

25 January 2018

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board – report from Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE (Chair)

Tourism and the Visitor Economy

1. I met Denis Wormwell, Chairman of Visit England to discuss the tourism sector's bid for a deal under the industrial strategy, the Board's priorities relating to tourism, and ensuring our tourism industry continues to thrive after leaving the European Union. We also discussed whether Visit England was properly resourced to deliver high-profile marketing campaigns.
2. Cllr Peter Golds attended a parliamentary event held to launch the National Forest's new tourism plan, as part of the Board's wider investigation into extending the season for the domestic visitor economy.
3. I wrote to Greg Clark MP, Secretary of State for BEIS, and John Glen MP, Minister for Tourism, to outline our support in principle for the tourism sector's bid for a deal under the Industrial Strategy, but also our concern at the lack of recognition of the role of councils in supporting and promoting the visitor economy. This followed a presentation on the bid to the Board by Visit England and Tourism Alliance.

Sport and Physical Activity

4. Our first sport and physical activity conference took place on 5 December, with over 75 delegates. Lead Member Cllr Peter Golds chaired the conference, which included key note speakers such as Tracey Crouch MP, Minister for Sport and twice women's cricket World Cup winner, Lydia Greenway. The conference also launched our new [Active people, healthy places](#) publication, bringing together good practice and different models for delivering sport and physical activity services.
5. I met with Nick Bitel, Chair of Sport England and reinforced the very positive relationship between the LGA and Sport England, developed through our joint delivery of leadership essentials sport programmes and ongoing work in supporting Sport England to implement their sport strategy. This has included providing advice on the 'Local Delivery Pilots', which is providing £100 million to 12 areas across England to develop innovative ways to increase participation in sport and physical activity.
6. I also met with Ashley Brown of Supporters Direct to discuss the role of communities in running clubs or influencing their management boards.
7. Cllr Peter Golds attended a joint parliamentary event by the APPGs on Mental Health and Sport, exploring the role of sport in tackling mental health problems.

Parks

8. I represented the LGA at the first Government Parks Action Group, convened and chaired by Marcus Jones MP. The group has been established as part of the Government's response to the CLG select committee inquiry into public parks, which found that they were at the tipping point. The group brings together key funders such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, charities like Fields in Trust and Keep Britain Tidy, and representatives involved in practical management such as friends groups. The group has been allocated £500,000 to invest in solutions that will help place public parks on a sustainable footing.

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Libraries

9. The LGA continues to act as co-accountable body, with DCMS, for the Leadership for Libraries Taskforce. I met with Kim Bromley-Derry CBE, the Taskforce's new Chairman and Chief Executive of London Borough of Newham, and Kathy Settle, the Chief Executive for the Taskforce. We discussed ensuring that the £500,000 per year investment in the Taskforce was providing the best value to hard pressed library services.
10. Cllr David Jeffels represented the Board at Creating the Library of the Future Roundtable event held by the APPG on Libraries. The event stressed the need for developing the scope of libraries to make them a more valued asset in the community, including acting as commercial hubs. Their roles in supporting Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SME's) and as places of life-long learning and re-skilling were also discussed in depth.

Heritage

11. Cllr Michelle Tanfield attended a parliamentary reception celebrating 70 Years of listing historic buildings. The event coincided with the announcement of the 2017 register on heritage at risk, as well as the more positive announcement of a further eight heritage action zones by Historic England. The new areas include Stoke-on-Trent, Rochdale and Grimsby.

Theatre

12. The Board has taken a particular interest in the role of theatres acting as anchor organisations for culture-led regeneration, following case studies from Cheshire West, Leicester, and Stevenage. As a result, I attended a UK Theatre Board meeting and held a follow-up meeting with their Chief Executive, Julian Bird, to discuss this role for theatres, and how they are taking steps to engage communities more widely.
13. Cllr Peter Golds spoke at UK Theatre's Business Resilience Conference to outline how they can engage with councils' key priorities and maximise their impact within a local community.
14. Cllr Michelle Tanfield has been appointed as the Board's representative to UK Theatre, and will be exploring these connections as part of our culture-led regeneration work.

Leadership Essentials Sport and Culture events

15. Lead Member Cllr Peter Golds spoke at the Leadership Essential Sports event in November and Leadership essentials Culture event in December 2017, where he outlined the landscape facing councils and the work that the LGA is undertaking to support councils. 20 portfolio holders attended these events and feedback from them was again very positive.

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Media

16. The Board has issued the following media releases since my last report:

- [Response to the Museums Review](#)
- [Budget response to Cultural Development Fund](#)
- [Response to £100 million pilot investment to combat inactivity](#)
- [Response to City of Culture Announcement](#)
- [Christmas markets surge brings festive cheer to high streets](#)

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