

29 March 2010

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board - Update on Current Issues

Summary

This report updates Members on current issues of interest to the Board which are not covered elsewhere on this agenda. Updates are included on:

- Arts
- Museums, Libraries and Archives
- Regeneration and Economic Development
- Digital Britain
- Tourism

Recommendations

Members are asked to note policy developments.

Action

Secretariat / CLOA Advisory Panel as appropriate.

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Update on Current Issues

Arts

1. Arts Council England (ACE) have launched *Achieving Great Art for Everyone*, a consultation on the arts sector's strategic direction over the next ten years. The consultation builds on previous work undertaken by ACE, such as *The Arts Debate* and the existing 2008-2011 strategy, *Great Art for Everyone*, to define how the Arts Council will work with artists and arts organisations to create positive change for the arts over the next 10 years.
2. Local Authorities, as the major funding partner for the Arts in England are encouraged to respond, and full details can be accessed at <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/consultation/letter-from-alan-davey/> The LGA has produced a draft response on behalf of local authorities, which will be consulted on at the March conference, and a subsequent final version will be cleared with Lead Members of the Board. A copy of this draft is **attached** at **Annex A**.
3. Cllr White will meet Liz Forgan and Alan Davey (respectively the Chair and Chief Executive of the Arts Council) on 1 April to discuss the issues raised by the consultation and on-going joint working between councils and the Arts Council.

Museums, Libraries and Archives

Renaissance in the Regions

4. As the final year of the current phase of the Renaissance museum development programme approaches (2010/11), local authority museums services are beginning to feel the impact of recent changes to funding guidance for museum development. The emphasis is now on shorter term projects at the expense of some longer-term partnership work, however there is greater potential for more medium and larger sized museums to get involved than in the past.
5. Any significant reduction in Renaissance funding from April 2011 would increase the financial pressures felt by many local authority museums. It would not just affect the museums that are currently Hub museums but also those that rely on the Museum Development Services and partnership delivery projects that have been built up in each region.

Diversifying the funding base for museums

6. Various means of meeting the funding pressures that are being felt by museums are being explored across the country: discussions about trust status and cross-authority working continue; efficiencies through shared provision and

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joined-up services, often with libraries, are being sought and income targets are being raised. In several authorities initial discussions are taking place about how museums can benefit from the strategic commissioning of their services by both Adult and Children's Services, although these plans are not as advanced as they are for some library services where there is greater potential for savings.

7. Partnerships with District Councils seem to be particularly under the microscope at the moment according to some sector reports. Reviews are taking place and indications are that 2011/12 is likely to be a more difficult year than 2010/11 for museums receiving District Council funding.

...Love museums

8. CAA and the focus on outcomes is providing museums with the opportunity to demonstrate how they contribute to broader economic and social objectives, as well as learning outcomes. As a result, museum and heritage staff are increasingly aware of how important it is for them to be able to make a strong case. Small museums with limited resources, however, find this work particularly challenging.
9. Help to present clearer and more compelling arguments that will influence decision-makers is becoming available from the Museums Association through its new Love Museums campaign. Training courses are available in March with new resources to follow. Further information can be found at <http://www.museumsassociation.org/lovemuseums>

New opportunities for culture and libraries to support learning

10. As a result of recent legislative and administrative changes, local authorities will take on commissioning responsibility for informal adult learning in 2011. Together with the new primary curriculum that becomes statutory from 2011, many local authority museum learning teams are working with their colleagues in culture, adult and children's services departments to address the needs of both informal learning and the new curriculum. For the schools, they are devising creative ways that they can work with teachers to interpret and respond to subjects like food, health, journeys, communities and place. Teachers are actively thinking about these issues right now, so this is particularly timely.

Museum visits up and museum participation down?

11. The latest figures from the Active People's Survey that are used for NI10 show that adults used museums less often in the year up until October 2009. However, many museums are reporting that their actual visit figures were up, or holding, over a similar period. Explanations for this might include that those that

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visit museums are visiting more often, or that a significant proportion of visitors to museums were tourists.

Archives for the 21st century

12. The government's new policy framework for archives was published last year, and an Implementation Group has been set up by The National Archives and the Museums Libraries and Archives Council. A number of local authority representatives have been invited to join this group, and an Implementation Plan will be published shortly.

Regeneration and Economic Development

'State of the South West' Report

13. Published by the South West Observatory, the State of the South West report, due for publication on 31 March 2010, suggests that, overall, the region's cultural and creative industries are performing well, but consistent and reliable data are major issues at a regional and sub-sector level. The DCMS-led Culture and Sport Evidence research programme, and support of analysis function in the region, will hopefully address these gaps. Given the importance of the creative economy and visitor economy to South West prosperity, an enhanced evidence base for researchers, policy-makers and planners, is an urgent requirement.

