

25 November 2013

**Item 6**

## **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:

- LGA Autumn Statement submission
- The Arts
- The Visitor Economy
- Sport and Physical Activity
- Libraries
- Heritage

### **Recommendation**

Members are asked to note the update.

### **Action**

Officers to action as appropriate.

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**LGA Autumn statement submission**

1. The LGA's Autumn Statement submission highlights that councils are currently half way through a scheduled 43 per cent cut in funding from central government.
2. The cuts, combined with the growing demand for social care, mean that the amount of money available to deliver non-social care services, including many of the services people value most, is predicted to shrink by 66 per cent by the end of the decade. This is likely to mean much less money to spend on services such as leisure facilities like pools, gyms and parks. It will also mean less money to spend on libraries and museums.
3. The LGA is supporting culture and sport portfolio through an improvement programme to find creative solutions to the financial challenges they face.
4. The LGA's Autumn Statement submission is available on the LGA's website: <http://tinyurl.com/njaej5>. The Chancellor will make the Autumn Statement on 5 December.

**The Arts**

Arts Council England's new strategy

5. Arts Council England (ACE) have launched their refreshed 10 year strategy 'Great art and culture for everyone' to bring together their remit for the arts with that for museums and libraries. It will provide the strategic direction for ACE's funding decisions and programmes.
6. The strategy highlights five goals:
  - 6.1. Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries.
  - 6.2. Everyone has the opportunity to experience and to be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries.
  - 6.3. The arts, museums and libraries are resilient and environmentally sustainable.
  - 6.4. The leadership and workforce in the arts, museums and libraries are diverse and appropriately skilled.
  - 6.5. Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries

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7. The strategy recognises that ACE can only achieve its objectives by working closely with the councillors who (outside London) fund and run the majority of this country's culture, libraries and museums.
8. The LGA has worked with ACE to reflect its extended remit in how it works with local government through a single cultural conversation. We hope this will lead to more joined-up conversations about key issues including commissioning, assets, reaching marginalised communities and the contribution of culture to the overall priorities of a place. We embedded this approach in Joint Practical Statement of Purpose that sets out how we will work together to support councils across the arts, museums and libraries. We are also working in partnership with ACE to run a political leadership programme for portfolio holders.
9. It will be important to take stock of the extent to which councils feel they are engaged in a single cultural conversation with ACE. Working more closely with the councillors who represent local government on ACE's area hubs provides an opportunity to do this.
10. ACE's refreshed strategy is available on its website: <http://tinyurl.com/k4pkwla>.

**The Visitor Economy**

11. VisitEngland has launched new research into the staycation phenomenon. The number of domestic overnight holiday trips was up by 9 per cent in England during July this year compared to the same time last year, with visitors spending £1.8billion over the month.
12. Not surprisingly the good weather during the summer helped to boost tourism in this country, according to VisitEngland. 12 per cent of people said they had changed their holiday plans as a result of the weather to spend more of their holidays in the UK. 18-34 year olds (23 per cent) and families (19 per cent) were more likely to have changed their plans because of the weather and over half of all holidaymakers (56 per cent) in England enjoyed good weather this year. 17 per cent said they were more likely to take a holiday in England next year because of the weather in 2013.
13. The Staycation research, which asks over a thousand Britons about their attitudes towards taking a break at home, shows that levels of optimism about the economy are the highest since the downturn began. The number of people who believe we are over the worst of the economic downturn jumped from 13 per cent in February to 29 per cent by September 2013.
14. The LGA's own analysis of the visitor economy highlighted that future growth potential would come from encouraging visitors to stay longer and spend more in destinations. We are taking this forward through our work with councillors to support them to make the most of cultural, heritage and sporting visits to create attractive and vibrant places where people want to visit.

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**Sport and Physical Activity**

Sport England rhythm of sport data

15. Sport England has produced a new toolkit called the 'rhythm of sport data' which enables councils to find out what the participation rates are for sports during different times of the year.
16. The LGA has been working closely with Sport England to ensure that National Governing Bodies of Sport and councils work more closely in terms of sharing data and developing local initiatives that are complementary in order to drive up participation rates.
17. To find out more information on participation rates, go to:  
<http://infographics.sportengland.org/>.

New Sports Minister

18. Cllr Flick Rea's introductory letter to Helen Grant MP, the new Sports Minister, is attached at **Annex A**. The Minister's portfolio also includes the visitor economy. Cllr Rea is meeting the Minister on 28 January.

UKactive Conference

15. The Chairman of the LGA, Sir Merrick Cockell addressed the UKactive Summit on 7 November. The Summit brought together councils, the voluntary sector and the fitness industry to discuss the key issues facing sport and physical activity.
16. In his speech Sir Merrick highlighted how despite budget pressures councils across the country are being very creative in how they manage leisure services and sporting assets, which are hugely valued by communities. Councils are joining with each other to share services, negotiating contracts to get the most out of every pound, sourcing external funding and working with voluntary groups, local sports clubs and business to keep costs down and keep services going.
17. The Chairman also emphasised that councils' new responsibilities for public health are a significant opportunity for a more preventative and joined-up approach to tackling inactivity. Through the provision of sporting and physical activity opportunities councils are helping to reduce the £80 billion cost to the NHS resulting from inactivity.

BSI Outdoor gym Specification

18. The British Standards Institutes (BSI) has launched its first ever specification for outdoor gym equipment – PAS 888:2013, which provides clear guidelines in terms of safety when it comes to specifying, manufacturing, installing, maintaining and inspecting outdoor gym equipment.

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19. A steering group, comprising of experts from the fitness industry as well as a local authority perspective from Vision Redbridge Culture, came together to oversee the initial drafting of the PAS before it went to the public consultation phase.
20. For more information on the specification: <http://tinyurl.com/nbfczsp>.

**Libraries**

21. For the first time the Business & Intellectual Property (IP) Centre National Network will be celebrating Global Entrepreneurship Week 2013 with a co-ordinated series of events. Providing support for budding entrepreneurs and start ups across the country, events will be taking place in the Business & IP Centre in the British Library and at central libraries in Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield.
22. The events are an opportunity to highlight the library's role as a community hub to spark local economic growth, creating opportunities for entrepreneurial activity for people of all backgrounds. This was a theme explored at the LGA's recent libraries seminar for new portfolio holders where Northamptonshire County Council shared how they are providing incubator space and advice for start-up businesses in libraries.
23. More information can be found on the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/ofe9avt>.

**Heritage**

First World War

24. Diane Lees, Director-General of Imperial War Museums (IWM) has written an article for the LGA's First magazine about how the First World War Centenary Partnership is supporting councils and communities to plan to mark the commemoration of the First World War 2014-18.
25. So far, 115 UK councils have joined the Partnership. The article is attached at **Annex B**.
26. In October the Secretary of State for Culture announced a new £10 million 4-year Heritage Lottery Programme to help communities mark historic anniversaries. More information is on the Heritage Lottery Fund website <http://www.hlf.org.uk/news/Pages/AnniversariesFunding.aspx>.