

13 July 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:

- Improvement
- Tourism
- Sport and Physical Activity
- 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Museums and Heritage
- Major events

Recommendations

Members are asked to note policy developments.

Action

Secretariat / CLOA Advisory Panel as appropriate.

Contact Officer: Steven Skelton
Phone No: 020 7664 3074
Email: steven.skelton@lga.gov.uk

Update on Current Issues

Improvement

1. The established Cultural Improvement Networks in the East of England, East and West Midlands and London are well placed to support local authorities to respond to the rapidly changing political and fiscal environment and inevitable transformation of cultural services that will result from the unprecedented pressure on public finance.
2. The networks in these regions are led by local authorities in collaboration with DCMS, IDeA and the culture and sport NDPB's. They have built strong and effective partnerships, aligning the priorities of cultural agencies and gaining the confidence of the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs). Initially projects were focussed on improvement and though this is still an important part of the work, the networks have been able to respond rapidly to immediate needs, for example in relation to: efficiency savings; exploring alternative models of provision; supporting third sector development; and preparing for the move to a commissioning model of service delivery.
3. Some of the initiatives supporting the change agenda are outlined below.
 - In London, the West Midlands and the East regions Library Change Programmes are underway, which are designed to evaluate alternative models of service delivery and realise substantial efficiencies alongside service improvements. London has embarked on a Heritage Change Programme, with similar aspirations for Local Authority Museums, Archives and the Historic Environment.
 - In London the 'Working with Children's Services' Project is engaging Local Authorities in developing new ways of working more collaboratively and supporting third sector development to improve outcomes for children and young people at a local level.
 - The East Midlands partnership is leading a sub regional programme of support to local authorities to undertake a specially adapted version of Culture and Sport Improvement toolkit (CSIT) to deliver efficiency and strategic budget reductions as well as effectiveness. The early focus is on energy efficiency, shared management and shared services, alternative management options and joint procurement. This project will enable local authorities to meet a target of at least £1m additional cashable efficiencies over the next 5 years.
 - Following a survey of local authorities earlier this year the West Midlands network has initiated cross authority discussions with local authorities and the

Arts Council to explore more effective and efficient ways of providing arts and arts development services in the region.

- In July the East of England is hosting 'Putting People First', an event that will bring together adult social care commissioners with culture and sport providers to consider the challenges, make the connections and develop solutions.
- The West and East Midlands conference on Strategic Commissioning in May was oversubscribed and well received by participants. Local authorities shared experiences of alternative ways to fund services and to make them relevant to the wider agenda, in particular health, adult social care and children's services.
- The Regional Cultural Improvement Networks are actively supporting the commissioning agenda, through improving access to quality data, developing evidence and outcomes measures and supporting improved performance management. They are also building capacity in the third sector and supporting Local Authorities through developing consortia.

Tourism

Local Enterprise Partnerships

4. The Secretaries of State for Communities and Local Government and for Business, Innovation and Skills wrote to councils on 29 June to invite them to form Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), and setting out initial thoughts on the role, scope and governance of LEPs, as well as the process going forward. This letter crucially includes the principle that councils should decide what future arrangements should be.
5. The LGA has long lobbied for economic development and enterprise support to be devolved from RDAs to council-led partnerships, which more closely represent the places in which economies function. We will work with councils to support the development of LEPs, and lobby government to ensure that the model is flexible enough to suit different areas.
6. RDAs have had responsibility for supporting tourism since 2003, and the current Visit England Strategic Framework for Tourism relies heavily on them as part of the public sector architecture. The LGA will work with all stakeholders, and particularly through Partners for England to help the tourism sector adapt to the new architecture, and will lobby hard for funding to follow the new responsibilities, and for local tourism partnerships to have maximum flexibility to support and market their destinations in line with local priorities.

7. We particularly welcome the devolution of powers from RDAs in this sector, as they local destination partnerships, linked to LEPs will more accurately represent the place that tourists visit, and are best placed join up all council services and strategic partners to help create great destinations.

