

## Culture and Sport Improvement Programme

### Summary

This report summarises the progress made over the last five years through the Culture and Sport Improvement Programme and highlights the emerging priorities for next year, which is the final year of the current three year agreement.

In particular the report shows the range of support offered to councils by the programme and its role in generating greater ownership of “sector led improvement”.

### Recommendations

That members note the report.

### Action

Officers to prepare a follow-up item for discussion at the March 2010 CTS Board.

## Culture and Sport Improvement Programme

### Background

1. The culture and sport improvement programme is now in the second year of a second (three year) programme. The programme reflects a strong partnership between DCMS, NDPBs (Sport England, MLA, English Heritage and Arts Council England), LGA, IDeA and the professional bodies working in the sector.
2. The aims of the improvement programme are set out in *A Passion for Excellence* (published in March 2008 and available at <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/8829117>). They are to create a strong framework that will:
  - improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of culture and sport in the delivery of outcomes in local communities;
  - improve the performance of the culture and sport sector and to address under-performance;
  - build capacity and leadership, and;
  - simplify and coordinate the improvement architecture.

### Funding

3. The first programme ran from April 2005 until March 2008 and was funded by DCMS, Sport England, Arts Council, MLA and English Heritage, and hosted by IDeA.
4. The second programme is core funded by the IDeA, and involves a National Advisor for Culture and Sport, the maintenance and management of the culture and sport section of IDeA Knowledge ([www.idea.gov.uk/cultureandsport](http://www.idea.gov.uk/cultureandsport)) and the maintenance of the improvement toolkit, including associated peer accreditation and training, at a total cost of £150,000 funded through top-slice grant.
5. In addition, an annual programme of work to the value of between £175,000 and £200,000 has been commissioned by a partnership of DCMS, Sport England, Arts Council, MLA and English Heritage. The programme also carries out contracted work commissioned and paid for by individual councils.
6. An evaluation of the programme is currently taking place which will show how far councils recognize the value of the programme and indicate the impact the programme is having on improving participation and improving services. The results will help shape next years' programme and feed into discussions about the longer term future of this work.

## Progress

7. Significant progress has been made in improving the positioning and performance in councils of the culture and sport sector. A full outline of the outputs and achievements of the improvement programme from 2005-2010 are enclosed at **Annex A**.
8. There remains, however, a leadership deficit within the sector at a local level. This deficit is evidenced, for example, by the MLA/DC Research study that was discussed at the July 2009 meeting of the CTS Board, and which showed that there are profound gaps in both the sector's impact on key priorities and its ability to connect what it offers to these priorities.
9. Discussing this research in July, the board felt it was also applicable to other cultural services, and agreed that the LGA should engage further with the National Culture Forum, other professional bodies and Local Authority portfolio holders, to support service improvement further and to advocate better for the contribution of culture, tourism and sport services to corporate priorities.
10. Since the summer the LGA and IDeA continued to progress the issue of officer leadership in the sector. In addition to on-going work outlined at Annex A, officers have:
  - held constructive discussions with the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association about the key role that it, and the National Culture Forum, must play in developing sector leadership amongst officers;
  - hosted a workshop, at the 14 December Libraries conference, on the issue of leadership and modernisation with respect to professional librarians, and;
  - represented members' interests in discussions aimed at strengthening the professional bodies which operate in sport.
11. Member-led advocacy in support of an improved legacy from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games is also a central plank of the draft legacy strategy outlined at **Item 9** on this agenda. The draft strategy also contains measures aimed at improving officer leadership and engagement with wider council priorities, particularly health and well-being.

## Next Steps

12. The 2010-11 programme is currently being negotiated as part of the IDeA business planning process. It is assumed that IDeA will continue to contribute core funding of £150,000 and partner funding will be in the order of £200,000. Initial priorities have been identified as:

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- Delivering a practical programme of training and support on commissioning as part of support to councils seeking to address efficiency requirements;
  - Continuing to support two further member leadership academies;
  - Supporting the final cohort of managers on the leading learning programme;
  - Completing the outcomes measuring project and preparing for any new performance arrangements following the next spending review;
  - Collecting evidence of success and sharing learning from the CAA, and;
  - Supporting councils identified as needing support in the CAA.
13. Officers will prepare a follow-up item for discussion at the March 2010 meeting of the CTS board. This will allow members to discuss their engagement with the improvement programme and to further consider their role in challenging and supporting professional bodies and political leaders of the sector to raise their game. This issue has on-going relevance given the pressures the sector will need to address in the face of future public spending reductions.

