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CULTURE MEDIA & SPORT

Culture, Media and Sport (general principles) and Sport and Media Policy

General

Background

CMS100 Culture Media & Sport (CMS) are three important elements through which social identity and a sense of community can be fostered in larger social groupings than those which can be sustained by personal relationships.

CMS101 In all areas of CMS there are two ways in which people can engage with the activity – through participation as performer or producer, or through reception as audience or spectator. Both forms of engagement with the particular activity are important; the major social value of CMS activities is the dialogue between participant and observer.

CMS102 The rise of new media at the beginning of the 21st century can be seen as a public expression of a need for better access and improved participation. Similarly the continuing existence of grass roots activity in sport and culture, despite the large scale withdrawal of public sector support, shows the continuing need and value of these activities to citizens.

General Principles

CMS200 The central Green principle in Culture Media and Sport (CMS) shall be that of promoting participation over passive consumption.

CMS201 Green policies should seek to democratise access to culture, media and sporting activities, ensuring that individuals are not excluded by reason of age, gender, social, ethnic, economic or geographical factors.

CMS202 There is a particular duty on organisations responsible for administering cultural, media and sporting activities to ensure that both participants and audiences are not subject to any form of discriminatory treatment or abuse.

CMS203 We believe, as across all our policy, in democratising and localising where possible. Regulatory structures need to be effective and accountable, and applied and controlled at the most local practicable level.

CMS204 Support should be given to ensure that there are adequate resources available to allow activities to flourish at a local level of participation. Where the private sector is unable to provide accessible local media, local sporting activity or local cultural support then it is the role of government to ensure that adequate provision is avail-

able to meet the needs of the community.

CMS205 Where an activity makes use of limited resources (for example media bandwidth, land for sporting activity, venues for cultural activities) then it is the role of government to reserve a proportion of the resource for ‘public’ access (e.g. public service channels, public playing fields, support for local theatre infrastructure)

General Policies

CMS200 Green elected members of government authorities will seek to introduce policies to promote the widest participation in culture, the media and sporting activities.

CMS201 Specific policy frameworks for each area are outlined below. All policy proposals are aiming to reinforce the core principles of accessibility, localisation, participation and fair management of limited resources.

Media

Media Background

CMS600 The media section covers three major areas:

- a) Broadcast media: primarily television and radio
- b) Print media: primarily newspapers, magazines and journals.

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- c) New media: primarily internet delivery by landline, wireless and mobile access.

In addition this section deals with advertising in the media.

A major concern for a policy framework across all media is the ownership of the means of content production and distribution, particularly where this allows gatekeepers to control access to the medium

A second concern is that some media make use of a limited resource (e.g. electromagnetic spectrum, print distribution channels, internet bandwidth) and where this is the case a proportion of the resource needs to be maintained for public service purposes.

A third concern is that, particularly in the case of the traditional media (press and broadcast), there need to be systems to ensure a degree of local access and content.

Media Principles

CMS610 The Green Party believes that a public service element in mass communications is a vital part of Britain's democracy. A healthy democracy is an informed democracy.

CMS611 The Green party believes that market mechanisms alone are an insufficient basis for regulation of the mass media.

CMS612 A key factor in Green Party media policy is recognition of the large influence that the mass media has on our democracy and our citizens. Public information supplied through

mass media channels should not be subject to private or ministerial control.

CMS613 The world of mass media and digital communications is one of constant technological change and innovation. There is no reason why such changes cannot be utilised to facilitate greater public welfare and democracy.

CMS614 As a general principle data that is collected or generated at public expense should be made available to individual citizens for private use at no extra charge. Examples include Ordnance Survey mapping data and Post Office postcode data (see PA856)

Media Objectives

CMS620 We believe that there is a proper democratic case for limiting cross media ownership by trans-national companies. We would have tighter rules on cross-media ownership. We are not convinced that arguments around globalisation and competition are any justification for loosening restrictions. Allowing individuals and companies to have too much influence undermines the operation of healthy informed democracy, not just in the UK, but across the EU and beyond.

CMS621 We would seek to encourage wider, more localised, participation and discourage any further concentration of media ownership. Local participation links in with our economic strategy of strong local economies

(see EC500)

CMS622 Part of the role of public service broadcasting is to provide a shared space for all citizens. Atomised broadcasting contributes to an atomised society; publicly supported channels should seek to address the whole society, reflecting the diversity and common interests of the whole potential audience.

