

Culture Tourism and Sport Board – report from Cllr Chris White (Chair)

Live Music

1. I have written to John Penrose MP, Tourism and Licensing Minister, to express councils' concerns about Lord Tim Clement-Jones's Private Members' Bill on live music, which proposes removing the need for a licence in certain circumstances. Councils fully support efforts to lower barriers to putting on live music, but the Bill as currently drafted denies local people a voice in the licensing process for live music, and fails to consider factors, other than the size of crowds, which might cause a public nuisance or endanger public safety. The government has signalled its intention to support the Bill, subject to a number of caveats being addressed, and I have offered to work with the Minister on finding a democratic solution that both reduces red tape and protects the public.

The Visitor Economy

2. British Tourism Week took place 12 – 20 March. Councils across the country participated in the “party on the pier” theme to raise awareness about the economic importance of the visitor economy, the UK's fifth largest industry. The success of the week in highlighting the value of tourism was one of the points Baroness Eaton and I discussed with Lady Penelope Cobham, Chairman of VisitEngland, on 24 March. As VisitEngland takes on a wider remit for destination management, I emphasised the importance of special purpose destination management organisations working closely with councils and Local Enterprise Partnerships to create and sustain great destinations.

Royal Wedding Street Parties

3. I have appeared on television and radio to rebut claims that council bureaucracy is stopping people from celebrating the forthcoming royal wedding by organising street parties and offered examples of how councils across the country have been making organising celebrations as easy as possible. For example, many councils have waived road closure and insurance fees and council staff are busy explaining the requirements for different types of event. I encouraged people who do experience difficulties to contact their ward councillor.

Libraries

4. As councils continue to look at ways to modernise library services, I wrote an opinion piece in the LGG's **first** magazine, which highlighted case studies from the Future Libraries Programme (FLP). One-quarter of library authorities are receiving bespoke support to develop imaginative solutions, such as sharing library services with other councils and making the most of new technology, and they have been sharing the lessons that are emerging through a programme of events, publications and an online Community of Practice.

Member Steering Group for the National Local Authority Olympic Resilience Programme, 8 March 2011

5. Cllr Stephen Castle and I attended the Member Steering Group for the National Local Authority Resilience Programme, which is supporting local authorities across England and Wales to meet their security and resilience obligations in relation to the 2012 Games and ensuring that local authority interests are represented in national discussions on these issues. Members discussed the progress achieved to date, key emerging issues and the developing communications strategy for the programme.

London 2012 Nations and Regions Group Meeting, 10 March 2011

6. Cllr Stephen Castle and I attended the Members' meeting of the Nations and Regions Group, which is responsible for ensuring that the benefits of the London 2012 Games are spread across the UK. We outlined what our respective roles would be during the Games. We also highlighted the important role that local authorities play in promoting the visitor economy and the need for Visit Britain and Visit England to engage Local Enterprise Partnerships in efforts to promote tourism through the Games and other events taking place in 2012.

Charles Allen, Chair of Nations and Regions Group, 6 April 2011

7. I met Charles Allen to discuss how LOCOG will engage with local authorities over the remaining 14 months until the London 2012 Games and the role that the LGG can play in facilitating this. I highlighted the need for LOCOG to share as much information as possible with councils on volunteer applicants and plans for the Torch Relay and raised concerns regarding the degree of consultation with local authorities by the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) in relation to major Games-related transport projects.

Superfast Broadband

8. I am arranging a meeting with Herefordshire County Council to discuss the superfast broadband pilot. They are along with North Yorkshire and Cumbria procuring superfast broadband services in those areas where it will not be provided by the market, predominantly rural areas – the so-called Final Third. Local Partnerships are providing officer support to the government's delivery agency Broadband UK's programme.

Leading Learning Programme Seminar, 28 February 2011

9. The Leading Learning programme is delivered by the National Culture Forum and aims to strengthen leadership capacity amongst senior officers working in local government cultural services. Cllr Flick Rea addressed participants on the role of local political leadership in leading and modernising culture and sport services during tough financial times.