

Culture, Tourism and Sport Programme Board – report from Cllr Chris White

Ed Vaizey MP, Minister for Culture

1. I had one of my regular catch-ups with the Culture Minister on 6 June. We discussed progress with the MLA / Arts Council transfer and I emphasised my support for continuing the Future Libraries Programme and my concerns that the Arts Council seemed not to be progressing this as fast as was needed. I also made the case for local museum partnerships that will commission locally appropriate solutions for improving performance and ensure that resources are devolved to the frontline to keep museums open.

Libraries

2. I have written to Dame Liz Forgan, Chair of the Arts Council, to emphasise councils' support for continuing the Future Libraries Programme (FLP) into a second phase. In the context of continued financial pressures on councils the best way to continue to protect frontline library services, and avoid getting into the territory of statutory inquiries, must be through expanding the FLP, which is a proven model of sector-led improvement. I also emphasised councils' strong support for the potential of the Arts Council's wider responsibilities to make possible a single conversation with councils spanning libraries, museums and the arts.

Social Legacy Board

3. Cllr Stephen Castle attended the Social Legacy Board where the items discussed included LOCOG's plans for using new technology to engage communities in the run-up to the Games, making the most of One Year to Go and disability legacy. In particular Cllr Castle highlighted the role of councils in enabling community celebrations during Games-time, such as street parties. He also emphasised the importance of communicating to councils about opportunities as early as possible.

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board 24 May

4. Members received a presentation from Oliver Morley, Chief Executive of The National Archives, about how TNA is getting ready to take over national support and leadership of the archives sector after the closure of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) in April 2012. Members agreed to set up a joint working group to represent councils' views in the transfer. Members also agreed the LG Group's response to the government's tourism policy, and agreed a number of actions to mark One Year to Go until the start of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in July.

East of England LGA Culture and Leisure Portfolio Holder Network

5. I was invited to give a presentation about the implications of national culture and sport policy for councils. As well as highlighting the financial pressures councils are under, I talked about the opportunities presented by wider developments, such as community budgets, councils' bigger role in public health and strategic commissioning.

Everyday participation in culture

6. I attended a workshop sponsored by the Arts Council to scope out a major new national research programme into everyday cultural participation. Subject to resources the Board will be keen to support this initiative.

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