of the Glasgow music scene owes much to its tertiary education sector which allows popular musicians the time to refine their art. Similarly Shanks’ *Dissonant Identities* (1994) shows how important the University of Texas is to the scene in Austin, Texas. Overall the breadth of education supplied by local authorities is important music scenes can but benefit if music education goes beyond the statutory minimum.

## Live Music

Playing live is the lifeblood of many popular musicians and a key part of any music scene. Economically, live music was reported in 2008 to be worth more in the UK than recorded music (Prynn 2008). Live music is also a vital part of what has become known as the Night Time Economy (NTE) and therefore somewhat controversial.<sup>16</sup> As previously noted, local authorities have long been involved in the regulation of live music and thus in what might be characterised is indirect music policy.

What is apparent is that it is in the live arena that local authorities can have the greatest indirect impact on popular music. Because they are often responsible for licensing venues<sup>17</sup> and for aspects of the health and safety of customers, local authorities have a legitimate interest in the running of popular music venues within their jurisdiction. The sheer range of venues which can be used for popular music is important here – from public parks and private stadia to local bars and clubs. All will have their own regulatory issues.

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<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Hadfield (2006).

<sup>17</sup> For a classic account of the ways in which local licensing legislation adversely affected the provision of live jazz in New York see Chevigny (1991). For more recent problems in Sydney see Panichi (2008).

Problems can arise when local authorities are seen, for whatever reason, as being obstructive to the development of live music. Often the question concerns licensing. To cite just one example, it was reported that 'Sheffield has experienced severe problems with licensing', with no new nightclub licences being granted in the city in a 15 year period up to 1995 (Brown *et al* 1996: 256). Meanwhile ten years later it was being reported that the main problem in Newcastle was a failure by the local licensing board to distinguish live music venues and bars (Mean and Tims 2005: 22). Even the best of intentions can have adverse effects as Homan (2000: 40-41) notes that attempts to make Sydney venues safer and less noisy incurred new costs for venues with already tight overheads. The lessons suggested by the authors of this are that local authorities might think of what barriers they might remove to help live popular music flourish, but also to consider what impact their other projects are having on live popular music. In helping venues move from one regulatory framework to another public funding might be used judiciously

In addition to licensing local authorities will have to deal with what might be termed the detritus of live popular music. In particular the practices of flyposting and user fliers to advertise gigs has caused confrontation. Thus for example it was reported that Newcastle has had 'a well-earned reputation for vociferously pursuing people flyering from local venues' (Mean and Times 2005: 6) and that Liverpool Council has also taken action against flyposting despite the fact that 'many music venues depended on fly-posting as their main source of advertising, even though it was often in breach of the law and the local authorities had increased penalties against those who broke the law' (Cohen 2007: 204). This sort of action, though well intentioned, can alienate live music promoters and Mean and Tims (2005) suggest that compromise is necessary. This can include having designated spaces for flyposting and reframing it as public art with awards for the best poster of the year. In addition:

'Ideally there should be no restrictions on flyering in the street. This may not be possible but as a compromise venues that are willing to allow flyering and posters from other venues on their premises, should be exempt from licenses. Alternatively, a different license, or perhaps no license at all could be applied to publicity material relating to local musicians or local musicians or venues advertising local acts' (Mean and Times 2005: 22).

Another aspect of the detritus of live popular music is that of noise. It needs to be recognised here that as urban spaces become ever more crowded and that as many regeneration projects involve new people moving into city centres which are increasingly being branded as 24 hour places of entertainment, then issues of noise regulation have become much more widespread (Johnson and Cloonan 2008). So noise problems around venues have been reported in places such as Newcastle, England (Mean and Tims 2005: 16) and Perth, Australia ([www.sasp.dca.wa.gov.au/](http://www.sasp.dca.wa.gov.au/)).

Insofar as these problems are associated with incomers objecting to long established premises, one suggestion has been to require that all new residential developments have "buyer beware" information outlining the provision of live music and other entertainment in the area (Mean and Tims 2005: 22). As has been astutely noted:

'Just as heavy industry was impossible without smoke and noise, the creative industries also create a certain amount of necessary dirt. There should be tighter regulation of building standards with regards to sound-proofing near music venues and a better distinction between unsolicited fly postering and the vital flow of information and publicity that makes a local music industry possible' (ibid: 27)

Perhaps one of the most advanced responses to these problems has come in Western Australia where the government established a Sound Attenuation Support Program ([www.sasp.dca.wa.gov.au/](http://www.sasp.dca.wa.gov.au/)) within its Department of Culture and the Arts. The Program tries to assist live venues in managing noise and offers advice to developers and potential new residents as well as to the venues. It also offers grants for

sound insulation. Here all stakeholders are at least offered advice and here the Program appears to be an example of best practice.

