

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board – report from Cllr Flick Rea (Chair)

The Visitor Economy

1. On 24 April, I met with Lady Penelope Cobham, Chair of VisitEngland. We discussed the important role local government plays in the visitor economy, which is the country's fifth biggest industry and a major source of jobs. I emphasised the importance of encouraging strong partnerships between Destination Management Organisations and Local Enterprise Partnerships. The LGA and VisitEngland will continue to work together to share innovative approaches to strengthening and investing in the visitor economy. I invited Lady Cobham to speak at a future meeting of the CTS Board.

Libraries and Culture

2. On 1 May, I attended a roundtable on workforce issues regarding libraries, hosted by Ed Vaizey MP, Culture Minister. Discussion focussed on the role of professional librarians in public libraries; how it is changing and what this means for service provision. I emphasised the importance of capturing and sharing the different ways in which the libraries' workforce is adapting.
3. I attended the first meeting of Arts Council England's (ACE) External Reference Group on 11 April, which was set up to consult on the impact of a 50% reduction in ACE's administration costs. I encouraged ACE to support a sector-led approach to improvement for local government arts, museums and libraries that enables as much funding as possible to reach the frontline to keep services open.

2012 Games and Sport

4. I met Jennie Price, Chief Executive of Sport England, on 30 April and am pleased to report that Sport England has agreed to fund a joint political leadership programme, building on the success of last year's Leadership Academies. We hope to work with around 100 councillors through a programme of events, peer support and sharing good practice.
5. Cllr Simon Henig and Cllr Stephen Castle met senior officials from London 2012 (LOCOG) and the Nations and Regions Group (NRG) on 17 April to discuss final preparations for the 2012 Games. Members highlighted the importance of sharing information about Local Leaders events with councils so that organisers can be supported to ensure events are safe and successful.

6. I attended the DCMS Disability Sports Summit on 19 April. The Summit was attended by leading sporting figures and we discussed how to tackle the low levels of disabled participation in sport. I highlighted the role that councils have played over many years to promote disability sports participation and encouraging more awareness of the barriers faced by disabled people. Councils are also using the 2012 Paralympic Games to raise the profile of disability sport. I am continuing discussions with Sport England to ensure that there is greater local sports connectivity to increase opportunities for disabled people.
7. On 2 May, I attended a meeting alongside Councillors Castle, Henig and Bagchi with Hugh Robertson MP, Sports Minister, and Bob Neill MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at CLG, to discuss the role that councils have played in the lead up to the torch relay and 2012 Games. We emphasised that councils are very positive about the torch relay and 2012 Games and contributed fully to the recent Olympic Torch Relay Dress Rehearsal, although there remain some concerns around increasing costs for staging the torch relay.
8. Councils have already received about 6, 500 road closures applications from people wishing to celebrate the Jubilee, building on the success of the 5, 000 events from last year's Royal Wedding. I used an article in *First* magazine to launch a new events handbook for councillors, which will help colleagues to think through how their council has responded to events and share some of the new ways of working that have emerged. It also showcases those councils that have truly gone the extra mile in supporting residents and removing traditional barriers to events, helping to challenge the many myths about council red tape blocking community events.

World War I Commemoration meeting

9. On 2 May, I attended met with Andrew Murrison MP, who has been appointed by the Prime Minister to lead the Government's planning for World War I commemorations in 2014-18, and the Heritage Lottery Fund. I emphasised that councils will commemorate World War I in different and locally appropriate ways and that the LGA would be happy to promote potential funding sources to councils.

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