

Culture, Tourism and Sport Programme Board Chair's Report – Cllr Chris White (Chair)

Meeting with Future Libraries Programme (FLP) projects and Ed Vaizey MP, Culture Minister

1. On 24 January, three of the councils involved with the FLP (Suffolk, Manchester and Kensington and Chelsea) gave presentations on progress to date. The councils are leading the way with finding more efficient ways of delivering library services by, for instance, giving local volunteers the opportunity to run libraries, sharing back office functions and developing a single library service across three London Boroughs. The learning from these projects and the other seven projects in the first wave is being shared widely across the sector.
2. I also emphasised the importance of securing a second wave of FLP projects to continue to support the modernisation of libraries, and the need for clarity about how the transition from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) to the Arts Council will be managed.

Tourism issues

3. Baroness Eaton and I met John Penrose MP on 11 January to discuss tourism and joint working with English Heritage on new and more efficient ways of working for local heritage services. The government is publishing a new tourism strategy next month.
4. As a result of this meeting, and with the express approval of the Board, I have written to tourism portfolio-holders suggesting ways in which councils might be able to support Destination Management Organisations which were in danger of folding.
5. We are currently discussing with Visit England how the highly successful national tourism partnership, Partners For England - which brings together RDAs, DCMS, Visit England, the industry and local government - can be reshaped to fit the new tourism landscape.

Local government's engagement with the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

6. At the end of January I wrote a letter to Hugh Robertson, Minister for Sport and the Olympics, to highlight our concerns around local authority

engagement with the 2012 Games in the light of Regional Development Agencies winding down their support of the Nations and Regions Groups (NRGs). I emphasised the need to retain a strategic layer of engagement between the local and national level to ensure that critical cross-boundary issues are dealt with. I argued that wherever possible NRGs should be supported to continue in their present form and, where this is not possible, it should be up to local partners to agree a way forward. I suggested that after the Games, local enterprise partnerships should take the lead on maximising the legacy benefits to local communities, where this is prioritised locally.

Meeting with County Sports Partnership (CSP) Network, 11 January

7. Cllr Stephen Castle and I met Richard Saunders, Chair of the County Sports Partnership Network to discuss LG Group proposals for a new approach to community sport. Reflecting good practice, we are proposing that CSPs, which bring together local partners such as health, schools, councils and local sports clubs, play a brokerage role to commission the efficient delivery of local sport. We agreed to work together to identify and share best practice in support of this approach.

LG Group annual 2012 Games Conference, 2 February 2011

8. I chaired the annual LG Group 2012 Games conference, which focussed on how local authorities can maximise the benefits of the Games for their local communities, including the local cultural, sporting and volunteering legacy of the Games. The conference provided an opportunity to discuss the practical challenges facing councils in relation to the Games, from helping ensure that the Games are well run and safe, to ensuring that the pressure placed on local public services during the Games does not disrupt delivery. Cllr Stephen Castle spoke in a plenary panel session on how local authorities can maximise local volunteering opportunities through the Games and chaired a workshop on maximising the sporting and physical activity legacy of the Games.

Culture, Tourism and Sport Programme Board Meeting, 19 January 2011

9. The Board received a presentation from James Berresford, Chief Executive of VisitEngland, about working with councils and local enterprise partnerships to strengthen the visitor economy, agreed to promote the Race Online campaign to councils and agreed headline policy and improvement priorities for culture, tourism and sport to inform the LG Group's business planning process for 2011/12.

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