

Note of Decisions Taken and Actions Required

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board

Tuesday 19 May 2009

Local Government House, Smith Square, London

Present:

Chair: Councillor Chris White (Hertfordshire) (Lib Dem)

Vice Chair: Sir Robin Wales (Vice Chair, Newham LB) (Lab)

Deputy Chairs: Councillor Stephen Castle (Essex CC) (Con);

Members: Councillor Sir William Lawrence (Stratford-on-Avon DC); Councillor Ken Maddock (Mendip DC); Councillor Geraldine Carter (Calderdale MBC); Councillor Trevor Thorne (Alnwick BC); Councillor Mahroof Hussain (Rotherham MDC); Councillor Bryony Rudkin (Ipswich BC); Councillor Mark Hackett (Manchester City Council); Councillor Paul Crossley (Bath & NE Somerset)

In attendance: LGA: Paul Raynes; Steven Skelton; Laura Caton and Paul Johnston

CLOA: Nigel Lynn

Apologies: Councillor Collin Brewer (North Cornwall DC); Councillor Henry Smith (West Sussex CC); Councillor Paul Massey (Cheltenham BC)

1. The future of local and regional news media

The Chair introduced the report, and made reference to the survey recently compiled by the LGA on the scope and nature of local authorities' newsletters / magazines.

Extensive discussions were held on the relationship between Council produced newsletters and magazines and the local and regional news media, with it being noted firstly that Councils across the country enjoyed different relationships with their local and regional news media outlets. Members stated that it was important to recognise the important role that local and regional media had to play in holding Councils to account, though some Members stated that media outlets could behave more responsibly in their reporting of Council activities.

Discussions were further held over new media technologies, with Members noting that media would be increasingly delivered via the internet. This, coupled with the effects of the current economic situation, was affecting local media outlets. Councils would also have to consider more efficient ways of publishing Council information than through printed magazines.

Members also expressed concerns that the coverage of certain local media was too specialised. In an increasingly digitised media environment, these very narrowly focussed media were suffering. Some members expressed the opinion that the media market was too regulated to enable local mergers that might help address this problem.

Decisions

The Board asked that officers look in to the potential to establish a dialogue between local media editors and the LGA.

Actions

Officers to explore the opportunity for a meeting between local newspaper editors and LGA representatives.

2. Libraries service and reviews

The Chair introduced the report, stating that the issue before the board was over the apparent increasing central government intervention in libraries' services. Members stated concern that central government had announced an inquiry into the library service provided by Wirral Metropolitan District Council. Members were clear that it was the Council's job to determine the local community's need, and to put in place a library service that met this need. Local dialogue should determine local service provision and assessment should be through the Comprehensive Area Assessment, not via a separate system of external standards. The Board broadly accepted that there was a role for a peer review and knowledge sharing system, but this should be sector-led and operated in conjunction with the Museum, Libraries and Archive Council (MLA)..

Discussions were further held over the use of new technologies in the library service, and the need for government to be clearer about the purpose of library service could look to provide in this time. These questions could be considered at the national level.

Decisions

- The Board supported the idea of a sector-led support and peer review programme for the library service.



- The Board supported moves to make it easier for library users in one authority to access the services of another authority.

Actions

Officers to continue to engage with the Libraries Review in the direction supported by members.

3. 'Tourism: Visit England'

The Board heard presentations from Jenny McGee (Head of Strategy) and Lyndsey Swift (Partners for England Manager) from VisitEngland on the development of VisitEngland and its future work with Local Authorities.

Regarding the tourism strategy targets as set out in the presentation, Members suggested that there was a need for measurable outcomes to establish whether those targets had been, or were being, met. Members noted that there had been historic problems in obtaining good intelligence, to which Lyndsey replied that it was essential that there be good communication between partners. Lyndsey acknowledged that at the local level, there would need to be improved qualitative and quantitative data.

The Board expressed its disappointment that, following the British Tourism Framework Review, local government was not represented on the newly constituted Tourism Advisory Council. Members stressed the important role that local government had to play in tourism service planning and delivery and that representatives from the sector should be involved as partners in strategic planning and decisions on tourism.

Concerns were similarly raised over the amount of weight currently being given by Visit England to the Olympic Games, with Members noting that this was a unique opportunity for the tourism sector.

Decisions

- **Members asked that the Chief Executive of VisitEngland attend a future meeting to present.**
- **The Chair agreed that a formal reply would be drafted and sent to VisitEngland on the areas for discussion outlined in the presentation, which would incorporate Members' views.**

Actions

- **Officers to invite the Chief Executive of Visit England to attend a future meeting.**
- **Officers to prepare a draft response to the areas for discussion, and circulate this response to Members.**

4. Member feedback from outside bodies

Members noted the report.

5. Board update on current issues

Members noted the update on current issues.

Discussions were held over the Olympic Games in 2012. It was noted by Members that more weight should be given toward considerations over the regeneration of East London through the Olympic Games and toward increasing youth participation in sport. Concerns were also raised by Members that insufficient consideration had been given toward issues regarding disability access to the Games and volunteering.

Action

Officers to prepare a report for the next Board meeting looking at the progress made toward ensuring legacy aims and preparations for programmes of volunteering at the Games.

6. Update on gambling issues

Members noted the update.

7. 'Tired of Hanging Around' – report by the Audit Commission

Members noted the report.

8. Notes of Previous meeting

The notes of the previous meeting were **agreed**, subject to the inclusion of a record of how members had indicated their support for mandatory licensing of lap-dancing clubs as Sex Encounter Venues. Members request that the LGA raise the issue of membership on the Tourism Advisory Council should also be added to the note.

The Chair requested that, for future meetings, the note of the previous meeting be considered as the first item on the agenda.

Date of the next meeting: Tuesday 14 July, 1.00pm, Local Government House