## **Financial Implications**

14. None for the LGA. As at paragraph nine, the IDeA is expected to contribute a further £150,000 across 2010-11.

## **Implications for Wales**

15. The improvement programme is mainly focused on England, particularly where funding is provided through DCMS and English NDPBs. However, material available on Knowledge is accessible to Welsh authorities, and a number of Welsh councils receive the IDeA newsletter. The National Advisor has also supported one event for Welsh councils last year and provides support to professional bodies that operate across Wales.

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## Outputs and Achievements of the Culture and Sport Improvement Programme.

### 2005-2008

16. During the first three year programme the focus was on enabling the sector to catch up with the wider improvement agenda and help position culture and sport initially in the CPA and latterly in the LAA process. The outputs from the first three years were:
  - A clearer strategic national leadership across the sector on the “improvement agenda”.
  - Greater collaboration nationally and regionally between many of the agencies and organisations responsible for culture and sport.
  - A culture block in the 2005/8 CPA.
  - Regional commentaries produced for 144 of the 149 single tier authorities.
  - The involvement of 93 councils in some form of externally supported improvement activity with many others using the self assessment tools unsupported.
  - 8 improvement pilots generating new products and learning material for transfer across the sector.
  - An increase in the use of facility accreditation schemes such as Quest and Green Flag.
  - A single approach to self-assessment and peer support across the sector.
  - A more cohesive range of output measures in the new national performance framework with a significant sector representation in the LAAs particularly for sport and physical activity.
  
17. The improvement strategy for culture and sport, ***A Passion for Excellence***, was published in March 2008 and seeks to enable councils and their partners to maximise the contribution of the sector in improving the quality of life and delivering better services for local people. The aims of the are to create a strong framework that will:
  - improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of culture and sport in the delivery of outcomes in local communities;
  - improve the performance of the culture and sport sector and to address under-performance;
  - build capacity and leadership, and;
  - simplify and coordinate the improvement architecture.

18. The culture and sport improvement programme was designed to help councils implement the improvement strategy in partnership with the DCMS, NDPBs and the professional bodies by:

- Developing the role of culture and sport in LAA frameworks, sustainable community strategies and Local Strategic Partnerships.
- Supporting self assessment and peer led challenge and support.
- Providing knowledge management (collecting, assessing and sharing lessons learnt, developing a best practice model highlighting good practice and authorities that demonstrate good, innovative application).
- Evolving Regional Commentaries in-line with the new improvement architecture with a view positioning culture and sport in the CAA process.
- Embedding regional improvement networks in the new regional improvement architecture.
- Increasing the capacity of the sector to support self-improvement, by identifying and developing the evidence, tools and skills available to the sectors professionals.
- Strengthening management and political leadership.
- Improving the quality of procurement and strategic commissioning across the sector;
- Supporting individual councils with their improvement.

## **Specific outputs and achievements, 2008-09**

### **Communication and IDeA Knowledge**

- 9 regional events launched the improvement strategy and were attended by 410 people, including 266 officers, 21 members and 123 from other agencies. 50% of all councils attended including 100% of Counties, 66% of other single tier councils and 35% of Districts.
- A new integrated site on IDeA Knowledge was launched in October 2008 with an average monthly usage of 1600 engagements.
- An E newsletter was launched at the same time and sent to over 200 councils highlighting new information on the site.
- “A Passion for Excellence-one year on” was launched at the LGA Culture Tourism and Sport conference in March 2009 demonstrating the progress made this year.
- The National Advisor attended and presented at 20 separate conference and events.

