Activity Update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

An update on the work of the CTS team, including delivery of the Leadership Essentials courses, Conferences and Peer Challenge programmes.

Recommendation

That the Board note the activity of the team.

**Action**

Officers to progress with work as outlined.

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**Activity Update**

Background

1. This paper gives a brief update on the activity of the LGA CTS team – specifically on the two main improvement programmes it provides – the contract with Arts Council England (ACE), which includes the Library and Cultural Peer Challenges and the Culture Leadership Essentials courses and the contract with Sport England (SE) which includes Sports and Physical Activity Leadership Essentials courses for both members and officers.

Issues

**Peer Challenges**

1. Since the last Board, we have reached the deadlines for our applications of interest in receiving one of the ten library peer challenges or the three cultural services peer challenges.
2. We have received four expressions of interest in the Library Peer Challenges and one for the Cultural Services, so have decided to implement a second round of applications for the peer challenges running in January- February. We have revised our communications strategy to ensure there is wider awareness of the opportunity to apply.
3. We have also received a sufficient number of applications for peers and peer challenge managers to conduct the challenges and will be hosting a training event for them on the 30January.

**Leadership Essentials**

1. Since the last Lead Members meeting, we have held both one of our Sports and Physical Activity Leadership Essentials (LE) courses, delivered in partnership with SE and one of our Culture LE courses, delivered with ACE.
2. The Sports and Physical Activity LE event took place for 7 delegates on the 15-16 November in Loughborough University and featured a range of good practise examples, leadership training and explanations of how Sport England and LGA can support councils.
3. The event received very positive feedback, with 100% of attendees very satisfied with the course and 100% feeling more confident in the ability to carry out their role.
4. The Culture event took place on the 11-12 Decemberin Scarman House at Warwick University, for 6 delegates. It featured speakers from a wide variety of local authorities and some sessions targeted specifically at leadership skills alongside explanations of the support the LGA and ACE offer.
5. The feedback from the event was again largely positive, with 66% of delegates finding the course greatly increased their ability to carry out their role and 83% feeling the course met their goals from the two days.
6. The feedback supports LGA and ACE perceptions that, while still well received, the cultural offer can be revised to deliver a more strategic narrative and provide delegates with a more practical understanding of how change has been achieved in the case study areas. This refresh will take place early in 2019, led by the new Improvement Adviser, and be in place for the 2019/20 leadership essentials offer.
7. More of these courses are coming up, with a Culture LE on the 24-25 January and a Sports and Physical Activity course on the 28 February - 1 March.

**Conferences**

1. On the 5 December, we hosted 35 delegates at the Sports and Physical Activity Conference in Bevin Hall at 18 Smith Square. The conference saw a range of interesting speakers, such as Baroness Tanni-Grey Thompson, 12 Gold-Medal Winning Paralympian , and Chris Perks ,Director of Local Delivery for Sport England , provide examples of best practise across the sector and inspirational stories of the transformational power of sports within communities and individuals.
2. The Annual Conference for Culture and Tourism takes places on 5/6 March 2019. This event is hosted by the City of London at the Guildhall, and contains the choice 4 walking tours around London, a host of speakers including a closing address from the Chairmen of ACE, and former director of the Tate, Sir Nicholas Serota. It will also include the presentation of the Hearts for the Arts awards.

**Media**

1. The LGA has issued a press release in response to new draft guidance by NICE on improving physical activity. This noted the importance of activity taking place outside of swimming pools and gyms, the value of high quality services such as parks and green spaces, alongside work by council to develop planning structures which take walking and cycling routes into account.
2. We also responded to an inquiry from The Times concerning the impact of budget cuts on libraries. Cllr Vernon-Jackson’s response was quoted in full in both The Times and The Express. Our response recognised the ingenuity among staff and volunteers in keeping services open and innovating, but highlighted the impact of losing £15 billion from council budgets.

Implications for Wales

1. This work is devolved to the WLGA.

Financial Implications

1. The Leadership Essentials courses are fully funded via contract with SE and ACE respectively.
2. The Peer Challenge work is also fully funded by ACE.

Next steps

1. The team will provide a training day for peers and peer challenge managers before they conduct the Library and Cultural Peer challenges, this is scheduled for the 30 January and the team are currently drawing up the agenda for the day.
2. The team is working on booking speakers and arranging the agendas for the upcoming Culture and Sports Leadership Essentials Courses.