The Seaside Destinations in England and Wales

8. The Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research has produced a report for the British Resorts and Destinations Association entitled *The Seaside Tourist Industry in England and Wales*. The report finds that “*far from being in terminal decline as a result of the rise of foreign holidays, a substantial British seaside tourist industry remains alive and well and seems even to have been growing over the last decade*”.
9. In line with the update on the seaside economy given to the Board at its May meeting, there is concern that this conclusion over-extrapolates from industry data (principally visitor numbers and employment data) to reach conclusions about seaside destination *as places*. For example, the number of jobs has grown in some regions but a focus on the detail for individual resorts reveals that this may not always be the case based on other research which looks at employment as well as visitor numbers.
10. While it is worth acknowledging that, through remarketing the current tourism offer and diversification of the ‘tourism product’ that seaside resorts provide, the future of seaside resorts as tourist destinations can be secured, that is not to say that there are not real issues of concern, mirrored by Councils’ experiences in the day to day management of the seaside resorts where decline is often seen as a reality on the ground. The concern with this report is that the use of so many different sources to assemble the data, region by region and nationally, from anecdotal on the one hand to pure statistics from the office of employment on the other, all appear to result in differing stories in each case.
11. It should be acknowledged that seaside towns have complex problems as well as poor infrastructure and social challenges. The Coastal Regeneration in English Resorts – 2010 acknowledged that coastal towns had some common themes – ‘migration and population turnover being high, high levels of incapacity benefit, higher proportions of elderly people, low educational attainment and limited opportunities for young people, issues arising from the placement of vulnerable adults and children in coastal settings, giving rise to a high level of houses in multiple occupancy, teenage pregnancy and with some resorts scoring higher in the indices of multiple deprivation’. These are key factors for the future of our seaside resorts and how they will change over time.

Sport and Physical Activity

Putting the People back into Participation

12. The LGA Group has very recently launched *Putting the People back into Participation*, available to view via www.lga.gov.uk/publications. The strategy, which was debated and shaped by delegates at the 2010 LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference and by other organisations who responded to the consultation draft, is designed to encourage even more Councillors to fully utilise the enormous potential of the 2012 Games to get people more active and further strengthen the local partnerships that will achieve that.

Government's ambitions for school sport

13. Jeremy Hunt MP, the Secretary of State for Culture, the Olympics, Media and Sport and Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education, have recently outlined the Government's ambitions for school sport, which include plans for an Olympic and Paralympic-style school sport competition. The competition is a key part of the Government's plans to generate a lasting sporting legacy from hosting the London 2012 Games.
14. This initiative is derived from Councils. Councils, along with County Sports Partnerships, should have a key role in planning and delivery of this project as it develops, and we will need to ensure that DCMS appreciate this.

County Sports Partnerships funding

15. The Government has also announced that funding of County Sports Partnerships (CSPs) will cease as part of the cuts across Government. This cuts relate solely to the CSP funding from the Department of Health (DH) which was supporting CSPs in their work around wider Physical Activity and links with the health sector and does not affect Sport England's core investment, which is focused on sport, or the other local or nationally funded programmes of work delivered by CSPs.
16. CSPs retain strong stakeholder support locally and nationally including Sport England who have re-confirmed their position and remain committed to funding CSPs in their role of supporting National Governing Bodies to increase participation in sport at a local level, and CSPs remain confident that they are the most effective coordinators and sources of local knowledge and intelligence at sub regional level and that are vital to help all partners reach their own individual targets and goals.

17. Members will want to consider whether the health funding for CSPs should be reinstated as part of the spending review.

Free swimming scheme

18. Government funding for free swimming for the under-17s and over-60s will end on 31 July as part of the Government's drive to cut the public deficit. The free swimming scheme, which had been due for government funding until April next year, has been described by Hugh Robertson MP, Minister for Sport and the Olympics, as "a luxury that we can no longer afford."
19. This follows on from the publication by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP of the Free Swimming Programme 2009/10 – Year 1 Annual Report, which assesses the impact of the Free Swimming Programme during its first year between April 2009 and March 2010. The report suggests that the programme has been at least partly responsible for some really positive changes in the level of physical activity undertaken by those who had participated in free swimming. However, the report does raise a significant question mark over the cost-effectiveness of the scheme. The report is available to view via www.culture.gov.uk/publications/7190.aspx
20. While the LGA Group recognises that the Government has a number of very tough decisions to make in going forward, the Group is very keen to ensure that the full impact on Councils are always considered when making this sort of decision.

Play England

21. Play England has announced a proposed reorganisation in the light of the imminent reduction in the value of its contracts with the Department for Education (DfE) for 2010-11 and the changing policy context for the play agenda under the coalition government. The national play body is reshaping its work to focus more on supporting local communities to develop and run their own play spaces and services. Play England is in talks with DfE about a new contract to support this work, and is actively exploring several other opportunities to take forward a new strategy when its main Big Lottery Fund grant comes to an end next year.
22. The charity has launched a staff consultation on a proposed new, reduced structure for Play England. Regional offices would close under the proposals, but a range of new jobs will have a regional and local focus as Play England seeks to build upon the experience and networks it has built over the last four years, and will continue to run a variety of events and training programmes through the year and, in particular, Playday, which takes place on Wednesday 4 August.

