

Cultural Event and Urban Regeneration: Lessons from Liverpool as the 2008 European Capital of Culture

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Abstract : For many European cities, a key motivation in developing event strategies is to use event as a catalyst for urban regeneration. One type of event that is particularly used as a means of urban development is the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) initiative. Based on a case study of the 2008 ECOC Liverpool, this paper aims at conceptualising the significance of major event for a city's economic, cultural and social regenerations. In terms of economic regeneration, the role of the ECOC is central in creating Liverpool's visitor economy and reshaping city image. Liverpool planned different themes for eight consecutive years as a way to ensure economic sustainability. As far as cultural regeneration is concerned, the ECOC contributed to the cultural regeneration of Liverpool by stimulating cultural participation and interest from the demand side, as well as improving cultural provision and collaboration within the cultural sector from the supply side. So as to social regeneration, Liverpool treated access development as a policy guideline and considered the ECOC as an opportunity to enhance the sense of place. The most significant lesson learned from Liverpool is its long-term planning and efforts made to integrate the ECOC into the overall urban development strategy. As a result, a more balanced and long-term effect on urban regeneration could be achieved.

Keywords : cultural event, urban regeneration, european capital of culture, Liverpool

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