CMS623 Public service broadcasting means that information and education are given equal precedence to entertainment in terms of availability and are not ghettoised to inconvenient times.

CMS624 As noted above, a public service obligation also includes entertainment as part of the mix. A public service channel may help ensure that top quality entertainment is available at times and places where it may not be commercially viable. This could include offering repeats of peak time entertainment from other channels in non-peak slots, as well as the production of high quality original programming

CMS625 The operation of public service media should be entirely divorced from interference by the government of the day both in terms of editorial content and in terms of economic support. Government's role should be confined to defining and reviewing a public service remit for channels with a public service obligation and providing sufficient funds to fully deliver the public service obligation through the Public Service Media Council (see CMS645).

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CMS626 Across all the broadcasting media and press we would seek to ensure that local channels were locally owned and accountable. The concentration of regional press and radio ownership in national organisations acts to reduce diversity of output reflecting regional and local differences. The loss of locally owned television stations with the aggregation of ITV and Cable TV ownership is unhelpful and we will seek ways to reintroduce and protect viable locally based channels.

CMS627 New media ownership and access need to be monitored to ensure that 'digital divides' or ghettoisation of sections of the community does not occur. Just as society has historically provided a universal postal and telephone service to every address in the country without geographic penalty, so we should seek to ensure universal access to digital television and radio channels, broadband communications and mobile telephone use.

Media Policies

a) General

CMS630 We will establish a principle of appointing regulatory bodies by democratic means, through nomination from appropriate democratically organised bodies, including trade unions and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), as well as direct and indirect elections. All senior appointments, such as Director General of the BBC, or Chair of the Independent Television Commission (ITC), should be made by regulatory bodies, and

where appropriate, scrutinized by the relevant Select Committee in the House of Commons.

CMS631 The Office of Communications (OFCOM) will remain as the primary regulatory authority across all media, but the remit will be amended to give social and cultural concerns equal weight to commercial factors. The current bias against intervention has tended to create a focus on market failure as the basis for regulation.

CMS632 Membership of the OFCOM Board and the Board Committees will be reformed to include democratically elected representatives from stakeholders.

CMS633 The role of OFCOM will be further expanded to take on statutory responsibility and regulation for matters relating to print media. In the first instance OFCOM may delegate front line complaint handling to the Press Complaints Commission (PCC), but OFCOM will provide a regulatory framework for the work of the PCC

CMS634 A free press & media are fundamental to our society and should not be constrained by spurious definitions of the public interest. Privacy laws, whilst protecting citizens' rights, should not be used to obstruct proper investigative journalism.

CMS635 Trade unions in the mass media can help democratisation of access to media by giving employee stakeholders a voice in the output of media channels. The Green Party will

support the role of unions in the media, with a view to developing a formal union representation on governing boards of large media organisations in the UK.

b) Public Service Broadcasting

CMS640 In television and radio an important component of a public service obligation is the production and promotion of non ratings-led programming. Public service broadcasters will not be expected to maximise ratings where they can demonstrate a cultural value to their work.

CMS641 The primary public service broadcaster will remain the BBC funded wholly by public money from a tax which may be ring-fenced (hypothecated) for public service broadcast use. The operation of this tax should not be regressive. The existing licence fee will be abolished and in the first instance replaced by a guaranteed inflation linked payment from general taxation.

CMS642 As part of its public service obligation the BBC will be required to continue to develop its centres of excellence in all regions of the UK and have a significant local presence in all regions. The centralisation of functions in London does great dis-service to the rest of the country, and modern technology makes it feasible to run a fully dispersed national organisation.

CMS643 The BBC should be organised primarily as a public service and thus not have to behave as if it operated in a commercial market. This is not to discourage innovation in the BBC or

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to prevent the BBC competing in certain markets against commercial companies, but to recognize that the value and success of the BBC is not solely measured in commercial terms. Following from this the funding of the BBC cannot be viewed solely through an economic prism, but must include the idea of public utility.

CMS644 The Green Party believes in maintaining public funding, as long as the BBC is pursuing clearly stated commitments to non-ratings led programming and continuing to fulfill a public service remit defined by the government through the regulators. This would include significant local production and distribution of content reflecting local communities.

CMS645 Whilst the BBC remains a public service organisation it is vital to distance it from Government or State interference. The level of funding available and its distribution between the BBC and other organisations fulfilling public service obligations shall be removed from direct government control through a democratically appointed Public Service Media Council.