More generally live music has been held to offer a challenge to notions of the 24 hour city (Cohen 2007: 212/3) and the choice seems to be about whether to be active or reactive. Meanwhile it is also important to note that planning decisions to allow new venues may are not unambiguously good as they may hit existing ones (Mean and Tims 2005: 18) and a glut of new venues may undermine the long term sustainability of successful local live music economies.

While local authorities will inevitably be drawn into issues around the regulation of live music and can choose to adopt a more or less proactive, stance, perhaps the most immediately appealing way for local authorities to become involved in live entertainment is in support of live music such as sponsoring major festivals (such as Glasgow City Council with Celtic Connections and Cambridge with the city's long-running Folk Festival) or sponsoring one off events (such as Paul McCartney's appearance at Liverpool football club's Anfield stadium in 2008). Or local authorities may get involved in community festivals which incorporate music such as Bradfords's Mela (Landry, Greene *et al* 1996: 41). Certainly involvement in festivals has been mooted as an appropriate ways for local authorities to became involved in popular music policy (Gibson and Connell 2005: chapter 7) from Newcastle (Mean and Tims 2005: 23) to Austin (Texas Perspectives 2001: 25-6).

Local authority involvement in live music might also include helping to attract major industry events - such as Edinburgh's support for the MTV Europe awards in 2003. Such events may contribute to the "branding" of a city or region as "cool" or in helping to *re-imagine* cities (Brown 1998: 8). Indeed, in the case of Edinburgh and the MTV Europe awards, the main impact seems to have been in enhancing the city's reputation as a tourist destination. Meanwhile Glasgow evidently sees its UNESCO Coty of Music status as built upon its ability to attract *international* talent to play in the city (its bid included a picture of James Brown) and a broader events strategy which included attracting the UEFA Cup Final and Commonwealth Games to the city.

However, local authorities should not simply consider the promotion of large events (including concerts) as a win-win situation as they have implications. Thus in the case of Edinburgh it was apparent that whilst the MTV Europe awards had had some economic impact, they also caused some resentment amongst local music makers, further alienating from public agencies (Reid 2007: 490). There were also questions about whether the *event* rather than the city was actually what came across the coverage (ibid: 486). The then First Minister of Scotland, Henry McLeish, was perhaps more truthful than he realised when he said of the MTV Awards that there was 'no way of quantifying the effect of the rest of the world looking at Scotland in a new light' (cited Reid 2007: 488) as such things are, indeed, hard to quantify. Nevertheless the sponsorship of major events remains a potential lucrative areas of investment for local authorities and one way of making a mark in the global scene, albeit an expensive way. According to Reid (2007) the lesson should be not to ignore local cultures and to make sure that these are given at least as much consideration as those of international sponsors with no long term commitment to the region.

Local authorities have also become involved in developments of the provision live music venues via the development of multi-purpose venues which often act as conference centres as well as music venues. Examples of this include Glasgow's SECC and Manchester G-Mex Centre. Space prevents a full discussion of the issues here, but the principle in getting involved in such projects should surely be that the widest possible range of the public benefits.

At the other end of the scale local authorities may become involved in projects which aim to both engender a new generation of live music promoters and responsible behaviour at gigs. Australia has

been at the forefront of this. For example, the state of Victoria's Freeza programme ([www.freeza.vic.gov.au/](http://www.freeza.vic.gov.au/)) involves young people promoting such gigs and includes The Push project ([www.thepush.org.au](http://www.thepush.org.au)) which uses this to help young people participate in their local community. Similar projects include the Western Australia's Rammpage ([www.rammpage.com.au/](http://www.rammpage.com.au/)), New South Wales' Indent (Independent Entertainment Network) ([www.indent.net.au/](http://www.indent.net.au/)) and Queensland A-Venue ([www.qmusic.com.au/a-venue/index.cfm](http://www.qmusic.com.au/a-venue/index.cfm)). The social aspect of these projects is obvious and a number of overlapping aims came together here – the promotion of alcohol free gigs, social inclusion of young people and the provision of new promoters for live music.

