

## **Engaging with the new government**

### **Summary**

This paper sets out available information about the new government's ministers and potential priorities in the fields of Culture, Tourism and Sport.

Officers will provide an oral update covering further developments and circulate any initial correspondence at the meeting.

### **Recommendations**

Members are asked to note the report and further updates available at the meeting, and give a steer as to LGA lobbying priorities for Culture, Tourism and Sport.

### **Action**

Officers and Lead Members to reflect the Board's steer in future lobbying work.

## Engaging with the new government

### Background

1. The full coalition agreement was published on 20 May, and outlined the government's priorities in 31 areas. Policies relevant to culture, tourism and sport are set out at **Annex A**. Officers will provide a further oral update on the relevant aspects of this agreement at the board meeting.
2. Responding to the publication, Cllr Margaret Eaton said, "This agreement needs to pave the way for a radical devolution of power to locally elected councils, which are close to the people they serve. They are on the side of local people and best placed to take tough decisions about vital public services that affect every family in the country...What we need now is fundamental reform of the way the public sector works to cut out middlemen who cost billions. We need to free locally-elected councils to do their job and respond to the needs of local voters."
3. The LGA Executive on 20 May agreed the headline offer to the new government set out in the note at **annex B**.

### New DCMS ministerial team

4. On Wednesday 12 May, Jeremy Hunt MP (Con) was confirmed as the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport. Subsequently, the following ministers were also announced, although the exact nature of each minister's portfolio has :
  - Ed Vaizey MP (Con) – Minister for Culture (joint with Department for Business Innovation and Skills);
  - Hugh Robertson MP (Con) – Minister for Sport and the Olympics;
  - James Penrose MP (Con) – Minister for Tourism (with responsibility for Heritage and Licensing).
5. On 12 May, Cllr Margaret Eaton wrote to the new Secretary of State to congratulate him on his appointment. Cllr Eaton raised several points, including reiterating members' opposition to a new Libraries Development Agency as suggested in the recent DCMS Modernisation Review. Cllr Chris White will also write to the DCMS ministerial team following the announcement of the full programme for the coalition government. Copies of this correspondence will be circulated to members at the meeting.

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## Jeremy Hunt's priorities

6. We understand that Jeremy Hunt has adopted four personal priorities for his time as Secretary of State. In addition to the need to lead the department through a spending review and deliver a successful Olympics, there are:
  - setting up a school Olympics;
  - supporting philanthropy;
  - tourism, including 2012 tourism;
  - local media technology.
  
7. On 19 May, Jeremy Hunt MP gave a keynote speech that outlined the new government's **three principles for the arts**, that would guide its work in this area:
  - support for a mixed economy in arts, with public subsidy supporting artists to create work that attracts private investment;
  - that culture and the arts are for everyone, not just the lucky few;
  - continued support for the arms length principle, to avoid making grants to artists a political matter.
  
8. The speech outlined the following plans for **reform of the lottery funding system**; a Conservative manifesto pledge:
  - currently, 16.67% of funds go to the arts, heritage and grassroots sport, with the remaining 50% going to charities, health, education and the environment. In the future the arts, sport and heritage will again receive their original 20% share of available funds;
  - all grant giving bodies (currently 14 in total) will also have to reduce their administration costs to 5% of the budgets they distribute.
  - there will be a rise in the amount of money going to voluntary and community groups, with the Big Lottery Fund being required to focus its support exclusively on that sector.
  - an order will be laid before September 2010 to enact these reforms, which will be completed by 2012.

The speech also outlined how the government will promote and support “a deeper commitment to cultural philanthropy”, and how it seeks to increase opportunities for culture based education in schools.

9. On 18 May, Hugh Robertson MP released details of what he described as his “**three very clear priorities**” for sport and the Olympics. These were, “to do everything in my power to help win the World Cup bid; to help deliver a successful 2012 Olympics; to use the 2012 Olympics to drive a sporting legacy”.

## LGA lobbying priorities

10. Drawing on the paper, further updates and previous discussions at the board, members are requested to comment on LGA lobbying priorities for culture, tourism and sport. In particular, members may wish to focus on:
- The contribution that the CTS sector can make to over-arching government priorities, such as reducing the public spending deficit and promoting the “big society”;
  - How the LGA can support devolution of powers and increased flexibility in the CTS sector to, and for, local councils and their residents;
  - How national and local government investment in the CTS sector can be made to work more closely together to deliver efficiency savings.

### **Financial Implications**

11. None arising from this report.

### **Implications for Wales**

12. Support for culture, tourism and sport is a devolved matter in Wales.

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**Extracts from the full programme for coalition government relevant to the CTS board****CULTURE, OLYMPICS, MEDIA AND SPORT**

The Government believes that a vibrant cultural, media and sporting sector is crucial for our well-being and quality of life. We need to promote excellence in these fields, with government funding used where appropriate to encourage philanthropic and corporate investment.

- We will maintain the independence of the BBC, and give the National Audit Office full access to the BBC's accounts to ensure transparency.
- We will enable partnerships between local newspapers, radio and television stations to promote a strong and diverse local media industry.
- We will maintain free entry to national museums and galleries, and give national museums greater freedoms.
- We will work with the Scottish Government to deliver a successful Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014, and ensure that the 2013 Rugby League and the 2015 Rugby Union World Cups are successful. We will strongly support the England 2018 World Cup bid.
- We will work with the Mayor of London to ensure a safe and successful Olympic and Paralympic Games in London in 2012, and urgently form plans to deliver a genuine and lasting legacy.
- We will examine the case for moving to a 'gross profits tax' system for the National Lottery, and reform the National Lottery so that more money goes into sport, the arts and heritage.
- We will stop wasteful spending by National Lottery distributors by banning lobbying activities and restricting administration costs to 5% of total income.
- We will use cash in dormant betting accounts to improve local sports facilities and support sports clubs.
- We will encourage the reform of football governance rules to support the co-operative ownership of football clubs by supporters.
- We will support the creation of an annual Olympic-style schools sport event to encourage competitive sport in schools, and we will seek to protect school playing fields.

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- We will cut red tape to encourage the performance of more live music.
- We will introduce measures to ensure the rapid roll-out of superfast broadband across the country. We will ensure that BT and other infrastructure providers allow the use of their assets to deliver such broadband, and we will seek to introduce superfast broadband in remote areas at the same time as in more populated areas. If necessary, we will consider using the part of the TV licence fee that is supporting the digital switchover to fund broadband in areas that the market alone will not reach.

## BUSINESS

The Government believes that business is the driver of economic growth and innovation, and that we need to take urgent action to boost enterprise, support green growth and build a new and more responsible economic model.

- We will take steps to improve the competitiveness of the UK tourism industry, recognising the important part it plays in our national economy.

## CRIME AND POLICING

The Government believes that we need radical action to reform our criminal justice system. We need police forces that have greater freedom from Ministerial control and are better able to deal with the crime and anti-social behaviour that blights people's lives, but which are much more accountable to the public they serve.

- We will ban the sale of alcohol below cost price.
- We will review alcohol taxation and pricing to ensure it tackles binge drinking without unfairly penalising responsible drinkers, pubs and important local industries.
- We will overhaul the Licensing Act to give local authorities and the police much stronger powers to remove licences from, or refuse to grant licences to, any premises that are causing problems.
- We will allow councils and the police to shut down permanently any shop or bar found to be persistently selling alcohol to children.
- We will double the maximum fine for under-age alcohol sales to £20,000.
- We will permit local councils to charge more for late-night licences to pay for additional policing.