2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

23. The new Government is reviewing the existing legacy architecture and has made a number of early policy announcements. We understand that the main focus for delivering legacy will be mass participation in sport which will be delivered by Sport England and the NGBs. The Local Authority view is that little or no funding is hitting grass-roots sport and encouraging mass participation through NGBs; rather, they have strengthened their corporate centres and their focus is on elite sport and performance. There appears to be a push to support this type of delivery model, but Government needs to understand its dependence on Councils, whether this dependence concerns funding via education or officer time in terms of helping to see the bigger picture. The whole drive to pass on participation responsibility to NGBs and Sport England won't happen without Councils being there to make the connections within and across the system.
24. The Government is suggesting a focus on competitive school sport, basing the policy on the Kent school games. Competition managers are already in place, but competition has to be a meaningful part of a development process. This is more competitive sport for the same young people and any funding will create the organisation of events and not focus on mass participation. To some extent the county sports partnerships games have evolved to give kids not in the elite end the chance to compete, but its part of a development process. This contradicts the government arguments for withdrawing from free swimming i.e. the same kids swimming more.
25. The structural reform of sport and the proposals to bring UK Sport, Sport England and Youth Sport Trust under one roof may have a major effect on the Olympic legacy programme. This is generally viewed by local government as positive because of the duplication.
26. The Government's announcement that it is abolishing the Regional Development Agencies may signal major change for the way CSPs could pick up the Olympic role in the absence of RDAs, or simply delegate down to Councils, linked to City regions, which would probably be the preference in which 2012 is currently organised.
27. The effect of public spending cuts on Sport and Culture budgets is generally accepted at 25% approximately over the next 3 years. Many Councils are proposing closing buildings across the Cultural portfolio.

Museums and Heritage

Heritage Lottery Fund

28. Museums have welcomed Jeremy Hunt's promise of more lottery money for heritage. In his first public speech since taking up the post on in May, he made a commitment that the Heritage Lottery Fund would receive an increased share of lottery profits, back to the levels it received when the lottery was founded in 1994.

HLF Skills for the Future programme

29. The Heritage Lottery Fund announced in June that the fund for its *Skills for the Future* programme would be increased to £17m – treble the amount it originally set aside - allowing 54 projects to go ahead. This money will deliver 808 placements - paid training opportunities for people across the UK seeking a career in heritage. At least seven local authority museums services in England have had projects approved. They will be setting up placements for people to receive training in conservation and areas such as managing volunteers and using social media to get people involved in heritage that will help reinvigorate and broaden the appeal of the heritage industry to job-seekers.

Find Your Talent

30. Following the coalition government's decision to end the *Find Your Talent* (FYT) programme with immediate effect, FYT partners are working together to progress outstanding arrangements and undertake legacy planning. the programme as a whole has played a significant role in extending access to cultural opportunities for children and young people. In the PUSH (Partnership for Urban South Hampshire) region alone, *Find Your Talent* has reached 36,286 children and young people and their families. Creativity, Culture and Education, the national charity that has managed the FYT pilot cultural offer is exploring potential options for the future.

Increasing interest in trust status and contracting out

31. There has been a recent upsurge of interest in trust status amongst local authorities, especially those managing museums, as a means of making services more sustainable in the face of budget pressures. Several authorities are also considering commissioning private companies to run their cultural services.

Major events

Ticket Web Site Scams

32. Local Authorities are supporting a national campaign aimed at raising awareness of ticket website scams. The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) Just Tick It campaign is warning festival-goers and sporting fans that summer events are also a peak time for scammers, conning people out of their cash by sophisticated online fake ticketing sites. These offer cheap or scarce tickets, which do not turn up, leaving fans often hundreds of pounds out of pocket.
33. Research from the OFT highlights that one in 12 ticket buyers have been caught out by scam ticket websites with victims losing an average of £80 each. Last year alone, thousands of people lost money over scam sites, offering tickets for everything from the V Festival to George Michael's O2 concert.
34. Authorities are advising the public to contact Consumer Direct if they believe a web site may not be genuine.

Contact Officer: Steven Skelton
Phone No: 020 7664 3074
Email: steven.skelton@lga.gov.uk