It should also be noted that live music scenes are fragile economies where indirect policies can have enormous impacts. For example, the live music scene in Sydney was disrupted by a relaxation of gambling laws in New South Wales which led to a proliferation of poker machines ("pokies") in pubs, many of which stopped providing (Johnson and Homan 2003). Rising property prices and middle class encroachment into entertainment areas in places such as Surry Hills and Paddington had also had a detrimental effect (Homan 2000: 32). A number of important venues were reported as closing or changing to non-music venues (ibid: 33). But the major impact was a cumbersome licensing regime which was eventually repealed (Panichi 2008). The lesson here is that local authorities which wish to have a flourishing live music scene need to keep constant vigil on the numerous factors which can impact adversely on that scene. This can include rising inner rents which venues can struggle to meet and which local authorities may be able to mediate.

At a more basic level local authorities can help promote level music by such things as ensuring that public transport is available to those leaving gigs at night (Brown *et al* 1998: 293) or by publishing gig guides (Mean and Tims 2005: 23). Thus live music offers a range of opportunities for local authorities to become involved in popular music. Once again it is to be hoped that this goes beyond what their statutory obligations.

## Retention

A number of local policy initiatives have been driven by a desire to ensure that local artists who are successful are retained for the economic and cultural benefit of the region. Thus in the 1980s Sheffield wish to capitalise on the success of local acts such as The Human League and ABC, while in Liverpool local policy-makers were concerned that the enormous financial success of Frankie Goes To Hollywood was having little local economic impact (Brown 1998: 3 and 11). Personal experience has suggested that while they are at liberty to sign acts from across the globe and while they may have had limited commercial success, the presence of Chemikal Underground records in Glasgow since 1995 is of enormous cultural significance. Meanwhile the Scottish Government has designated 2009, the 250th anniversary of the national poet Robert Burns, as the Year of Homecoming in an attempt to both re-brand the country and attract tourists, especially from the Scottish diaspora.

In the case of Sheffield, the Council was concerned that bands had to leave the city to record (Brown 1998: 3) and that bands such as the Longpigs, Pulp and Baby Bird had left the city once they were successful (ibid: 16). Meanwhile in Liverpool Echo and the Bunmen were praised as a band who had stayed in the city (Cohen 2007: 120), However Cohen (2000: 287) cautions that as part of the mythology of popular music is getting away and making it, those who remain in their home city can be case as failures. Nevertheless the retention of successful of musicians has been seen as vital to a local scene. Thus in Perth Paul Bodlovich of WAMi believed that the fact that local band Eskimo Joe continued to live in Perth was 'more valuable than any number of workshops on the creative industries' (Cloonan 2008: 10). Denise Foley, Executive Officer of Q Music in Brisbane said that one of the motivations for the organisation was that: "We wanna be able to create the opportunities for younger musicians to develop



here" (ibid, emphasis Foley). Importantly Beyers *et al* (2004: 32) have noted that a successful music scene can be retain *other* key workers in a city.

Retention is a difficulty issue as some many factors contribute to why people wish to remain living in an area. Nevertheless is it clear that musicians will stay in places where they feel they can practice their art. This entails having access t the sorts of facilities that music making requires. Here local authorities have a role to play in helping to making sure that those facilities are in place. If they are, retention will be made easier and scenes more vibrant.

## Cultural Policy

This report has been based on the assumption that popular music policy is a form of cultural policy with important economic consequences. It has not therefore chosen cultural policy as an area to highlight. Nevertheless it is clear that local authorities do have important decisions to make about their cultural policies and that cultural policy remains important (Frith *et al* 2009). Evidence suggests that the full impact of policies should be assessed. This means thinking through the spaces in which cultural initiatives are hosted and how their location fits with broader activated within a given area (Brown 1998: 4, Brown *et al* 1998: 255).