CMS646 The Public Service Media Council (PSMC) will agree with government the total level of funding required for all public service media to deliver the agreed public service obligations. PSMC will distribute the funding to appropriate organisations including the BBC.

CMS647 Where an existing public service medium is being supplanted by a new alternative

(as for example in the switch from analogue to Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) broadcasting, or the possible movement of some public service programming to new media) then the government has an obligation to ensure universal access before the old medium is discontinued.

c) Commercial Broadcasting

CMS650 We would seek to restore some public service obligations to the commercial TV and Radio broadcasters. In particular we wish to see the reintroduction and protection of locally owned and run television and radio channels through more stringent controls on the licenses issued to broadcasters.

CMS651 We would establish Community Media Centres, at a sub-regional level, where residents of the area can be trained and produce programmes that reflect the diversity of perspectives in their community. These Community Media Centres should be run democratically and accountable to regional public broadcasting councils.

CMS652 We will remove financial and other bureaucratic barriers to small geographically based channels built around the local output of Community Media Centres.

CMS653 Broadcast media will be regulated such that there is a presumption against aggregation of ownership both within and across media.

CMS654 We are opposed to 'contesting' funds for Public service programmes ((i.e. opening

up a programme fund for which all Broadcasters can bid). This will undermine BBC's and C4's public service platform. Only where existing public service broadcasters are unable or unwilling to meet an identified public service need would funding through PSMC (see CMS646) be opened to alternative channels.

d) Press and print mass media

CMS660 Ownership and control of national and local print newspapers and journals is a proper matter for regulation by OFCOM.

CMS661 At present we do not see the need for a public service print publisher in an analogous position to the BBC, but this shall be kept under review as the newspaper market evolves.

CMS662 Concentration of ownership of the distribution channels for print media acts as a barrier to new and unusual entrants. There may be a case for intervention by the regulator (OFCOM) to ensure a vibrant print culture develops. Retailers shall not be tied into single distributor agreements for magazines and national chains will be encouraged to allow local management to source and stock local material.

CMS663 Measures will be introduced to encourage local ownership and editorial control of titles particular to specific communities, cities and regions.

CMS664 We will encourage local papers to report on local government issues (parish, town, district and principal authority

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levels) as a public service to help re-engage citizens with their governance.

e) New Media

CMS670 Democratisation of media/TV: the Green Party recognises and welcomes developments in broadband TV channels that allow free participation. The Green Party believes that government at all levels should encourage such democratisation of media, and wider participation in generating content.

CMS671 Councils will be encouraged and helped to make their public deliberations available through streaming media.

CMS672 The Green Party believes that the development of computer communications has reached the point where BT should have an obligation to provide broadband capable infrastructure to every household. Funding for marginal 'uneconomic' lines may come from a small levy on every access line. The principle of universal access at the same base price to the household should prevail as with post and telephone services.

CMS673 The BBC will be allowed to carry its public service role over into new media through developing its web and online services funded from its general revenue stream. In line with the principle of limiting cross-media ownership, we may wish to see the new media arm of the BBC develop into a separate organisation which carries a public service obligation specifically for

new digital media and funded from public money through the Public Service Media Council.

CMS674 As technologies evolve 'spare' spectrum or bandwidth may become available. This represents a valuable 'commons' which should not simply be auctioned to the highest bidder but a proportion should be reserved for public use.

f) Advertising

CMS680 Advertising has great impact on the world in which we live. The Green perspective is that in the context of deregulated commercial freedom and unsustainable consumption by citizens, advertising is in need of some restraint. Whilst we recognise the freedom of individuals to make informed choices for themselves, regulation is needed where the impact of consumption is to the detriment of society. Regulators have a particular responsibility towards children and the vulnerable.

CMS681 Advertising to Children. Unsustainable economic growth is highly influenced by a culture of consumption. This culture is currently engendered in children and young people by advertising, particularly on television. Children must be protected from unscrupulous marketing and aggressive advertising. A Green government would strengthen regulation of advertising in media that may be viewed by children, and of products intended for consumption by children, to ensure that they are factual and informative and not ma-

nipulative.

CMS682 As specified in DU401 we will introduce a complete ban on promotion of tobacco and alcohol products through advertising or sponsorship.