### **Improvement support to councils**

- In a survey of 200 councils carried out in October 2008, 50% of councils said they had already used a self assessment tool and 57% planned to use the new improvement toolkit.

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- In 2008/9 4 councils had their self assessment validated (peer challenge) and 23 councils in London, and 13 councils, the CSP and the Tourist Board in Lancashire participated in peer supported improvement.
- Advice was offered to a number of individual councils.

## **Regional Improvement Networks**

- Regional improvement networks were operating in London & the East Midlands with RIEP funding.
- Networks were under development in West Midlands, South West, East of England, South East and the North West some with RIEP funding or offers of funding.

## **Role of Culture & sport in LSPs, LAAs & Sustainable community strategies**

- Three separate studies were carried out into the positioning of culture sport in LSPs, Sustainable Community Strategies and LAAs. These studies led to the publication of guidance on better performance management and partnership working to address identified weaknesses.
- A draft commissioning framework was launched in December 2008 along with three guidance documents on Needs Assessment, Option Appraisal and Procurement and Capacity Building in Third Sector, along with case studies and a set of draft competencies developed by Wigan Culture & Leisure Trust. 5 events took place in Birmingham, Ipswich, Rochdale (SPORTA), London and Bristol to consult on the guidance.
- A protocol to enable regional NDPBs to carry out “strategic dialogues” with councils was put in place to replace Regional Commentaries.

## **Leadership development**

- Two Member Leadership academies took place in partnership with Leicester City Council and South Tyneside Council. 30 elected members with responsibility for culture and sport attended from across the country.
- A cohort of 29 managers attended the first Leading Learning programme aimed at middle and senior managers working in the culture and sport sector and promoted by The National Culture Forum (A consortium of professional bodies). The programme included three residential sessions, action learning sets, mentoring by chief executives and senior managers and web based learning material.

## **Other work included:**

- Participation in the national library review
- Participation in the Arts Council project to develop peer review for Regularly Funded Bodies.

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- Advice to CLOA and the National Culture Forum
- Advice to DCMS and NDPBs.
- Support and advice to individual councils.

## **Specific outputs and achievements, 2009-10**

### **Communication and IDeA Knowledge**

- IDeA Knowledge is updated regularly with new material and now has an average monthly use of about 2000 engagements.
- The E newsletter is now sent regularly to 284 council subscribers including 224 individual councils (60% of all councils).
- The National Advisor has attended and presented at 15 separate conference and events.

### **Improvement support to councils**

- 16 councils are engaging in a targeted programme of support aimed at improving the delivery of LAA improvement targets.
- 4 councils are undergoing validation or peer reviews and one other has contracted for a tailored review of their improvement work. Councils in Cumbria are undertaking peer supported improvement.

### **Regional Improvement Networks**

- Regional improvement networks are now operating in London, the East Midlands, West Midlands and East of England with RIEP funding.
- Networks are also in place or developing in the South West, South East, North West, Yorkshire and Humber and North East although struggle to achieve ongoing RIEP support.

### **Role of Culture & sport in LSPs, LAAs & Sustainable community strategies**

- Research has been undertaken and published into the role of culture in commissioning better outcomes for children and young people on behalf of the Arts Council and MLA. As part of the programme 4 regional training events were delivered.
- The final version of the commissioning guidance for the sector is due for publication in March 2010.
- A guidance paper on the role of culture and sport in supporting better adult social care outcomes is under development jointly with the NCF and hopefully the social care sector for publication next year.
- A project has commenced to capture the learning from about 20 councils currently attempting to measure the impact of culture and sport on local outcomes to assist the sector better evidence its contribution to local outcomes.

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## **Leadership development**

- Two further member leadership academies took place in partnership with Essex County Council and Lewisham Council attended by 23 elected members from across the country.
- The second cohort of 32 managers is attending the second Leading Learning programme.

## **Other work continues to include:**

- Participation in the national library review
- Participation in the Arts Council project to develop peer review for Regularly Funded Bodies.
- Advice to CLOA and the National Culture Forum
- Advice to DCMS and NDPBs.
- Support and advice to individual councils.