Drawing on previous work by Brown (1998), a number of other observations can be made. Local musicians and music entrepreneurs may become frustrated if local authority bureaucracy means that access to finance is more difficult than it would be in the private sector (Brown 1998: 15). Lack of joined up thinking may produce a rash of initiatives rather than a coherent policy (ibid: 21). Councils may adopt a "hands-off" but supportive role (ibid: 16 and 17) and this may suit an industry in which practitioners are not necessarily looking for subsidies, but merely to be allowed to be creative (Mean and Tims 2005: 21). However local authorities might be able to helps by providing cheaper rents for organisations and companies involved in cultural production (Brown 1998: 18). In Austin, Texas, the local authority recognition of the importance of popular music includes: 'providing music by local artists at the airport, funding a cable access channel devoted entirely to local music, and administering a loan program specifically for the music industry' (Texas Perspectives 2001: 3). Once again, a range of options are apparent.

## Tourism/Heritage

A number of cities have capitalised on their musical heritage in order to attract tourists. Examples include Nashville's designation as "Music City USA" and Liverpool's more recent attempts to capitalise on its Beatles' heritage including naming its airport after John Lennon.<sup>18</sup> To an extent the degree to which local authorities are able to exploit musical tourism will be dependent upon its musical heritage and its contemporary scenes. It will also be dependent on the extent to which the private sector is already exploiting these factors as tourist attractions. It should also be noted that tourism is hardly a passive process. In the case of Liverpool, Cohen noted tensions about the version of Liverpool which was produced in Beatles' themed events and that: 'Beatles tourism did not simply reflect the city, but also produced it' (Cohen 2007: 167). So in this sense authorities need to be wary about *how* their jurisdiction is being constructed. Nevertheless a rounded popular music cannot afford to ignore tourism and the shrewder ones will ensure that this has a broad appeal (Texas Perspectives 2001: 24)

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<sup>18</sup> See Connell and Gibson (2003), chapter 10 and Gibson and Connell (2005).

One variation of the tourism theme is to attract music industries conventions to the region. Successful examples of this include the South By South West convention in Austin, Texas,<sup>19</sup> MIDEM in Cannes, Pop Komm in Berlin and In The City in Manchester. Such events help to brand cities and can also help local acts gain access to new markets. However, they require careful planning (which is often contracted out) and should be carefully evaluated.

## Conclusion

One conclusion to be drawn about the relationship between local authorities and popular music is that it has no conclusion as it is an ongoing process with continuous vacillations. In the modern era where cities and regions are constantly re-branding themselves and in which the cultural industries are seen as key economic drivers, doing nothing about popular music or simply remaining reactive while meeting statutory requirements may not be a serious option. There is now something a political consensus that government should help the creative industries even if this means simply removing “red tape” and “protecting” (or extending) copyright. Ultimately the approach adopted can be driven by long-term planning or short-term expediency. It will also be driven by the motivations of those in charge – whether they are more concerned with issues of social justice or branding their jurisdictions in the interests of international corporations.

Shrewd authorities will have one eye on the potential of the music industries as economic drivers, will keep another on the darker side of poor wages and links to the black economy. They will also be aware of the hype around notions such as the creative city and the creative class without thinking through the implications of this.<sup>20</sup> They will also be aware of the broader context of globalisation and the fact that popular music is often seen as being at the forefront of such processes but that, as Homan (2000: 35) many pressing issues for popular musicians remains ‘stubbornly local’. They will be aware that approaches can either be top down (Reid 2007) or bottom up (Hudson) and can involve looking at either supply or demand side cultural economics. It will be recognised that a lot of popular music activity is mundane and not glamorous and that such work is unlikely to attract newspaper headlines.

Frith *et al* (2009) argue that what matters is ‘the nature of the local music culture.... and... the axes between local music making and global music exploitation rather than local attempts to replicate global industry institutions on a smaller scale’. They suggest that what is important is links with major centres of music, consideration of local musical culture and of local musical communities. Successful music scenes need a combination of musical resources, spaces and time. Often ideas are more important than money *per se*, although local activity needs to interact with the global and in many ways popular music policy can be seen as an attempt to mark out “the local” as distinctive in markets which can be seen as increasingly homogenous.

More broadly a review of the literature reveals is an exciting range of possibilities for local authority involvement in popular music offers - from local community initiatives up to mega-events. Popular music can make regions and cities better places to live in. In that sense it has much in common with the aspirations of local authorities. Carefully managed, there is much scope to work together for mutual benefit.

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<sup>19</sup> This was described by Texas Perspectives (2001: 4) as tourism.

<sup>20</sup> See Landry (2005: 12-13) for the dangers of this.

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