CMS683 Environmental Advertising. Products which are harmful to the environment, for example in terms of greenhouse gas emissions through use, or embodied carbon in their manufacture or distribution, will be required to carry a prominent warning in all advertising. See also policies TR550, TR552 and TR553 on air travel advertising

CMS684 Social Advertising. The costs associated with advertising space create an imbalance between commercial and non-commercial organisations in their ability to influence the public. We will investigate means to provide access to all advertising media for groups seeking to redress a perceived imbalance.

CMS685 Political Advertising. Political Parties are not fundamentally commercial organisations, and need continuing access to media channels in order to help maintain a citizenry aware of the political issues and involved in the democratic process. The system of Party Political Broadcasts should be extended to allow registered political parties some free access to media space outside election periods and in print as well as broadcast media. Access between elections would be dependent on the party exceeding a given threshold of votes cast in the last round of proportional rep-

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resentation elections, in line with the rules regarding eligibility for state funding of political parties (see PA307)

CMS686 The aggregate and cumulative effect of advertising taken altogether is to increase overall demand and foster a materialist and consumption driven culture which is not sustainable. The overall volume of advertising that promotes unsustainable consumption will be controlled and gradually reduced. This control will be exercised by OFCOM, who may also exercise it over forms of advertising not otherwise within their control. They will take into account, amongst other things:

- a) the extent to which advertising is straightforward and factual, and provides useful information to consumers, or promotes worthwhile causes or activities, as against unsustainable consumption,
- b) the need, given the importance of advertising revenues, to maintain and encourage diversity within the media and freedom of editorial expression,
- c) an overall target for the volume of advertising provided by the government to OFCOM annually in the light of economic circumstances
- d) the need to avoid unnecessary regulation of small scale or local activities that promote the development of the local economy or community.

Sport

Background

CMS800 Sport can have a very positive influence on the society we live in. Participation in sport improves physical fitness, and sport can help provide a sense of community and can help break down barriers between communities through engaging in friendly competition.

CMS801 There has been a growth in sport as a spectator based entertainment and a diminishment of sport as a means to improve physical health and cooperative behaviours. We see a need for government to encourage and provide support for participation in all sports at local level.

CMS802 National excellence in sport can best arise as a result of a widespread engagement in sporting activity across age, class, race, gender and geography.

CMS803 Any sport that involves the killing or infliction of pain or suffering upon any animal is excluded from this section (see AR411)

Sport Principles

CMS810 There are significant wider social benefits through increased participation in sport; for example health and well-being benefits translate into reduced pressure on the NHS (see H311) and improved green economic performance (see EC310)

CMS811 In line with the principles above, the Green Party believes that there is no place in sport at any level for racism or any other form of discrimination.

CMS812 The Green Party further recognises that sport is one of the main remaining areas of gender discrimination. Women face many barriers (social, cultural, official) to full participation in many sports. This is an equally unacceptable discrimination.

Sport Policy

a) General

CMS830 Programmes to combat discrimination should be introduced wherever necessary, with a particular focus on young people.

b) Sport in School

CMS840 Participation in physical activities such as sport is a very important part of children's development. Because many sports require special facilities, equipment, or the participation of large teams, they can be things which children or parents will be unable to properly organise for themselves. Schools therefore have an important role in first introducing children to a wide range of sporting activities.

CMS841 Sport in school should not be treated in the same way as other lessons. Since it can involve setting up equipment and getting to and from playing locations, all of which take time, sports are likely to suffer if they are timetabled into a school day just like any other lesson. Instead, they should be given sufficient time to make them meaningful. This may be achieved by extending the school day and increasing resources specifically to enable sporting and physical activities.

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CMS842 Schools should be aiming to provide a full, unbroken half day per week of sport for every child, in addition to daily opportunities for physical exercise. All sports should be open to all children and all children should be expected to participate in some sporting activity appropriate to their needs.

CMS843 Schools should seek to form ties with local sporting clubs (either amateur or professional) in order to share facilities, gain coaching assistance and provide pupils with an easier route to taking up these sports outside school.

CMS844 School playing fields should be protected from development through rigorous planning controls. All new schools should include sufficient indoor and outdoor facilities to ensure that all pupils can be accommodated.