Digital Britain

Next Generation Fund

14. It was announced this month that Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) will drive forward the Universal Service Commitment to deliver 2Mbps to every household by 2012 and will be responsible for managing the spend of the £1 billion Next Generation Fund to deliver next generation broadband to 90% of the country by 2017.
15. There remain concerns that this would still leave rural areas vulnerable and likely to be in the 10% not in receipt of the new Broadband is growing. Many rural SME's from the cultural and creative sector who rely on fast broadband speeds and often choose to locate in rural communities are concerned that they could still be disadvantaged.

Tourism

England: A Strategic Framework for Tourism 2010 – 2020

16. VisitEngland launched the long-awaited Strategic Framework for Tourism 2010 – 2020 for England on 18 March 2010. The LGA has worked closely with

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VisitEngland to ensure that the strategy acknowledges that tourism is a place-based industry. We think that, as such, councils are the key public body responsible for supporting the visitor economy in this country. The framework can be viewed at <http://www.enjoyengland.com/corporate/corporate-information/England-tourism-framework/index.aspx>

Heritage Tourism

17. On 5 March the Heritage Lottery fund and Visit Britain jointly published *Investing in success*. The report reveals for the first time the scale of the heritage tourism industry in the UK, estimating its gross domestic product (GDP) contribution to be £20.6 billion.
18. The research establishes that the sector makes a bigger contribution to UK GDP than the advertising, car manufacturing or film industries. These findings highlight the importance of continued investment from leisure, culture and heritage budgets in supporting tourism and its ability to help with post-recession recovery.
19. Building on work carried out for VisitBritain, the report also demonstrates that heritage is a major motivation behind the tourism expenditure of both overseas and domestic visitors. It shows that the heritage tourism sector, including historic buildings, museums, parks and the countryside, directly supports an estimated 195,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs. The report can be downloaded from <http://www.hlf.org.uk/news/Pages/InvestinginSuccess.aspx>

World Travel and Tourism Council report

20. The 2010 research, produced in co-operation with Oxford Economics, assesses the economic impact of Travel & Tourism for the 181 countries, as well as for the world overall.
21. It measures spending on Travel & Tourism by households, businesses, governments, overnight and same-day visitors, in order to capture fully the economic contribution of both domestic and international tourism, thereby quantifying Travel & Tourism's contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) and employment.
22. In line with the trend in other sectors in 2009, Travel & Tourism activity was hit hard by the credit and housing market collapses experienced in many countries, with households cutting back on leisure travel and corporations reducing business travel budgets. The impact on Travel & Tourism investment was also significant. Yet even though Travel & Tourism activity was so depressed, it still employed over 235 million people across the world last year, generating 9.4% of global GDP.

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23. Although there are signs that the global economy has moved into a recovery phase, we are expecting the pick-up in developed economies – a key source of Travel & Tourism Demand in the short term – to be gradual, with both corporations and households continuing to reconsider travel plans and to limit expenditure.
24. Nevertheless, despite the current blip in growth trends, our research confirms that prospects for the longer term remain positive. Over the next ten years, Travel & Tourism will continue to grow in importance as one of the world's highest-priority sectors and employers.

Tourism Strategy scoping report

25. The Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council commissioned DC Research in October 2009 to investigate the potential to support and deliver success under the tourism agenda, enabling the cultural and tourism sectors to work together more productively. The Tourism Strategy Scoping Report aims to inform MLA Council's policy development and ensure that MLA programmes and strategies support the sector in achieving positive outcomes in terms of its contribution to tourism. The report can be downloaded from http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/policy_development/~media/Files/pdf/2009/Tourism_strategy_scoping_project

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ACHIEVING GREAT ART FOR EVERYONE – EVERYWHERE

Draft LGA response to Arts Council England's consultation paper
March 2010

Why councils care about the arts

The arts are an expression of what it is to be human. What they mean to us is inseparable from our identity – as individuals, and as communities. However universal its reach and significance, artistic production is always about the people who practice it, and the places in which they practice – Hull and its poets or West Yorkshire and its painters and sculptors. Even digital creation has its human geography, both virtual and real.

This means, of course that the arts enrich the lives of the communities where they are made. Debates setting “intrinsic” against “instrumental” value or “elite” and “low” culture are fatuous. People who are able to experience the arts are more likely to be healthier, law-abiding and engaged in civic life, precisely because of the nature of the artistic experience. Thriving and excellent arts attract visitors and have economically valuable spin-offs precisely because they are something many people want to enjoy.

It is no surprise, then, that local government remains, as it has always been, a vital part of the ecology of the arts. From the Chester Mystery Plays, commissioned by the town's mediaeval guilds, to Jeanie Finlay's digitised reflection on Anish Kapoor's Sky Mirror commissioned by the council-supported Nottingham Playhouse, local communities continue to foster the production of excellent arts for and in their places, to make their places better.

All culture is local – by definition: the word itself is derived from words meaning to inhabit, and to till the land. Local government wants to make sure that more people can benefit from their own authentic culture, rooted in their own places and communities.

