



CMS 161900/DC

29 December 2010

Dear Councillor

We are writing to you about our shared goal of getting better local services for people and to update you on some practical measures to help local authorities delivering cultural and sporting services when the government's overriding priority is deficit reduction, as reflected in the local government finance settlement.

We would like to highlight some of the many examples of improvement and modernisation across local cultural and sporting services. Culture and sport support a range of policy priorities including, but not limited to, economic growth, health and wellbeing, and safer and stronger communities. It is for these reasons that culture and sport are so important to communities and tend to attract significant local interest. Councils across the country have also learned that it is important to prepare for changes with evidence that can be defended.

Through the Future Libraries Programme (FLP) the Local Government Group and Museums, Libraries & Archives Council (MLA) are supporting 36 councils to find new ways to deliver library services without cutting the front line. We thought it would be helpful, ahead of the formal publication of findings from the programme, to share with you examples of the leading savings options that are emerging and our [newsletter](#) gives you more information. The MLA and Local Government Group can help if you want to find out more and are available to assist you in looking at a wider range of options and ideas for your library services that could help you save money while minimising the need for cuts to front line services.

Library authorities outside the programme are also developing innovative approaches to providing services:

- a) Essex County Council will be helping to improve Slough Borough Council's library service and reduce its administration costs from 1 January 2011;
- b) Investment by Aviva has contributed towards the transformation of York Central Library with more books, the latest technologies and new services;
- c) In North Yorkshire volunteers at Grassington Hub are at the heart of service delivery.

We are convinced that innovation, led by the energy and experience of councils themselves, is also going to provide the best recipes for modernising cultural services generally in a tougher financial climate.

There are also lots of examples of councils developing different approaches to providing local cultural and sporting services and responding to the economic situation by being innovative:

- a) Many councils are successfully commissioning their cultural services to deliver more efficiently other key service priorities such as adult social care, health, better outcomes for children and young people and economic development;
- b) Manchester City Council has focused its culture and sport services as major drivers of economic growth, inward investment, and job creation and training;
- c) Leicester Comedy Festival has developed relationships with communities and the health service to respond to issues such as men's health, teenage pregnancy and healthy eating amongst children and young people;
- d) Suffolk Artlink manages a series of projects aimed at improving the lives of vulnerable people in Suffolk including older people and their carers;
- e) In Kirklees a partnership between creative arts organisations offer a range of services for people as part of their mental health and wellbeing care planning services.

There are a number of different ways by which examples such as these are shared widely across the local government sector, including:

- a) LGID's website brings together in one place the learning that is coming out of the "Passion for Excellence" improvement work in partnership with DCMS and key public bodies.  
<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=21131849>.
- b) The Living Places website is a suite of online resources developed by DCMS and key public bodies to support the contribution of culture and sport to planning <http://living-places.org.uk>.
- c) LGID has also launched two new publications outlining ways the sector can improve its efficiency through new ways of working and making better use of assets and sources of further help.  
<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=24327034>

Help and advice is available and it could assist you in providing the culture and sport local people will be looking for while making the savings that are needed.



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