

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:

- Superfast broadband;
- Public service reform;
- Olympic and Paralympic Legacy; and
- Libraries.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the update.

Action

Officers to action as appropriate.

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Update on current issues

Superfast Broadband

1. The Government is consulting on proposed changes to siting requirements for broadband cabinets and overhead lines. The Government proposes to remove the requirement to install telecommunications apparatus underground everywhere except in Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); and to remove prior approval requirements for broadband cabinets in all protected areas except for SSSIs. Councils have major concerns that the proposals could open the floodgates for broadband street cabinets and overhead pylons being built in the countryside and near to people's homes.
2. The closing date for responses to the consultation is 13 March 2013 and we have encouraged councils to share their responses with us LGA at cts@local.gov.uk.
3. You can read the consultation on DCMS's website:
<http://www.dcms.gov.uk/consultations/9697.aspx>
4. To implement the proposals, the Government is also seeking to amend the Communications Act through Clause 8 of the Growth and Infrastructure Bill. The LGA is lobbying for the deletion of the clause, which would open the door to unwelcome changes to the Electronic Communications Code – namely that broadband and potentially other communications infrastructure could be placed almost anywhere.

Public Service Reform

Community Budgets

5. Independent analysis conducted by Ernst & Young, commissioned by the LGA, showed that more than £4 billion of public money could be saved every year by radically shaking up the way public services are provided and paid for in England.
6. The results of a year-long pilot of community budgets, modelled to a national level, show that devolving more decisions to local areas would provide better services and save between £9.4 billion and £20.6 billion over five years across local and central government.
7. Community budgets work by bringing together public sector money and resources in local areas to give authorities like councils, the police and health service the freedom to integrate their work and design services around the needs of people who use them.
8. The CTS Board is kick-starting debate about the opportunities presented by place-based budgeting for culture and sport services with an Innovation Session led by Cheshire West and Chester Council – one of four Whole Place Community Budget pilots – at the CTS Conference 7-8 March. You can read the Ernst & Young report on the LGA website http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=3e06dd05-6204-4ae8-9b41-81f516cb9a5b&groupId=10171.

Commissioning

Item 5

9. Arts Council England (ACE) has launched an £895,000 three-year commissioning programme to develop awareness and understanding of commissioning opportunities amongst the cultural sector, museums and libraries. The LGA is exploring how this programme could help us to develop further the work we already do with potential cultural commissionees in councils (for instance, the sell-out series of commissioning leadership events we ran last year for culture portfolio holders).

Olympic and Paralympic Legacy

Join In

10. The Join In Trust Limited, a charity supported by Sport England and National Governing Bodies, has launched Join In Local Sport 2013.
11. This will build upon 18/19 August 2012 – the weekend between the end of the Olympics and the start of the Paralympics – when 300,000 people took part in Join In Local Sport by getting involved with their local sports club. In total, there were more than 6,000 events held for Join In 2012.
12. The aim of Join In 2013, which will run 27 July – 9 September, is to provide a focal point to celebrating the one year anniversary of the Games by encouraging even more people to get involved with their local sports club and participate in community sport events.
13. Councils – as the biggest public funders of community sport and in view of their wider community leadership role – were key partners of Join In 2012 and there are similar opportunities for Join In 2013 to help maintain the momentum of legacy and develop further the capacity of local sports clubs and volunteers. The LGA is promoting Join In 2013 to local government and encouraging national coordination between Join In and other legacy initiatives.

Volunteering Database

The London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) has announced that it is handing over the operation of its customer database to Sport England working in partnership with UK Sport and London & Partners.

The 5.3 million people currently on the database will have an opportunity to opt out or carry on receiving the monthly newsletters. For those still in the database on March 28 2013 the transfer means that they will continue to receive regular email updates about sport, volunteering and culture from across the UK. The new newsletters will alert subscribers to opportunities within their local community, ticket offers before general release and the latest information on upcoming events such as UK Sport's Gold Event Series including the forthcoming World Championships Triathlon, and Rugby League World Cup. There will also be opportunities to win "money can't buy" competition prizes like access-all-areas passes to world famous sporting events, sessions with sporting heroes and sporting merchandise.

The LGA is strongly encouraging Sport England to give councils access to the database so that they can signpost Olympic and Paralympic volunteers to local opportunities.

Libraries

14. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has launched an

7 March 2013

Item 5

'Enterprising Libraries' scheme, supported and co-funded by the British Library and Arts Council England. The aim of the £1.2 million fund is to transform six city libraries into 'innovation incubators' which will help local residents create start-up businesses.

15. The funding will be spread in two equal yearly instalments to the six patent-holding city libraries based in Newcastle, Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, and Sheffield.
16. A competition will be held in summer 2013 and local library services will bid to work with the patent libraries in major cities to support their work in communities across the country to increase their business and intellectual property capacity.
17. The Enterprising Libraries initiative builds upon the success of the British Library's own Business and Intellectual Property (IP) Centre which since 2006 has run more than 4,000 workshops which in turn have contributed to the creation of more than 2,700 business start-ups and more than 3,300 jobs.
18. The programme will offer business advice and support to communities from these libraries including mentoring advice from business figures, free access to existing patent licences and offer support to individuals wishing to patent their ideas and projects.
19. The LGA is very supportive of additional funding that recognises the potential of public libraries to drive growth and we will share the learning with other councils through our improvement activity. We are also encouraging DCLG and ACE to connect-up the 'Enterprising Libraries' scheme with the broader growth and service transformation agendas.