

Update on current issues

Purpose of report

For information / noting

Summary

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

- Libraries
- 2012 Games and sport
- The visitor economy
- Museums
- Arts

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the update.

Action

Secretariat / CLOA Advisory Panel as appropriate

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Update on current issues

Libraries

Oral evidence session of the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee's libraries inquiry

1. Cllr Elizabeth Campbell (Cabinet Member for Education and Libraries, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea) gave evidence, on behalf of the LGA, to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee's inquiry on libraries.
2. The session began with oral evidence from Alan Davey (Chief Executive, Arts Council England - ACE) and Annie Mauger (Chief Executive, Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals - CILIP). The second session heard evidence from Cllr Campbell, representing the LGA, Cllr David Pugh (Leader, Isle of Wight Council) and Nigel Thomas (Service Delivery Manager, Leicestershire County Council).
3. Cllr Campbell began by emphasising the financial pressures that councils are under. She said that the re-design of library services wasn't a decision that was taken easily but that each individual local authority must make its own decision depending on the local area, and detailed the support and tools the LGA offer to help councils in designing a modern library service which would best fit their local needs.
4. With regards to the definition of a 'comprehensive and efficient' service, Cllr Campbell said that library services need to have the flexibility to reflect local need and that it would therefore not be conducive to have a single, national definition as each area is different. She also explained the LGA are calling to keep the statutory duties on councils to provide a library service but feel the removal of the superintendent role of the Secretary of State would improve councils' ability to provide better library services for their local communities.

Libraries Development Initiative (LDI) update

5. LGA and ACE have announced the 13 successful projects which will receive £230,000 between them to explore innovative, locally appropriate and enterprising ways of working to build 21st century library services. Many of these projects will be looking at developing consortiums between private, public and third sector partners and developing partnership working across local authorities. We are keen to discuss with ACE how we will work together to extract the learning from the projects and share with the sector as widely as possible.

6. The press release with a list of successful projects can be found here:
<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/arts-council-news/arts-council-and-local-government-association-anno/>

Securing the future of a modern libraries service seminar

7. Following on from the success of the free libraries seminar the LGA held in London at the end of last year, we ran another successful seminar for members in Leeds. The seminar was chaired by Cllr Florence Nosegbe from the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board. The event was fully booked and supported members to develop a clearer vision on what a modern library service may look like, shared good practice from councils developing innovative approaches to their library services, and gave members a better understanding of the tools available from the LGA to help them.

2012 Games and Sport

Olympic Torch relay and Paralympic Flame Festivals

8. The LGA is working closely with the Government Olympic Executive (GOE), LOCOG and Nations and Regions Group to ensure that there is adequate support for councils involved in the Torch Relay and Paralympic Flame Festivals. In the last two months, the GOE has organised five workshops for councils to learn more about what the Torch Relay will involve and the support they can expect from the GOE and LOCOG. The LGA will continue to represent councils' concerns and ensure that the Torch Relay and Flame Festivals maximise community engagement.

Host a Nation Week

9. The LGA has been working in partnership with the GOE, VisitBritain, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and LOCOG in developing the 'Host a Nation Week' (HANW) programme and toolkit. The HANW will take place during the week commencing 16 July. It will be an opportunity for councils and communities to celebrate international diversity and the diversity of their communities by staging events that involve either athletes from visiting teams or involve various members of their communities to learn more about other countries or people from different backgrounds within their communities.

Leadership programme for sport portfolio holders

10. Following the very successful two day leadership academy for sport portfolio holders organised in November 2011, the LGA and Sport England organised a one day member leadership workshop for sport portfolio holders on 30 January. The feedback from delegates was again very positive and as a result Sport England have agreed to fund another two day leadership academy on 14/15

March 2012. The LGA is currently working with Sport England to develop a programme of support that builds on the success of the leadership academies and workshop and provides further support to Members who have attended the academies and workshop through mentoring, discussion forums and peer support.

Sport England Youth and Community Sports Strategy 2012-17

11. Sport England launched their new sport strategy, which has a greater focus on youth sport and the need for more local connectivity between sports providers. In response to the strategy, the Chair of the CTS Board wrote to Jeremy Hunt and encouraged him to reflect the fact that local government is the key delivery agent for sport and uniquely placed to bring together the sometimes disparate elements of the local sporting landscape. The letter is attached at **Appendix A**. Jennie Price, Chief Executive of Sport England, is presenting to Members on 23 May.

Visitor economy

Taskforce report on smart regulation and economic growth: seizing the tourism opportunity

12. The tourism red tape task force has produced a report to Tourism Minister, John Penrose MP recommending a number of reforms to regulation to make it easier for businesses to maximise the economic benefits of tourism. The LGA has welcomed the report's aim to stimulate the visitor economy by cutting red tape. In response we wrote to the Minister supporting a number of common sense proposals and made alternative suggestions where appropriate. Our response emphasised that tourism is a local issue with local government working in partnership with business to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy.
<http://www.local.gov.uk/topic-tourism-and-visitor-economy>

Museums

ACE announces new details of museum funding

13. Following ACE's new responsibilities for museums, they have announced details of the Renaissance Major partner museums which together will receive approximately £20 million of funding per year for the next three years as part of their Renaissance programme. The major partners are a diverse range of museum services including local authorities. ACE also announced details of their Museums Development Fund which will help enhance the sustainability and resilience of the museum sector through sharing expertise and good practice. Applications for the Museums Development Fund opened on 7 February. We are pressing ACE to discuss scope for closer working with the LGA to shape their improvement offer to local government funded and supported museums. We are

also discussing with ACE how we can ensure good practice coming out of this work is effectively shared within the sector.

14. You can read the ACE press release here:
<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/arts-council-news/we-announce-renaissance-major-partner-museums-and-/>

Arts

ACE launches a Creative People and Places fund

15. ACE have launched a new £37 million fund to improve participation in the arts. Over three years the Creative People and Places fund will fund around 15 programmes of activity to develop new approaches to arts experiences for local areas not currently engaging with the arts. This can include museums and libraries where they are providing arts based activities and opportunities. Applications are now open and applicants must register their intention to apply to their regional office by 23 March 2012. The fund is open to arts and non-arts organisations. The LGA is emphasising to ACE the importance of engaging local authorities even when other organisations put forward a bid.
16. You can read the ACE press release here:
<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/arts-council-news/creative-people-and-places-fund-opens-applications/>