

7 March 2013

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The Arts and Growth

The LGA is working on promoting the centrality of local government investment in the arts to growth and the visitor economy and will launch a publication setting out the evidence for this at the CTS Annual Conference. In the lead up to this an article was published in First magazine which can be found at **Annex A**.

The article and publication include a plethora of case studies that illustrate the local economic impact of council investment in, and support of, the arts – from attracting tourists, to supporting creative businesses and providing apprenticeships for young people. This evidence supports the arguments made in the publication that the arts have an impact on boosting local growth. Copies of the publication will be circulated at the board meeting.

The LGA's media team is promoting the report through proactive media work and officers will update Members on coverage at the meeting.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the publication and agree that local government investment in the arts is a theme in the LGA's spending review narrative.

Action

To be taken forward by officers as directed by Members.

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Annex A Arts funding boosts economic growth

22 February 2013

New research from Arts Development UK revealed councils which have chosen to protect their arts budgets in the face of overall spending cuts overwhelmingly do that because they believe the arts boost growth.

Arts events and attractions create great destinations, great places to live and have economically valuable spin-offs.

They attract visitors to an area, can revive high streets and support workers to gain new skills in a variety of employment opportunities.

The arts provide nearly 1 million jobs and 67,000 cultural businesses contribute £28 billion every year to the UK economy. The arts encourage visitors to stay for longer and to spend more money in destinations contributing more than £80 billion to the visitor economy.

Local government's role is key in leading this, not just because they spend on the arts – although they do, investing the same amount as the Arts Council everywhere except central London – but because councils promote consumer and business confidence and support the private sector in their areas. Councils also support communities and their cultural offers through effective use of the planning system, making places attractive to visitors while ensuring the provision of appropriate infrastructure and housing.

Examples of investment in the arts delivering economic return can be seen in local authorities around the country. Milton Keynes Council invested £197,000 in the 2012 Summer of Culture and International Festival. This was used to bring in an extra £1 million from participating organisations and the total economic benefit to the town was estimated to be £6.4 million.

Investment

Major cultural events in Liverpool generated £73 million for the local economy in 2012, with the city council taking a leadership role in driving growth through the visitor economy using four key

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events: the Olympic torch relay, the Music on the Waterfront, the Mathew Street Music Festival and the Sea Odyssey giant marionette spectacular.

The Staffordshire Hoard, an internationally-renowned find of Anglo- Saxon gold and silver, was discovered near Lichfield in July 2009. A partnership of local councils came together to help raise the money to save the find. On a 2011 summer tour of the region to thank local people for their donations, the hoard attracted more than 50,000 people with an estimated economic boost of more £1.5 million.

Councils are building relationships, forging partnerships and using the arts to boost growth as part of their wider economic leadership role. This encourages investment and contributes to bringing in funding which can put the arts centre-stage in the drive for economic recovery in many of our communities.

Last week I met with Sir Peter Bazalgette, new Chair of Arts Council England, and was encouraged by our shared commitment to boosting growth through the arts and the sector-led improvement model. We reiterated our joint statement of purpose, which sets out how we will work together nationally to support existing local collaboration, so that we unlock fully the benefits of closer working between libraries, museums and the arts.

Sir Peter will debate the proposition that investment in the arts pays economic dividends at the annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference on 7 and 8 March in Chester. A new LGA publication giving an insight into the economic role of the arts will be launched at the Conference, at which other headline speakers include Arts Minister Ed Vaizey MP, Peter Salmon, Director of BBC North, Professor Lindsey Davies, President of the UK Faculty of Public Health and Simon Mann, Development Director at Chester Zoo. Cllr Pamela Booher, Lord Mayor of Chester, and Cllr Mike Jones, Leader of Cheshire West and Chester will also be joining us.

Cllr Flick Rea is Chair of the LGA's Culture Tourism and Sport Board