The Arts Council's vision

The proposed vision

sees this country as a global creative hub, a platform for world-leading artistic excellence and innovation and a great place for artists to live and work. More people enjoy the best of the arts, engaging and participating in new ways. The arts are playing a dynamic role at the heart of society, both locally and nationally. They are continuing to drive the creative industries and bring critical insight to how we harness

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the digital revolution and adapt to a low-carbon future. Arts organisations nurture the diversity of artistic talent and champion the value of artistic excellence and innovation on behalf of their communities and the nation. They are resilient, naturally collaborative and adaptable, and thrive within a mixed economy of support.

is one which we can broadly support. In particular, we share the ambition to increase participation and engagement, to give the arts a dynamic civic role, and to develop the creative industries.

We have two comments, though. They mainly stem from the breadth of the vision.

First, it is worth understanding what exactly the significance is of seeing “this country as a global creative hub” and a “platform for world-leading excellence”. There are a number of ways in which the country as a whole might have this role – for example, if England were to benefit from a tax regime which discriminated in favour of artists, as Ireland has done for writers. But we need to acknowledge that England’s artistic profile will mostly be driven by clusters of excellence in individual places and sectors. As things stand, London is the focus for many of the public sector’s largest investments in the arts, but many places outside London are home to artists and organisations with a global profile. In practice, we hope ACE will explicitly recognise that “England” is shorthand for the collection of centres of excellence that make up the country, and that this will need to be reflected in the way that the future strategy is delivered.

Secondly, the vision is all-embracing. We do not think the activity of ACE, or indeed of the public sector as a whole, should be, though. ACE should not seek to fix everything, let alone steer everything. Many elements of the vision seem to us to reflect a sensible anticipation of what artists, communities, and wider social and economic pressures will bring about for themselves. It would be wrong for public bodies to think they should substitute for others’ good judgement – and it may be right for the public sector to make some strategic decisions to get out of the way. This is both a point of principle, but also an important way in which we will need to take into account the likely constraints on public spending.

Finally, and related to that, some elements of the vision read a little like a policy-driven programme for what work will be commissioned - for example, “The arts...bring critical insight to...how we adapt to a low-carbon future”. We do not consider that would be an appropriate approach for ACE. Artists should be able to reflect social change as they see fit; policy-driven patronage impoverishes the arts, even when it does not reduce them to propaganda.

The goals

There are five principles which are important to local government which we are delighted to see reflected in ACE’s proposed goals. We think they could, if anything, be brought out more emphatically and reflected more uniformly across the goals. We are not certain that five goals are necessary, though. ACE’s emphasis should in our

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view be on increasing participation and commissioning excellent art. The other three goals are in our view secondary.

The role of the arts in civic life: it will be obvious from the LGA's overall approach that we see the arts as central to civic life and we are very pleased that ACE does, too. We think that this is not only part of the agenda for goal 5 (sustainability) but also goals 1 (excellence) and goal 3 (participation).

Increasing participation: local authorities are aiming to increase arts participation; this is also the government's only national objective, as reflected in PSA targets, for the arts; we support goal 3 strongly, therefore, and can only express mild surprise that it is not higher up the running order.

Funding partnerships: we have been extremely pleased with the ACE's recent approach to joint working with local government, which recognises that, excluding a small number of London-based centres of excellence, each contributes roughly the same amount of money to the arts and very often by co-funding the same organisations. We strongly encourage ACE to go further in joining up the funding conversation between itself and local councils where they have shared interests in an organisation, but also to do more to align funding criteria across the partners. We were slightly concerned to see that the partnership principle is reflected in the detail of goals 3 (participation), 4 (young people) and 5 (sustainability), but not in goal 1 (excellence). We would like to reassure ACE that excellence is unquestionably an objective which local government pursues through its arts funding.

Shared advocacy: we would be keen that ACE should work with the LGA Group, and with councils through the National Improvement Programme, to develop a shared evidence base and common messages for the kind of advocacy suggested in goals 3 and 5.

2012 cultural legacy: councils are working hard to deliver a cultural legacy from the 2012 Games and hope that this will be an increasingly strong theme of partnership with ACE.

Future organisation, approach and funding mechanisms

We believe it would be right for ACE to become more focussed, and to develop more flexible funding mechanisms. In order to get the best value from the limited amounts of public money which are likely to be available in the future, we suggest that ACE needs to adopt the following principles:

- focus should mean doing less, and concentrating on a core mission of increasing participation and funding excellence;
- flexibility mustn't become code for lack of transparency, which is essential if partnership is to work well;
- better partnership is essential in a tougher financial climate; that requires strong communication with funding partners such as councils, shared

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- funding methodologies and criteria, and shared approaches to appraising the performance of funded organisations
- better experiences for citizens, including the quality of life in the places they live in, are ACE's (and councils') real and only main objective, and it would be wrong to allow ACE's understandable interest in the managerial health of funded organisations to take priority over that.

We look forward to pursuing what we see as a very constructive conversation with ACE as the consultation moves to its next stages.