CMS845 School sports facilities should be open for access by local clubs and teams outside teaching hours to ensure maximum use of a valuable resource. This would apply to all types of school however funded. In addition, as noted in ED320, community resources should be fully integrated into the educational system.

b) Amateur Sport

CMS850 Participation in amateur sport fosters good community relations and helps maintain people's physical fitness. The aim of sports education in school should be to encourage as many

people as possible to continue participating in sport after they leave school. As the vast majority of this participation will be at an amateur level, it is important to ensure that sufficient facilities exist to allow the participation of all those who want it.

CMS851 Local councils should ensure that facilities such as sports centres, swimming pools and sports fields are sufficient to meet demand. The importance of local amateur sporting teams should be recognised by government at all levels, who should provide assistance to such clubs whenever practical. This could include the use of school fields by clubs for matches, where such clubs are unable to maintain their own grounds.

c) Professional Sport

CMS860 A strong school and amateur sports culture should, in turn, strengthen professional sport by both encouraging those who wish to pursue sport as a career and increasing the potential audience. Access to a sporting career should be available without discrimination to anyone with the desire and ability to pursue it.

CMS861 In addition to their commercial aspect, professional sporting teams often represent communities at local or national level and this social function needs to be recognised and supported by developing structures which would allow local stakeholders to participate in the running of the business.

CMS862 The Green Party

would prefer professional sporting clubs to be mutually owned by the members rather than by shareholders. For those clubs which are currently Public Limited Companies, whose shares are traded internationally, the risk is always that distant shareholders, with no regard for the community the club is supposed to represent, will take over the club and sever all meaningful links with the local community. In some instances, clubs have even been moved to other towns and cities - making a mockery of any supposed local connection implied in the club's name. We will introduce legal mechanisms to allow transformation of such PLCs into Mutual Organisations with agreement of stakeholders.

CMS863 Where clubs wish to remain as PLCs, the Green Party would like to see supporters' trusts set up with the aim of achieving enough of a shareholding to prevent the club being taken over by outside financial interests.

CMS864 Local authorities should be permitted to invest in shares in professional sports clubs which operate in their area as a means of maintaining a connection between the club and its community. Any dividends paid to the authority must be reinvested into public sporting facilities or coaching programmes in the area.

CMS865 We believe in 'safeguarding' for sports stadia. This means that spectators who wish to stand will be allocated their own space separated from seating

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only areas. There are examples of good practice in countries like Germany and we believe it is high time the UK adopted this practice. Currently (2007) UEFA does not allow the use of standing areas in grounds for its fixtures. We would seek to undo this ban where such areas are proven to be safe for spectators and where the police are satisfied that no crowd control issues would arise.

d) International Sport

CMS870 Whilst professional sport is a business, as noted above, its role in representing a community in a spirit of friendship and mutual respect with other communities should never be overlooked. This is especially so in the case of international sport.

CMS871 If a team is representing the nation then the Government should take a role in deciding whether it is appropriate for the team to take part in competition against a country with whom normal friendly, respectful, or diplomatic relations are not possible. The Government should not try to avoid taking action by treating the sport as if it was a private business venture.

CMS872 In determining whether a particular country is appropriate for international sporting contacts consideration should be given to the freedom of access by supporters and media in the country. If host government actions meant that such freedoms for UK citizens and journalists could not be reasonably guaranteed, there should be a presump-

tion against a visit by a representative national team.

CMS873 Strategic national planning should seek to ensure that major national sporting arenas are not all sited in one part of the country and that all can be easily accessed by good public transport links. Wherever practical, the venue for international sporting fixtures should be rotated around various suitable stadia throughout the country, and should avoid being excessively focussed in London.

CMS874 When bidding to host major international sporting competitions, such as World Cups or the Olympics, wherever possible existing facilities should be proposed. No new facilities should be proposed unless their existence will also prove to be useful to the wider local community in the years to follow the games.

CMS875 The UK should use its influence with the world sporting community to encourage the placing of international games across wider geographic areas to prevent excessive negative disruption to the lives and economies of host communities.

CMS876 The televising of major national and international sporting events has a significant influence in inspiring young people to take up sports. It is therefore important to ensure that such events remain available on free-to-air nationwide TV. The Government should resist proposals to remove events from the list of those protected in such a way. It should negotiate to get highlights

of major events which are no longer protected in this way, and events staged overseas involving representative national teams, made available on free-to-air TV if possible.

f) Localised Sports

CMS880 Some sports are specific to small localised areas of the country. For example Cornish Wrestling and Sussex Stoolball. Local authorities should particularly seek to encourage and support such activities both in education and in the community.