

## **Case studies: The Big Society**

### **Purpose of report**

For noting.

### **Summary**

At the last meeting of the CTS Programme Board, Members requested that they receive a regular paper highlighting case studies from the sector. This paper highlights three examples from CLOA of councils' culture services leading the way on the Big Society.

### **Recommendations**

Members are asked to note the case studies, comment on their usefulness and give a steer on future topics they would like case studies to cover.

### **Action**

Secretariat / CLOA Advisory Panel as appropriate.

**Contact officer:** Laura Caton  
**Position:** Business Manager, LGA  
**Phone no:** 020 7664 3154  
**E-mail:** [laura.caton@local.gov.uk](mailto:laura.caton@local.gov.uk)

## **Case Studies**

### **Background**

1. At the last meeting of the CTS Programme Board, Members requested that they receive a regular paper highlighting case studies from the sector. The LG Group and CLOA provide a wealth of case study material and platforms to help councils share the latest cutting edge examples of delivering excellent culture, tourism and sport services. This is an especially important function to support sector-led improvement.
2. Members and officers can access material in a number of ways, including:
  - 2.1 LG Group publications, e-bulletins and events
  - 2.2 CLOA and other professional body networks, events and communications
  - 2.3 On-line resources such as LGID's 'knowledge' web pages and Communities of Practice
  - 2.4 LGID's Improvement Programme to build the capacity of councillors and officers who are leading local culture, tourism and sport services
  - 2.5 Dedicated resources to support bespoke peer mentoring and challenge, such as the Future Libraries Programme and the Local Legacy Local Leadership Programme. The learning from such projects is also widely shared across the whole sector.
3. This update focuses on the Big Society, following-on from a brief discussion at the last CTS Programme Board meeting. The paper gives some brief policy context and then highlights three case studies.

### **The Big Society**

4. The government has said it wants to replace a big state with a Big Society. The three strands of the government's Big Society agenda are social action; public services reform and community empowerment. Democratic local government recognises that ambition and is at the heart of making it happen. Councils play a vital role in fostering and expressing local community identity, encouraging community activism and creating the opportunities for voluntary groups to access funding and build their capacity.
5. Culture is the Big Society par excellence. When it comes to cultural production and heritage protection, much of it is a grassroots and immediate form of philanthropy.

**Item 8**

6. For example:
  - 6.1 7 million people are members of sports clubs and another 10 million do informal sport;
  - 6.2 1 million people are members of English Heritage;
  - 6.3 2 per cent of the population take an active part in drama or opera and there are 2,500 amateur drama clubs registered with NODA (a representative body) and 50 amateur drama festivals;
  - 6.4 2.7 per cent of the population are members of book clubs;
  - 6.5 3 per cent of the population perform live music in public;
  - 6.6 There are 215,000 volunteers in archaeological heritage; the National Trust alone has over 60,000 volunteers;
  - 6.7 There are 200,000 museum friends and volunteers;
  - 6.8 Around 350,000 grade 2 listed buildings are cared for by the people who live in them with (almost) no public assistance
7. Councils across the country work to support this kind of activity through the provision of facilities and spaces such as sports venues and public libraries; through regulation and licensing; through creating opportunities (for example in archaeology projects).
8. The 3 case studies that follow represent a tiny sample of the excellent work that is already happening and that CLOA is sharing across the sector.

**Case study 1**

**Tadcaster Pool, Selby District Council, North Yorkshire**

Tadcaster Pool is a 25m pool in a converted barn, which opened in 1994. It is managed by a Board of Trustees who raised all the capital for the facility. The only direct financial support they had from the Council was £10,000 revenue for the first three years. The Trustees employ 10 professional staff. Otherwise, the facility is run through the work of over 100 volunteers who cover everything from pool duties to marketing, gardening or IT support. They have trained over 500 volunteer Lifeguards in the National Pool Lifeguard qualification since the pool was opened. The Trustees provide a first-class facility that would cost the Council at least an estimated £80,000 per year if they ran it themselves.

**Case study 2**

**Hope Community Library, Wigan Borough Council, Greater Manchester**

Hope Community Library was established in 2005 from a former Primary Care Trust building. It is used by a local school and offers a community centre, along with a

library. The library is run by a team of 24 volunteers and is open for 42 hours per week.

Wigan's Library Service provides professional advice and support and a contribution of £30,000 for book stock and the People's Network. Being managed by volunteers saves at least £50,000 a year.

### **Case study 3**

#### **Cultural Participation Scheme, West Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire**

West Oxfordshire District Council runs a Cultural Participation project with local voluntary agencies. The Council provides access to facilities and some facilitation from professional staff. The voluntary sector identifies suitable people who would not normally access leisure and cultural activities. As these voluntary organisations are already at the front line of working with people who are vulnerable or at risk, they can help them to access these services.

One example is the Rush Project. It operates in areas within the district with the highest levels of perceived anti-social behaviour by young people. The scheme establishes strong local partnerships and enables the voluntary sector to identify young people who will benefit the most from cultural activity and then work with us to enable targeted provision.

Another example is a football scheme delivered by Oxfordshire FA through a local voluntary sector organisation working with young people excluded from school. In this example, young women who abuse alcohol are the target group. Through regular training sessions, these young people have become interested in their fitness and skill levels to the extent that most have reduced their drinking, and most have now completed their FA Level 1 Coaching Award and are now leading the sessions. They have several teams, with full kit, who play matches locally.

There are lots of other examples as part of the scheme. For example, a local swimming pool training disaffected young people as lifeguards, adults with learning disabilities involved in film making and local disabled people becoming involved in their local theatre. The scheme depends on the Council acknowledging the skills and expertise within the voluntary sector, and understanding that they work in different ways to local government. The success of the scheme has enabled cultural services to reposition itself as a 'must have' service, whether statutory or not.

### **Conclusion and next steps**

9. Members are asked to note the case studies, comment on their usefulness and give a steer on future topics they would like case studies to cover.

### **Financial Implications**

10. None.